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Title: Moby Dick; or The Whale

Author: Herman Melville

Last Updated: January 3, 2009

Posting Date: December 25, 2008 [EBook #2701]

Release Date: June, 2001

Language: English

\*\*\* START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK MOBY DICK; OR THE WHALE \*\*\*

Produced by Daniel Lazarus and Jonesey

MOBY DICK; OR THE WHALE

By Herman Melville

Original Transcriber's Notes:

This text is a combination of etexts, one from the now-defunct ERIS

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was compared with a public domain hard copy version of the text.

In chapters 24, 89, and 90, we substituted a capital L for the symbol

for the British pound, a unit of currency.

ETYMOLOGY.

(Supplied by a Late Consumptive Usher to a Grammar School)

The pale Usher--threadbare in coat, heart, body, and brain; I see him

now. He was ever dusting his old lexicons and grammars, with a queer

handkerchief, mockingly embellished with all the gay flags of all

the known nations of the world. He loved to dust his old grammars; it

somehow mildly reminded him of his mortality.

"While you take in hand to school others, and to teach them by what

name a whale-fish is to be called in our tongue leaving out, through

ignorance, the letter H, which almost alone maketh the signification of

the word, you deliver that which is not true." --HACKLUYT

"WHALE.... Sw. and Dan. HVAL. This animal is named from roundness or

rolling; for in Dan. HVALT is arched or vaulted." --WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY

"WHALE.... It is more immediately from the Dut. and Ger. WALLEN; A.S.

WALW-IAN, to roll, to wallow." --RICHARDSON'S DICTIONARY

KETOS, GREEK.

CETUS, LATIN.

WHOEL, ANGLO-SAXON.

HVALT, DANISH.

WAL, DUTCH.

HWAL, SWEDISH.

WHALE, ICELANDIC.

WHALE, ENGLISH.

BALEINE, FRENCH.

BALLENA, SPANISH.

PEKEE-NUEE-NUEE, FEGEE.

PEHEE-NUEE-NUEE, ERROMANGOAN.

EXTRACTS (Supplied by a Sub-Sub-Librarian).

It will be seen that this mere painstaking burrower and grub-worm of a

poor devil of a Sub-Sub appears to have gone through the long Vaticans

and street-stalls of the earth, picking up whatever random allusions to

whales he could anyways find in any book whatsoever, sacred or

profane. Therefore you must not, in every case at least, take the

higgledy-piggledy whale statements, however authentic, in these

extracts, for veritable gospel cetology. Far from it. As touching the

ancient authors generally, as well as the poets here appearing, these

extracts are solely valuable or entertaining, as affording a glancing

bird's eye view of what has been promiscuously said, thought, fancied,

and sung of Leviathan, by many nations and generations, including our

own.

So fare thee well, poor devil of a Sub-Sub, whose commentator I am. Thou

belongest to that hopeless, sallow tribe which no wine of this world

will ever warm; and for whom even Pale Sherry would be too rosy-strong;

but with whom one sometimes loves to sit, and feel poor-devilish, too;

and grow convivial upon tears; and say to them bluntly, with full eyes

and empty glasses, and in not altogether unpleasant sadness--Give it up,

Sub-Subs! For by how much the more pains ye take to please the world,

by so much the more shall ye for ever go thankless! Would that I could

clear out Hampton Court and the Tuileries for ye! But gulp down your

tears and hie aloft to the royal-mast with your hearts; for your friends

who have gone before are clearing out the seven-storied heavens, and

making refugees of long-pampered Gabriel, Michael, and Raphael, against

your coming. Here ye strike but splintered hearts together--there, ye

shall strike unsplinterable glasses!

EXTRACTS.

"And God created great whales." --GENESIS.

"Leviathan maketh a path to shine after him; One would think the deep to

be hoary." --JOB.

"Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah." --JONAH.

"There go the ships; there is that Leviathan whom thou hast made to play

therein." --PSALMS.

"In that day, the Lord with his sore, and great, and strong sword,

shall punish Leviathan the piercing serpent, even Leviathan that crooked

serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." --ISAIAH

"And what thing soever besides cometh within the chaos of this monster's

mouth, be it beast, boat, or stone, down it goes all incontinently that

foul great swallow of his, and perisheth in the bottomless gulf of his

paunch." --HOLLAND'S PLUTARCH'S MORALS.

"The Indian Sea breedeth the most and the biggest fishes that are: among

which the Whales and Whirlpooles called Balaene, take up as much in

length as four acres or arpens of land." --HOLLAND'S PLINY.

"Scarcely had we proceeded two days on the sea, when about sunrise a

great many Whales and other monsters of the sea, appeared. Among the

former, one was of a most monstrous size.... This came towards us,

open-mouthed, raising the waves on all sides, and beating the sea before

him into a foam." --TOOKE'S LUCIAN. "THE TRUE HISTORY."

"He visited this country also with a view of catching horse-whales,

which had bones of very great value for their teeth, of which he brought

some to the king.... The best whales were catched in his own country, of

which some were forty-eight, some fifty yards long. He said that he was

one of six who had killed sixty in two days." --OTHER OR OTHER'S VERBAL

NARRATIVE TAKEN DOWN FROM HIS MOUTH BY KING ALFRED, A.D. 890.

"And whereas all the other things, whether beast or vessel, that

enter into the dreadful gulf of this monster's (whale's) mouth, are

immediately lost and swallowed up, the sea-gudgeon retires into it in

great security, and there sleeps." --MONTAIGNE. --APOLOGY FOR RAIMOND

SEBOND.

"Let us fly, let us fly! Old Nick take me if is not Leviathan described

by the noble prophet Moses in the life of patient Job." --RABELAIS.

"This whale's liver was two cartloads." --STOWE'S ANNALS.

"The great Leviathan that maketh the seas to seethe like boiling pan."

--LORD BACON'S VERSION OF THE PSALMS.

"Touching that monstrous bulk of the whale or ork we have received

nothing certain. They grow exceeding fat, insomuch that an incredible

quantity of oil will be extracted out of one whale." --IBID. "HISTORY OF

LIFE AND DEATH."

"The sovereignest thing on earth is parmacetti for an inward bruise."

--KING HENRY.

"Very like a whale." --HAMLET.

"Which to secure, no skill of leach's art

Mote him availle, but to returne againe

To his wound's worker, that with lowly dart,

Dinting his breast, had bred his restless paine,

Like as the wounded whale to shore flies thro' the maine."

--THE FAERIE QUEEN.

"Immense as whales, the motion of whose vast bodies can in a peaceful

calm trouble the ocean til it boil." --SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT. PREFACE TO

GONDIBERT.

"What spermacetti is, men might justly doubt, since the learned

Hosmannus in his work of thirty years, saith plainly, Nescio quid sit."

--SIR T. BROWNE. OF SPERMA CETI AND THE SPERMA CETI WHALE. VIDE HIS V.

E.

"Like Spencer's Talus with his modern flail

He threatens ruin with his ponderous tail.

...

Their fixed jav'lins in his side he wears,

And on his back a grove of pikes appears."

--WALLER'S BATTLE OF THE SUMMER ISLANDS.

"By art is created that great Leviathan, called a Commonwealth or

State--(in Latin, Civitas) which is but an artificial man." --OPENING

SENTENCE OF HOBBES'S LEVIATHAN.

"Silly Mansoul swallowed it without chewing, as if it had been a sprat

in the mouth of a whale." --PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

"That sea beast

Leviathan, which God of all his works

Created hugest that swim the ocean stream." --PARADISE LOST.

---"There Leviathan,

Hugest of living creatures, in the deep

Stretched like a promontory sleeps or swims,

And seems a moving land; and at his gills

Draws in, and at his breath spouts out a sea." --IBID.

"The mighty whales which swim in a sea of water, and have a sea of oil

swimming in them." --FULLLER'S PROFANE AND HOLY STATE.

"So close behind some promontory lie

The huge Leviathan to attend their prey,

And give no chance, but swallow in the fry,

Which through their gaping jaws mistake the way."

--DRYDEN'S ANNUS MIRABILIS.

"While the whale is floating at the stern of the ship, they cut off his

head, and tow it with a boat as near the shore as it will come; but it

will be aground in twelve or thirteen feet water." --THOMAS EDGE'S TEN

VOYAGES TO SPITZBERGEN, IN PURCHAS.

"In their way they saw many whales sporting in the ocean, and in

wantonness fuzzing up the water through their pipes and vents, which

nature has placed on their shoulders." --SIR T. HERBERT'S VOYAGES INTO

ASIA AND AFRICA. HARRIS COLL.

"Here they saw such huge troops of whales, that they were forced to

proceed with a great deal of caution for fear they should run their ship

upon them." --SCHOUTEN'S SIXTH CIRCUMNAVIGATION.

"We set sail from the Elbe, wind N.E. in the ship called The

Jonas-in-the-Whale.... Some say the whale can't open his mouth, but that

is a fable.... They frequently climb up the masts to see whether they

can see a whale, for the first discoverer has a ducat for his pains....

I was told of a whale taken near Shetland, that had above a barrel of

herrings in his belly.... One of our harpooneers told me that he caught

once a whale in Spitzbergen that was white all over." --A VOYAGE TO

GREENLAND, A.D. 1671 HARRIS COLL.

"Several whales have come in upon this coast (Fife) Anno 1652, one

eighty feet in length of the whale-bone kind came in, which (as I was

informed), besides a vast quantity of oil, did afford 500 weight of

baleen. The jaws of it stand for a gate in the garden of Pitferren."

--SIBBALD'S FIFE AND KINROSS.

"Myself have agreed to try whether I can master and kill this

Sperma-ceti whale, for I could never hear of any of that sort that was

killed by any man, such is his fierceness and swiftness." --RICHARD

STRAFFORD'S LETTER FROM THE BERMUDAS. PHIL. TRANS. A.D. 1668.

"Whales in the sea God's voice obey." --N. E. PRIMER.

"We saw also abundance of large whales, there being more in those

southern seas, as I may say, by a hundred to one; than we have to the

northward of us." --CAPTAIN COWLEY'S VOYAGE ROUND THE GLOBE, A.D. 1729.

"... and the breath of the whale is frequently attended with such an

insupportable smell, as to bring on a disorder of the brain." --ULLOA'S

SOUTH AMERICA.

"To fifty chosen sylphs of special note,

We trust the important charge, the petticoat.

Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to fail,

Tho' stuffed with hoops and armed with ribs of whale."

--RAPE OF THE LOCK.

"If we compare land animals in respect to magnitude, with those

that take up their abode in the deep, we shall find they will appear

contemptible in the comparison. The whale is doubtless the largest

animal in creation." --GOLDSMITH, NAT. HIST.

"If you should write a fable for little fishes, you would make them

speak like great wales." --GOLDSMITH TO JOHNSON.

"In the afternoon we saw what was supposed to be a rock, but it was

found to be a dead whale, which some Asiatics had killed, and were then

towing ashore. They seemed to endeavor to conceal themselves behind the

whale, in order to avoid being seen by us." --COOK'S VOYAGES.

"The larger whales, they seldom venture to attack. They stand in so

great dread of some of them, that when out at sea they are afraid to

mention even their names, and carry dung, lime-stone, juniper-wood,

and some other articles of the same nature in their boats, in order to

terrify and prevent their too near approach." --UNO VON TROIL'S LETTERS

ON BANKS'S AND SOLANDER'S VOYAGE TO ICELAND IN 1772.

"The Spermacetti Whale found by the Nantuckois, is an active, fierce

animal, and requires vast address and boldness in the fishermen."

--THOMAS JEFFERSON'S WHALE MEMORIAL TO THE FRENCH MINISTER IN 1778.

"And pray, sir, what in the world is equal to it?" --EDMUND BURKE'S

REFERENCE IN PARLIAMENT TO THE NANTUCKET WHALE-FISHERY.

"Spain--a great whale stranded on the shores of Europe." --EDMUND BURKE.

(SOMEWHERE.)

"A tenth branch of the king's ordinary revenue, said to be grounded on

the consideration of his guarding and protecting the seas from pirates

and robbers, is the right to royal fish, which are whale and sturgeon.

And these, when either thrown ashore or caught near the coast, are the

property of the king." --BLACKSTONE.

"Soon to the sport of death the crews repair:

Rodmond unerring o'er his head suspends

The barbed steel, and every turn attends."

--FALCONER'S SHIPWRECK.

"Bright shone the roofs, the domes, the spires,

And rockets blew self driven,

To hang their momentary fire

Around the vault of heaven.

"So fire with water to compare,

The ocean serves on high,

Up-spouted by a whale in air,

To express unwieldy joy." --COWPER, ON THE QUEEN'S

VISIT TO LONDON.

"Ten or fifteen gallons of blood are thrown out of the heart at

a stroke, with immense velocity." --JOHN HUNTER'S ACCOUNT OF THE

DISSECTION OF A WHALE. (A SMALL SIZED ONE.)

"The aorta of a whale is larger in the bore than the main pipe of the

water-works at London Bridge, and the water roaring in its passage

through that pipe is inferior in impetus and velocity to the blood

gushing from the whale's heart." --PALEY'S THEOLOGY.

"The whale is a mammiferous animal without hind feet." --BARON CUVIER.

"In 40 degrees south, we saw Spermacetti Whales, but did not take

any till the first of May, the sea being then covered with them."

--COLNETT'S VOYAGE FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXTENDING THE SPERMACETI WHALE

FISHERY.

"In the free element beneath me swam,

Floundered and dived, in play, in chace, in battle,

Fishes of every colour, form, and kind;

Which language cannot paint, and mariner

Had never seen; from dread Leviathan

To insect millions peopling every wave:

Gather'd in shoals immense, like floating islands,

Led by mysterious instincts through that waste

And trackless region, though on every side

Assaulted by voracious enemies,

Whales, sharks, and monsters, arm'd in front or jaw,

With swords, saws, spiral horns, or hooked fangs."

--MONTGOMERY'S WORLD BEFORE THE FLOOD.

"Io! Paean! Io! sing.

To the finny people's king.

Not a mightier whale than this

In the vast Atlantic is;

Not a fatter fish than he,

Flounders round the Polar Sea."

--CHARLES LAMB'S TRIUMPH OF THE WHALE.

"In the year 1690 some persons were on a high hill observing the

whales spouting and sporting with each other, when one observed:

there--pointing to the sea--is a green pasture where our children's

grand-children will go for bread." --OBED MACY'S HISTORY OF NANTUCKET.

"I built a cottage for Susan and myself and made a gateway in the form

of a Gothic Arch, by setting up a whale's jaw bones." --HAWTHORNE'S

TWICE TOLD TALES.

"She came to bespeak a monument for her first love, who had been killed

by a whale in the Pacific ocean, no less than forty years ago." --IBID.

"No, Sir, 'tis a Right Whale," answered Tom; "I saw his sprout; he threw

up a pair of as pretty rainbows as a Christian would wish to look at.

He's a raal oil-butt, that fellow!" --COOPER'S PILOT.

"The papers were brought in, and we saw in the Berlin Gazette

that whales had been introduced on the stage there." --ECKERMANN'S

CONVERSATIONS WITH GOETHE.

"My God! Mr. Chace, what is the matter?" I answered, "we have been stove

by a whale." --"NARRATIVE OF THE SHIPWRECK OF THE WHALE SHIP ESSEX OF

NANTUCKET, WHICH WAS ATTACKED AND FINALLY DESTROYED BY A LARGE SPERM

WHALE IN THE PACIFIC OCEAN." BY OWEN CHACE OF NANTUCKET, FIRST MATE OF

SAID VESSEL. NEW YORK, 1821.

"A mariner sat in the shrouds one night,

The wind was piping free;

Now bright, now dimmed, was the moonlight pale,

And the phospher gleamed in the wake of the whale,

As it floundered in the sea."

--ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH.

"The quantity of line withdrawn from the boats engaged in the capture

of this one whale, amounted altogether to 10,440 yards or nearly six

English miles....

"Sometimes the whale shakes its tremendous tail in the air, which,

cracking like a whip, resounds to the distance of three or four miles."

--SCORESBY.

"Mad with the agonies he endures from these fresh attacks, the

infuriated Sperm Whale rolls over and over; he rears his enormous head,

and with wide expanded jaws snaps at everything around him; he rushes

at the boats with his head; they are propelled before him with vast

swiftness, and sometimes utterly destroyed.... It is a matter of great

astonishment that the consideration of the habits of so interesting,

and, in a commercial point of view, so important an animal (as the Sperm

Whale) should have been so entirely neglected, or should have excited

so little curiosity among the numerous, and many of them competent

observers, that of late years, must have possessed the most abundant

and the most convenient opportunities of witnessing their habitudes."

--THOMAS BEALE'S HISTORY OF THE SPERM WHALE, 1839.

"The Cachalot" (Sperm Whale) "is not only better armed than the True

Whale" (Greenland or Right Whale) "in possessing a formidable weapon

at either extremity of its body, but also more frequently displays a

disposition to employ these weapons offensively and in manner at once so

artful, bold, and mischievous, as to lead to its being regarded as the

most dangerous to attack of all the known species of the whale tribe."

--FREDERICK DEBELL BENNETT'S WHALING VOYAGE ROUND THE GLOBE, 1840.

October 13. "There she blows," was sung out from the mast-head.

"Where away?" demanded the captain.

"Three points off the lee bow, sir."

"Raise up your wheel. Steady!" "Steady, sir."

"Mast-head ahoy! Do you see that whale now?"

"Ay ay, sir! A shoal of Sperm Whales! There she blows! There she

breaches!"

"Sing out! sing out every time!"

"Ay Ay, sir! There she blows! there--there--THAR she

blows--bowes--bo-o-os!"

"How far off?"

"Two miles and a half."

"Thunder and lightning! so near! Call all hands."

--J. ROSS BROWNE'S ETCHINGS OF A WHALING CRUIZE. 1846.

"The Whale-ship Globe, on board of which vessel occurred the horrid

transactions we are about to relate, belonged to the island of

Nantucket." --"NARRATIVE OF THE GLOBE," BY LAY AND HUSSEY SURVIVORS.

A.D. 1828.

Being once pursued by a whale which he had wounded, he parried the

assault for some time with a lance; but the furious monster at length

rushed on the boat; himself and comrades only being preserved by leaping

into the water when they saw the onset was inevitable." --MISSIONARY

JOURNAL OF TYERMAN AND BENNETT.

"Nantucket itself," said Mr. Webster, "is a very striking and peculiar

portion of the National interest. There is a population of eight or nine

thousand persons living here in the sea, adding largely every year

to the National wealth by the boldest and most persevering industry."

--REPORT OF DANIEL WEBSTER'S SPEECH IN THE U. S. SENATE, ON THE

APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF A BREAKWATER AT NANTUCKET. 1828.

"The whale fell directly over him, and probably killed him in a moment."

--"THE WHALE AND HIS CAPTORS, OR THE WHALEMAN'S ADVENTURES AND THE

WHALE'S BIOGRAPHY, GATHERED ON THE HOMEWARD CRUISE OF THE COMMODORE

PREBLE." BY REV. HENRY T. CHEEVER.

"If you make the least damn bit of noise," replied Samuel, "I will send

you to hell." --LIFE OF SAMUEL COMSTOCK (THE MUTINEER), BY HIS BROTHER,

WILLIAM COMSTOCK. ANOTHER VERSION OF THE WHALE-SHIP GLOBE NARRATIVE.

"The voyages of the Dutch and English to the Northern Ocean, in order,

if possible, to discover a passage through it to India, though they

failed of their main object, laid-open the haunts of the whale."

--MCCULLOCH'S COMMERCIAL DICTIONARY.

"These things are reciprocal; the ball rebounds, only to bound forward

again; for now in laying open the haunts of the whale, the whalemen seem

to have indirectly hit upon new clews to that same mystic North-West

Passage." --FROM "SOMETHING" UNPUBLISHED.

"It is impossible to meet a whale-ship on the ocean without being struck

by her near appearance. The vessel under short sail, with look-outs at

the mast-heads, eagerly scanning the wide expanse around them, has a

totally different air from those engaged in regular voyage." --CURRENTS

AND WHALING. U.S. EX. EX.

"Pedestrians in the vicinity of London and elsewhere may recollect

having seen large curved bones set upright in the earth, either to form

arches over gateways, or entrances to alcoves, and they may perhaps

have been told that these were the ribs of whales." --TALES OF A WHALE

VOYAGER TO THE ARCTIC OCEAN.

"It was not till the boats returned from the pursuit of these whales,

that the whites saw their ship in bloody possession of the savages

enrolled among the crew." --NEWSPAPER ACCOUNT OF THE TAKING AND RETAKING

OF THE WHALE-SHIP HOBOMACK.

"It is generally well known that out of the crews of Whaling vessels

(American) few ever return in the ships on board of which they

departed." --CRUISE IN A WHALE BOAT.

"Suddenly a mighty mass emerged from the water, and shot up

perpendicularly into the air. It was the while." --MIRIAM COFFIN OR THE

WHALE FISHERMAN.

"The Whale is harpooned to be sure; but bethink you, how you would

manage a powerful unbroken colt, with the mere appliance of a rope tied

to the root of his tail." --A CHAPTER ON WHALING IN RIBS AND TRUCKS.

"On one occasion I saw two of these monsters (whales) probably male and

female, slowly swimming, one after the other, within less than a stone's

throw of the shore" (Terra Del Fuego), "over which the beech tree

extended its branches." --DARWIN'S VOYAGE OF A NATURALIST.

"'Stern all!' exclaimed the mate, as upon turning his head, he saw the

distended jaws of a large Sperm Whale close to the head of the boat,

threatening it with instant destruction;--'Stern all, for your lives!'"

--WHARTON THE WHALE KILLER.

"So be cheery, my lads, let your hearts never fail, While the bold

harpooneer is striking the whale!" --NANTUCKET SONG.

"Oh, the rare old Whale, mid storm and gale

In his ocean home will be

A giant in might, where might is right,

And King of the boundless sea."

--WHALE SONG.

CHAPTER 1. Loomings.

Call me Ishmael. Some years ago--never mind how long precisely--having

little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on

shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of

the world. It is a way I have of driving off the spleen and regulating

the circulation. Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth;

whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find

myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up

the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get

such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to

prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically

knocking people's hats off--then, I account it high time to get to sea

as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and ball. With a

philosophical flourish Cato throws himself upon his sword; I quietly

take to the ship. There is nothing surprising in this. If they but knew

it, almost all men in their degree, some time or other, cherish very

nearly the same feelings towards the ocean with me.

There now is your insular city of the Manhattoes, belted round by

wharves as Indian isles by coral reefs--commerce surrounds it with

her surf. Right and left, the streets take you waterward. Its extreme

downtown is the battery, where that noble mole is washed by waves, and

cooled by breezes, which a few hours previous were out of sight of land.

Look at the crowds of water-gazers there.

Circumambulate the city of a dreamy Sabbath afternoon. Go from Corlears

Hook to Coenties Slip, and from thence, by Whitehall, northward. What

do you see?--Posted like silent sentinels all around the town, stand

thousands upon thousands of mortal men fixed in ocean reveries. Some

leaning against the spiles; some seated upon the pier-heads; some

looking over the bulwarks of ships from China; some high aloft in the

rigging, as if striving to get a still better seaward peep. But these

are all landsmen; of week days pent up in lath and plaster--tied to

counters, nailed to benches, clinched to desks. How then is this? Are

the green fields gone? What do they here?

But look! here come more crowds, pacing straight for the water, and

seemingly bound for a dive. Strange! Nothing will content them but the

extremest limit of the land; loitering under the shady lee of yonder

warehouses will not suffice. No. They must get just as nigh the water

as they possibly can without falling in. And there they stand--miles of

them--leagues. Inlanders all, they come from lanes and alleys, streets

and avenues--north, east, south, and west. Yet here they all unite.

Tell me, does the magnetic virtue of the needles of the compasses of all

those ships attract them thither?

Once more. Say you are in the country; in some high land of lakes. Take

almost any path you please, and ten to one it carries you down in a

dale, and leaves you there by a pool in the stream. There is magic

in it. Let the most absent-minded of men be plunged in his deepest

reveries--stand that man on his legs, set his feet a-going, and he will

infallibly lead you to water, if water there be in all that region.

Should you ever be athirst in the great American desert, try this

experiment, if your caravan happen to be supplied with a metaphysical

professor. Yes, as every one knows, meditation and water are wedded for

ever.

But here is an artist. He desires to paint you the dreamiest, shadiest,

quietest, most enchanting bit of romantic landscape in all the valley of

the Saco. What is the chief element he employs? There stand his trees,

each with a hollow trunk, as if a hermit and a crucifix were within; and

here sleeps his meadow, and there sleep his cattle; and up from yonder

cottage goes a sleepy smoke. Deep into distant woodlands winds a

mazy way, reaching to overlapping spurs of mountains bathed in their

hill-side blue. But though the picture lies thus tranced, and though

this pine-tree shakes down its sighs like leaves upon this shepherd's

head, yet all were vain, unless the shepherd's eye were fixed upon the

magic stream before him. Go visit the Prairies in June, when for scores

on scores of miles you wade knee-deep among Tiger-lilies--what is the

one charm wanting?--Water--there is not a drop of water there! Were

Niagara but a cataract of sand, would you travel your thousand miles to

see it? Why did the poor poet of Tennessee, upon suddenly receiving two

handfuls of silver, deliberate whether to buy him a coat, which he sadly

needed, or invest his money in a pedestrian trip to Rockaway Beach? Why

is almost every robust healthy boy with a robust healthy soul in him, at

some time or other crazy to go to sea? Why upon your first voyage as a

passenger, did you yourself feel such a mystical vibration, when first

told that you and your ship were now out of sight of land? Why did the

old Persians hold the sea holy? Why did the Greeks give it a separate

deity, and own brother of Jove? Surely all this is not without meaning.

And still deeper the meaning of that story of Narcissus, who because

he could not grasp the tormenting, mild image he saw in the fountain,

plunged into it and was drowned. But that same image, we ourselves see

in all rivers and oceans. It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of

life; and this is the key to it all.

Now, when I say that I am in the habit of going to sea whenever I begin

to grow hazy about the eyes, and begin to be over conscious of my lungs,

I do not mean to have it inferred that I ever go to sea as a passenger.

For to go as a passenger you must needs have a purse, and a purse is

but a rag unless you have something in it. Besides, passengers get

sea-sick--grow quarrelsome--don't sleep of nights--do not enjoy

themselves much, as a general thing;--no, I never go as a passenger;

nor, though I am something of a salt, do I ever go to sea as a

Commodore, or a Captain, or a Cook. I abandon the glory and distinction

of such offices to those who like them. For my part, I abominate all

honourable respectable toils, trials, and tribulations of every kind

whatsoever. It is quite as much as I can do to take care of myself,

without taking care of ships, barques, brigs, schooners, and what not.

And as for going as cook,--though I confess there is considerable glory

in that, a cook being a sort of officer on ship-board--yet, somehow,

I never fancied broiling fowls;--though once broiled, judiciously

buttered, and judgmatically salted and peppered, there is no one who

will speak more respectfully, not to say reverentially, of a broiled

fowl than I will. It is out of the idolatrous dotings of the old

Egyptians upon broiled ibis and roasted river horse, that you see the

mummies of those creatures in their huge bake-houses the pyramids.

No, when I go to sea, I go as a simple sailor, right before the mast,

plumb down into the forecastle, aloft there to the royal mast-head.

True, they rather order me about some, and make me jump from spar to

spar, like a grasshopper in a May meadow. And at first, this sort

of thing is unpleasant enough. It touches one's sense of honour,

particularly if you come of an old established family in the land, the

Van Rensselaers, or Randolphs, or Hardicanutes. And more than all,

if just previous to putting your hand into the tar-pot, you have been

lording it as a country schoolmaster, making the tallest boys stand

in awe of you. The transition is a keen one, I assure you, from a

schoolmaster to a sailor, and requires a strong decoction of Seneca and

the Stoics to enable you to grin and bear it. But even this wears off in

time.

What of it, if some old hunks of a sea-captain orders me to get a broom

and sweep down the decks? What does that indignity amount to, weighed,

I mean, in the scales of the New Testament? Do you think the archangel

Gabriel thinks anything the less of me, because I promptly and

respectfully obey that old hunks in that particular instance? Who ain't

a slave? Tell me that. Well, then, however the old sea-captains may

order me about--however they may thump and punch me about, I have the

satisfaction of knowing that it is all right; that everybody else is

one way or other served in much the same way--either in a physical

or metaphysical point of view, that is; and so the universal thump is

passed round, and all hands should rub each other's shoulder-blades, and

be content.

Again, I always go to sea as a sailor, because they make a point of

paying me for my trouble, whereas they never pay passengers a single

penny that I ever heard of. On the contrary, passengers themselves must

pay. And there is all the difference in the world between paying

and being paid. The act of paying is perhaps the most uncomfortable

infliction that the two orchard thieves entailed upon us. But BEING

PAID,--what will compare with it? The urbane activity with which a man

receives money is really marvellous, considering that we so earnestly

believe money to be the root of all earthly ills, and that on no account

can a monied man enter heaven. Ah! how cheerfully we consign ourselves

to perdition!

Finally, I always go to sea as a sailor, because of the wholesome

exercise and pure air of the fore-castle deck. For as in this world,

head winds are far more prevalent than winds from astern (that is,

if you never violate the Pythagorean maxim), so for the most part the

Commodore on the quarter-deck gets his atmosphere at second hand from

the sailors on the forecastle. He thinks he breathes it first; but not

so. In much the same way do the commonalty lead their leaders in many

other things, at the same time that the leaders little suspect it.

But wherefore it was that after having repeatedly smelt the sea as a

merchant sailor, I should now take it into my head to go on a whaling

voyage; this the invisible police officer of the Fates, who has the

constant surveillance of me, and secretly dogs me, and influences me

in some unaccountable way--he can better answer than any one else. And,

doubtless, my going on this whaling voyage, formed part of the grand

programme of Providence that was drawn up a long time ago. It came in as

a sort of brief interlude and solo between more extensive performances.

I take it that this part of the bill must have run something like this:

"GRAND CONTESTED ELECTION FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF THE UNITED STATES.

"WHALING VOYAGE BY ONE ISHMAEL.

"BLOODY BATTLE IN AFFGHANISTAN."

Though I cannot tell why it was exactly that those stage managers, the

Fates, put me down for this shabby part of a whaling voyage, when others

were set down for magnificent parts in high tragedies, and short and

easy parts in genteel comedies, and jolly parts in farces--though

I cannot tell why this was exactly; yet, now that I recall all the

circumstances, I think I can see a little into the springs and motives

which being cunningly presented to me under various disguises, induced

me to set about performing the part I did, besides cajoling me into the

delusion that it was a choice resulting from my own unbiased freewill

and discriminating judgment.

Chief among these motives was the overwhelming idea of the great

whale himself. Such a portentous and mysterious monster roused all my

curiosity. Then the wild and distant seas where he rolled his island

bulk; the undeliverable, nameless perils of the whale; these, with all

the attending marvels of a thousand Patagonian sights and sounds, helped

to sway me to my wish. With other men, perhaps, such things would not

have been inducements; but as for me, I am tormented with an everlasting

itch for things remote. I love to sail forbidden seas, and land on

barbarous coasts. Not ignoring what is good, I am quick to perceive a

horror, and could still be social with it--would they let me--since it

is but well to be on friendly terms with all the inmates of the place

one lodges in.

By reason of these things, then, the whaling voyage was welcome; the

great flood-gates of the wonder-world swung open, and in the wild

conceits that swayed me to my purpose, two and two there floated into

my inmost soul, endless processions of the whale, and, mid most of them

all, one grand hooded phantom, like a snow hill in the air.

CHAPTER 2. The Carpet-Bag.

I stuffed a shirt or two into my old carpet-bag, tucked it under my arm,

and started for Cape Horn and the Pacific. Quitting the good city of

old Manhatto, I duly arrived in New Bedford. It was a Saturday night in

December. Much was I disappointed upon learning that the little packet

for Nantucket had already sailed, and that no way of reaching that place

would offer, till the following Monday.

As most young candidates for the pains and penalties of whaling stop at

this same New Bedford, thence to embark on their voyage, it may as well

be related that I, for one, had no idea of so doing. For my mind was

made up to sail in no other than a Nantucket craft, because there was a

fine, boisterous something about everything connected with that famous

old island, which amazingly pleased me. Besides though New Bedford has

of late been gradually monopolising the business of whaling, and though

in this matter poor old Nantucket is now much behind her, yet Nantucket

was her great original--the Tyre of this Carthage;--the place where the

first dead American whale was stranded. Where else but from Nantucket

did those aboriginal whalemen, the Red-Men, first sally out in canoes to

give chase to the Leviathan? And where but from Nantucket, too, did that

first adventurous little sloop put forth, partly laden with imported

cobblestones--so goes the story--to throw at the whales, in order to

discover when they were nigh enough to risk a harpoon from the bowsprit?

Now having a night, a day, and still another night following before me

in New Bedford, ere I could embark for my destined port, it became a

matter of concernment where I was to eat and sleep meanwhile. It was a

very dubious-looking, nay, a very dark and dismal night, bitingly cold

and cheerless. I knew no one in the place. With anxious grapnels I had

sounded my pocket, and only brought up a few pieces of silver,--So,

wherever you go, Ishmael, said I to myself, as I stood in the middle of

a dreary street shouldering my bag, and comparing the gloom towards the

north with the darkness towards the south--wherever in your wisdom you

may conclude to lodge for the night, my dear Ishmael, be sure to inquire

the price, and don't be too particular.

With halting steps I paced the streets, and passed the sign of "The

Crossed Harpoons"--but it looked too expensive and jolly there. Further

on, from the bright red windows of the "Sword-Fish Inn," there came such

fervent rays, that it seemed to have melted the packed snow and ice from

before the house, for everywhere else the congealed frost lay ten inches

thick in a hard, asphaltic pavement,--rather weary for me, when I struck

my foot against the flinty projections, because from hard, remorseless

service the soles of my boots were in a most miserable plight. Too

expensive and jolly, again thought I, pausing one moment to watch the

broad glare in the street, and hear the sounds of the tinkling glasses

within. But go on, Ishmael, said I at last; don't you hear? get away

from before the door; your patched boots are stopping the way. So on I

went. I now by instinct followed the streets that took me waterward, for

there, doubtless, were the cheapest, if not the cheeriest inns.

Such dreary streets! blocks of blackness, not houses, on either hand,

and here and there a candle, like a candle moving about in a tomb. At

this hour of the night, of the last day of the week, that quarter of

the town proved all but deserted. But presently I came to a smoky light

proceeding from a low, wide building, the door of which stood invitingly

open. It had a careless look, as if it were meant for the uses of the

public; so, entering, the first thing I did was to stumble over an

ash-box in the porch. Ha! thought I, ha, as the flying particles almost

choked me, are these ashes from that destroyed city, Gomorrah? But "The

Crossed Harpoons," and "The Sword-Fish?"--this, then must needs be the

sign of "The Trap." However, I picked myself up and hearing a loud voice

within, pushed on and opened a second, interior door.

It seemed the great Black Parliament sitting in Tophet. A hundred black

faces turned round in their rows to peer; and beyond, a black Angel

of Doom was beating a book in a pulpit. It was a negro church; and the

preacher's text was about the blackness of darkness, and the weeping and

wailing and teeth-gnashing there. Ha, Ishmael, muttered I, backing out,

Wretched entertainment at the sign of 'The Trap!'

Moving on, I at last came to a dim sort of light not far from the docks,

and heard a forlorn creaking in the air; and looking up, saw a swinging

sign over the door with a white painting upon it, faintly representing

a tall straight jet of misty spray, and these words underneath--"The

Spouter Inn:--Peter Coffin."

Coffin?--Spouter?--Rather ominous in that particular connexion, thought

I. But it is a common name in Nantucket, they say, and I suppose this

Peter here is an emigrant from there. As the light looked so dim, and

the place, for the time, looked quiet enough, and the dilapidated little

wooden house itself looked as if it might have been carted here from

the ruins of some burnt district, and as the swinging sign had a

poverty-stricken sort of creak to it, I thought that here was the very

spot for cheap lodgings, and the best of pea coffee.

It was a queer sort of place--a gable-ended old house, one side palsied

as it were, and leaning over sadly. It stood on a sharp bleak corner,

where that tempestuous wind Euroclydon kept up a worse howling than ever

it did about poor Paul's tossed craft. Euroclydon, nevertheless, is a

mighty pleasant zephyr to any one in-doors, with his feet on the hob

quietly toasting for bed. "In judging of that tempestuous wind called

Euroclydon," says an old writer--of whose works I possess the only copy

extant--"it maketh a marvellous difference, whether thou lookest out at

it from a glass window where the frost is all on the outside, or whether

thou observest it from that sashless window, where the frost is on both

sides, and of which the wight Death is the only glazier." True enough,

thought I, as this passage occurred to my mind--old black-letter, thou

reasonest well. Yes, these eyes are windows, and this body of mine is

the house. What a pity they didn't stop up the chinks and the crannies

though, and thrust in a little lint here and there. But it's too late

to make any improvements now. The universe is finished; the copestone

is on, and the chips were carted off a million years ago. Poor Lazarus

there, chattering his teeth against the curbstone for his pillow, and

shaking off his tatters with his shiverings, he might plug up both ears

with rags, and put a corn-cob into his mouth, and yet that would not

keep out the tempestuous Euroclydon. Euroclydon! says old Dives, in his

red silken wrapper--(he had a redder one afterwards) pooh, pooh! What

a fine frosty night; how Orion glitters; what northern lights! Let them

talk of their oriental summer climes of everlasting conservatories; give

me the privilege of making my own summer with my own coals.

But what thinks Lazarus? Can he warm his blue hands by holding them up

to the grand northern lights? Would not Lazarus rather be in Sumatra

than here? Would he not far rather lay him down lengthwise along the

line of the equator; yea, ye gods! go down to the fiery pit itself, in

order to keep out this frost?

Now, that Lazarus should lie stranded there on the curbstone before the

door of Dives, this is more wonderful than that an iceberg should be

moored to one of the Moluccas. Yet Dives himself, he too lives like a

Czar in an ice palace made of frozen sighs, and being a president of a

temperance society, he only drinks the tepid tears of orphans.

But no more of this blubbering now, we are going a-whaling, and there is

plenty of that yet to come. Let us scrape the ice from our frosted feet,

and see what sort of a place this "Spouter" may be.

CHAPTER 3. The Spouter-Inn.

Entering that gable-ended Spouter-Inn, you found yourself in a wide,

low, straggling entry with old-fashioned wainscots, reminding one of

the bulwarks of some condemned old craft. On one side hung a very large

oilpainting so thoroughly besmoked, and every way defaced, that in the

unequal crosslights by which you viewed it, it was only by diligent

study and a series of systematic visits to it, and careful inquiry of

the neighbors, that you could any way arrive at an understanding of its

purpose. Such unaccountable masses of shades and shadows, that at first

you almost thought some ambitious young artist, in the time of the New

England hags, had endeavored to delineate chaos bewitched. But by dint

of much and earnest contemplation, and oft repeated ponderings, and

especially by throwing open the little window towards the back of the

entry, you at last come to the conclusion that such an idea, however

wild, might not be altogether unwarranted.

But what most puzzled and confounded you was a long, limber, portentous,

black mass of something hovering in the centre of the picture over three

blue, dim, perpendicular lines floating in a nameless yeast. A boggy,

soggy, squitchy picture truly, enough to drive a nervous man distracted.

Yet was there a sort of indefinite, half-attained, unimaginable

sublimity about it that fairly froze you to it, till you involuntarily

took an oath with yourself to find out what that marvellous painting

meant. Ever and anon a bright, but, alas, deceptive idea would dart you

through.--It's the Black Sea in a midnight gale.--It's the unnatural

combat of the four primal elements.--It's a blasted heath.--It's a

Hyperborean winter scene.--It's the breaking-up of the icebound stream

of Time. But at last all these fancies yielded to that one portentous

something in the picture's midst. THAT once found out, and all the rest

were plain. But stop; does it not bear a faint resemblance to a gigantic

fish? even the great leviathan himself?

In fact, the artist's design seemed this: a final theory of my own,

partly based upon the aggregated opinions of many aged persons with whom

I conversed upon the subject. The picture represents a Cape-Horner in a

great hurricane; the half-foundered ship weltering there with its three

dismantled masts alone visible; and an exasperated whale, purposing to

spring clean over the craft, is in the enormous act of impaling himself

upon the three mast-heads.

The opposite wall of this entry was hung all over with a heathenish

array of monstrous clubs and spears. Some were thickly set with

glittering teeth resembling ivory saws; others were tufted with knots of

human hair; and one was sickle-shaped, with a vast handle sweeping round

like the segment made in the new-mown grass by a long-armed mower. You

shuddered as you gazed, and wondered what monstrous cannibal and savage

could ever have gone a death-harvesting with such a hacking, horrifying

implement. Mixed with these were rusty old whaling lances and harpoons

all broken and deformed. Some were storied weapons. With this once long

lance, now wildly elbowed, fifty years ago did Nathan Swain kill fifteen

whales between a sunrise and a sunset. And that harpoon--so like a

corkscrew now--was flung in Javan seas, and run away with by a whale,

years afterwards slain off the Cape of Blanco. The original iron entered

nigh the tail, and, like a restless needle sojourning in the body of a

man, travelled full forty feet, and at last was found imbedded in the

hump.

Crossing this dusky entry, and on through yon low-arched way--cut

through what in old times must have been a great central chimney with

fireplaces all round--you enter the public room. A still duskier place

is this, with such low ponderous beams above, and such old wrinkled

planks beneath, that you would almost fancy you trod some old craft's

cockpits, especially of such a howling night, when this corner-anchored

old ark rocked so furiously. On one side stood a long, low, shelf-like

table covered with cracked glass cases, filled with dusty rarities

gathered from this wide world's remotest nooks. Projecting from the

further angle of the room stands a dark-looking den--the bar--a rude

attempt at a right whale's head. Be that how it may, there stands the

vast arched bone of the whale's jaw, so wide, a coach might almost drive

beneath it. Within are shabby shelves, ranged round with old decanters,

bottles, flasks; and in those jaws of swift destruction, like another

cursed Jonah (by which name indeed they called him), bustles a little

withered old man, who, for their money, dearly sells the sailors

deliriums and death.

Abominable are the tumblers into which he pours his poison. Though

true cylinders without--within, the villanous green goggling glasses

deceitfully tapered downwards to a cheating bottom. Parallel meridians

rudely pecked into the glass, surround these footpads' goblets. Fill to

THIS mark, and your charge is but a penny; to THIS a penny more; and so

on to the full glass--the Cape Horn measure, which you may gulp down for

a shilling.

Upon entering the place I found a number of young seamen gathered about

a table, examining by a dim light divers specimens of SKRIMSHANDER. I

sought the landlord, and telling him I desired to be accommodated with a

room, received for answer that his house was full--not a bed unoccupied.

"But avast," he added, tapping his forehead, "you haint no objections

to sharing a harpooneer's blanket, have ye? I s'pose you are goin'

a-whalin', so you'd better get used to that sort of thing."

I told him that I never liked to sleep two in a bed; that if I should

ever do so, it would depend upon who the harpooneer might be, and

that if he (the landlord) really had no other place for me, and the

harpooneer was not decidedly objectionable, why rather than wander

further about a strange town on so bitter a night, I would put up with

the half of any decent man's blanket.

"I thought so. All right; take a seat. Supper?--you want supper?

Supper'll be ready directly."

I sat down on an old wooden settle, carved all over like a bench on the

Battery. At one end a ruminating tar was still further adorning it with

his jack-knife, stooping over and diligently working away at the space

between his legs. He was trying his hand at a ship under full sail, but

he didn't make much headway, I thought.

At last some four or five of us were summoned to our meal in an

adjoining room. It was cold as Iceland--no fire at all--the landlord

said he couldn't afford it. Nothing but two dismal tallow candles, each

in a winding sheet. We were fain to button up our monkey jackets, and

hold to our lips cups of scalding tea with our half frozen fingers. But

the fare was of the most substantial kind--not only meat and potatoes,

but dumplings; good heavens! dumplings for supper! One young fellow in

a green box coat, addressed himself to these dumplings in a most direful

manner.

"My boy," said the landlord, "you'll have the nightmare to a dead

sartainty."

"Landlord," I whispered, "that aint the harpooneer is it?"

"Oh, no," said he, looking a sort of diabolically funny, "the harpooneer

is a dark complexioned chap. He never eats dumplings, he don't--he eats

nothing but steaks, and he likes 'em rare."

"The devil he does," says I. "Where is that harpooneer? Is he here?"

"He'll be here afore long," was the answer.

I could not help it, but I began to feel suspicious of this "dark

complexioned" harpooneer. At any rate, I made up my mind that if it so

turned out that we should sleep together, he must undress and get into

bed before I did.

Supper over, the company went back to the bar-room, when, knowing not

what else to do with myself, I resolved to spend the rest of the evening

as a looker on.

Presently a rioting noise was heard without. Starting up, the landlord

cried, "That's the Grampus's crew. I seed her reported in the offing

this morning; a three years' voyage, and a full ship. Hurrah, boys; now

we'll have the latest news from the Feegees."

A tramping of sea boots was heard in the entry; the door was flung open,

and in rolled a wild set of mariners enough. Enveloped in their shaggy

watch coats, and with their heads muffled in woollen comforters, all

bedarned and ragged, and their beards stiff with icicles, they seemed an

eruption of bears from Labrador. They had just landed from their boat,

and this was the first house they entered. No wonder, then, that they

made a straight wake for the whale's mouth--the bar--when the wrinkled

little old Jonah, there officiating, soon poured them out brimmers all

round. One complained of a bad cold in his head, upon which Jonah

mixed him a pitch-like potion of gin and molasses, which he swore was a

sovereign cure for all colds and catarrhs whatsoever, never mind of how

long standing, or whether caught off the coast of Labrador, or on the

weather side of an ice-island.

The liquor soon mounted into their heads, as it generally does even

with the arrantest topers newly landed from sea, and they began capering

about most obstreperously.

I observed, however, that one of them held somewhat aloof, and though

he seemed desirous not to spoil the hilarity of his shipmates by his own

sober face, yet upon the whole he refrained from making as much noise

as the rest. This man interested me at once; and since the sea-gods

had ordained that he should soon become my shipmate (though but a

sleeping-partner one, so far as this narrative is concerned), I will

here venture upon a little description of him. He stood full six feet

in height, with noble shoulders, and a chest like a coffer-dam. I have

seldom seen such brawn in a man. His face was deeply brown and burnt,

making his white teeth dazzling by the contrast; while in the deep

shadows of his eyes floated some reminiscences that did not seem to give

him much joy. His voice at once announced that he was a Southerner,

and from his fine stature, I thought he must be one of those tall

mountaineers from the Alleghanian Ridge in Virginia. When the revelry

of his companions had mounted to its height, this man slipped away

unobserved, and I saw no more of him till he became my comrade on the

sea. In a few minutes, however, he was missed by his shipmates, and

being, it seems, for some reason a huge favourite with them, they raised

a cry of "Bulkington! Bulkington! where's Bulkington?" and darted out of

the house in pursuit of him.

It was now about nine o'clock, and the room seeming almost

supernaturally quiet after these orgies, I began to congratulate myself

upon a little plan that had occurred to me just previous to the entrance

of the seamen.

No man prefers to sleep two in a bed. In fact, you would a good deal

rather not sleep with your own brother. I don't know how it is, but

people like to be private when they are sleeping. And when it comes to

sleeping with an unknown stranger, in a strange inn, in a strange

town, and that stranger a harpooneer, then your objections indefinitely

multiply. Nor was there any earthly reason why I as a sailor should

sleep two in a bed, more than anybody else; for sailors no more sleep

two in a bed at sea, than bachelor Kings do ashore. To be sure they

all sleep together in one apartment, but you have your own hammock, and

cover yourself with your own blanket, and sleep in your own skin.

The more I pondered over this harpooneer, the more I abominated the

thought of sleeping with him. It was fair to presume that being a

harpooneer, his linen or woollen, as the case might be, would not be of

the tidiest, certainly none of the finest. I began to twitch all over.

Besides, it was getting late, and my decent harpooneer ought to be

home and going bedwards. Suppose now, he should tumble in upon me at

midnight--how could I tell from what vile hole he had been coming?

"Landlord! I've changed my mind about that harpooneer.--I shan't sleep

with him. I'll try the bench here."

"Just as you please; I'm sorry I cant spare ye a tablecloth for a

mattress, and it's a plaguy rough board here"--feeling of the knots and

notches. "But wait a bit, Skrimshander; I've got a carpenter's plane

there in the bar--wait, I say, and I'll make ye snug enough." So saying

he procured the plane; and with his old silk handkerchief first dusting

the bench, vigorously set to planing away at my bed, the while grinning

like an ape. The shavings flew right and left; till at last the

plane-iron came bump against an indestructible knot. The landlord was

near spraining his wrist, and I told him for heaven's sake to quit--the

bed was soft enough to suit me, and I did not know how all the planing

in the world could make eider down of a pine plank. So gathering up the

shavings with another grin, and throwing them into the great stove in

the middle of the room, he went about his business, and left me in a

brown study.

I now took the measure of the bench, and found that it was a foot too

short; but that could be mended with a chair. But it was a foot too

narrow, and the other bench in the room was about four inches higher

than the planed one--so there was no yoking them. I then placed the

first bench lengthwise along the only clear space against the wall,

leaving a little interval between, for my back to settle down in. But I

soon found that there came such a draught of cold air over me from under

the sill of the window, that this plan would never do at all, especially

as another current from the rickety door met the one from the window,

and both together formed a series of small whirlwinds in the immediate

vicinity of the spot where I had thought to spend the night.

The devil fetch that harpooneer, thought I, but stop, couldn't I steal

a march on him--bolt his door inside, and jump into his bed, not to be

wakened by the most violent knockings? It seemed no bad idea; but upon

second thoughts I dismissed it. For who could tell but what the next

morning, so soon as I popped out of the room, the harpooneer might be

standing in the entry, all ready to knock me down!

Still, looking round me again, and seeing no possible chance of spending

a sufferable night unless in some other person's bed, I began to think

that after all I might be cherishing unwarrantable prejudices against

this unknown harpooneer. Thinks I, I'll wait awhile; he must be dropping

in before long. I'll have a good look at him then, and perhaps we may

become jolly good bedfellows after all--there's no telling.

But though the other boarders kept coming in by ones, twos, and threes,

and going to bed, yet no sign of my harpooneer.

"Landlord!" said I, "what sort of a chap is he--does he always keep such

late hours?" It was now hard upon twelve o'clock.

The landlord chuckled again with his lean chuckle, and seemed to

be mightily tickled at something beyond my comprehension. "No," he

answered, "generally he's an early bird--airley to bed and airley to

rise--yes, he's the bird what catches the worm. But to-night he went out

a peddling, you see, and I don't see what on airth keeps him so late,

unless, may be, he can't sell his head."

"Can't sell his head?--What sort of a bamboozingly story is this you

are telling me?" getting into a towering rage. "Do you pretend to say,

landlord, that this harpooneer is actually engaged this blessed Saturday

night, or rather Sunday morning, in peddling his head around this town?"

"That's precisely it," said the landlord, "and I told him he couldn't

sell it here, the market's overstocked."

"With what?" shouted I.

"With heads to be sure; ain't there too many heads in the world?"

"I tell you what it is, landlord," said I quite calmly, "you'd better

stop spinning that yarn to me--I'm not green."

"May be not," taking out a stick and whittling a toothpick, "but I

rayther guess you'll be done BROWN if that ere harpooneer hears you a

slanderin' his head."

"I'll break it for him," said I, now flying into a passion again at this

unaccountable farrago of the landlord's.

"It's broke a'ready," said he.

"Broke," said I--"BROKE, do you mean?"

"Sartain, and that's the very reason he can't sell it, I guess."

"Landlord," said I, going up to him as cool as Mt. Hecla in a

snow-storm--"landlord, stop whittling. You and I must understand one

another, and that too without delay. I come to your house and want a

bed; you tell me you can only give me half a one; that the other half

belongs to a certain harpooneer. And about this harpooneer, whom I

have not yet seen, you persist in telling me the most mystifying and

exasperating stories tending to beget in me an uncomfortable feeling

towards the man whom you design for my bedfellow--a sort of connexion,

landlord, which is an intimate and confidential one in the highest

degree. I now demand of you to speak out and tell me who and what this

harpooneer is, and whether I shall be in all respects safe to spend the

night with him. And in the first place, you will be so good as to unsay

that story about selling his head, which if true I take to be good

evidence that this harpooneer is stark mad, and I've no idea of sleeping

with a madman; and you, sir, YOU I mean, landlord, YOU, sir, by trying

to induce me to do so knowingly, would thereby render yourself liable to

a criminal prosecution."

"Wall," said the landlord, fetching a long breath, "that's a purty long

sarmon for a chap that rips a little now and then. But be easy, be easy,

this here harpooneer I have been tellin' you of has just arrived from

the south seas, where he bought up a lot of 'balmed New Zealand heads

(great curios, you know), and he's sold all on 'em but one, and that one

he's trying to sell to-night, cause to-morrow's Sunday, and it would not

do to be sellin' human heads about the streets when folks is goin' to

churches. He wanted to, last Sunday, but I stopped him just as he was

goin' out of the door with four heads strung on a string, for all the

airth like a string of inions."

This account cleared up the otherwise unaccountable mystery, and showed

that the landlord, after all, had had no idea of fooling me--but at

the same time what could I think of a harpooneer who stayed out of a

Saturday night clean into the holy Sabbath, engaged in such a cannibal

business as selling the heads of dead idolators?

"Depend upon it, landlord, that harpooneer is a dangerous man."

"He pays reg'lar," was the rejoinder. "But come, it's getting dreadful

late, you had better be turning flukes--it's a nice bed; Sal and me

slept in that ere bed the night we were spliced. There's plenty of room

for two to kick about in that bed; it's an almighty big bed that. Why,

afore we give it up, Sal used to put our Sam and little Johnny in the

foot of it. But I got a dreaming and sprawling about one night, and

somehow, Sam got pitched on the floor, and came near breaking his arm.

Arter that, Sal said it wouldn't do. Come along here, I'll give ye a

glim in a jiffy;" and so saying he lighted a candle and held it towards

me, offering to lead the way. But I stood irresolute; when looking at a

clock in the corner, he exclaimed "I vum it's Sunday--you won't see that

harpooneer to-night; he's come to anchor somewhere--come along then; DO

come; WON'T ye come?"

I considered the matter a moment, and then up stairs we went, and I was

ushered into a small room, cold as a clam, and furnished, sure enough,

with a prodigious bed, almost big enough indeed for any four harpooneers

to sleep abreast.

"There," said the landlord, placing the candle on a crazy old sea chest

that did double duty as a wash-stand and centre table; "there, make

yourself comfortable now, and good night to ye." I turned round from

eyeing the bed, but he had disappeared.

Folding back the counterpane, I stooped over the bed. Though none of the

most elegant, it yet stood the scrutiny tolerably well. I then glanced

round the room; and besides the bedstead and centre table, could see

no other furniture belonging to the place, but a rude shelf, the four

walls, and a papered fireboard representing a man striking a whale. Of

things not properly belonging to the room, there was a hammock lashed

up, and thrown upon the floor in one corner; also a large seaman's bag,

containing the harpooneer's wardrobe, no doubt in lieu of a land trunk.

Likewise, there was a parcel of outlandish bone fish hooks on the shelf

over the fire-place, and a tall harpoon standing at the head of the bed.

But what is this on the chest? I took it up, and held it close to the

light, and felt it, and smelt it, and tried every way possible to arrive

at some satisfactory conclusion concerning it. I can compare it to

nothing but a large door mat, ornamented at the edges with little

tinkling tags something like the stained porcupine quills round an

Indian moccasin. There was a hole or slit in the middle of this mat,

as you see the same in South American ponchos. But could it be possible

that any sober harpooneer would get into a door mat, and parade the

streets of any Christian town in that sort of guise? I put it on, to try

it, and it weighed me down like a hamper, being uncommonly shaggy and

thick, and I thought a little damp, as though this mysterious harpooneer

had been wearing it of a rainy day. I went up in it to a bit of glass

stuck against the wall, and I never saw such a sight in my life. I tore

myself out of it in such a hurry that I gave myself a kink in the neck.

I sat down on the side of the bed, and commenced thinking about this

head-peddling harpooneer, and his door mat. After thinking some time on

the bed-side, I got up and took off my monkey jacket, and then stood in

the middle of the room thinking. I then took off my coat, and thought

a little more in my shirt sleeves. But beginning to feel very cold now,

half undressed as I was, and remembering what the landlord said about

the harpooneer's not coming home at all that night, it being so very

late, I made no more ado, but jumped out of my pantaloons and boots, and

then blowing out the light tumbled into bed, and commended myself to the

care of heaven.

Whether that mattress was stuffed with corn-cobs or broken crockery,

there is no telling, but I rolled about a good deal, and could not sleep

for a long time. At last I slid off into a light doze, and had pretty

nearly made a good offing towards the land of Nod, when I heard a heavy

footfall in the passage, and saw a glimmer of light come into the room

from under the door.

Lord save me, thinks I, that must be the harpooneer, the infernal

head-peddler. But I lay perfectly still, and resolved not to say a word

till spoken to. Holding a light in one hand, and that identical New

Zealand head in the other, the stranger entered the room, and without

looking towards the bed, placed his candle a good way off from me on the

floor in one corner, and then began working away at the knotted cords

of the large bag I before spoke of as being in the room. I was all

eagerness to see his face, but he kept it averted for some time while

employed in unlacing the bag's mouth. This accomplished, however, he

turned round--when, good heavens! what a sight! Such a face! It was of

a dark, purplish, yellow colour, here and there stuck over with large

blackish looking squares. Yes, it's just as I thought, he's a terrible

bedfellow; he's been in a fight, got dreadfully cut, and here he is,

just from the surgeon. But at that moment he chanced to turn his face

so towards the light, that I plainly saw they could not be

sticking-plasters at all, those black squares on his cheeks. They were

stains of some sort or other. At first I knew not what to make of this;

but soon an inkling of the truth occurred to me. I remembered a story of

a white man--a whaleman too--who, falling among the cannibals, had been

tattooed by them. I concluded that this harpooneer, in the course of his

distant voyages, must have met with a similar adventure. And what is it,

thought I, after all! It's only his outside; a man can be honest in any

sort of skin. But then, what to make of his unearthly complexion, that

part of it, I mean, lying round about, and completely independent of the

squares of tattooing. To be sure, it might be nothing but a good coat of

tropical tanning; but I never heard of a hot sun's tanning a white man

into a purplish yellow one. However, I had never been in the South Seas;

and perhaps the sun there produced these extraordinary effects upon the

skin. Now, while all these ideas were passing through me like lightning,

this harpooneer never noticed me at all. But, after some difficulty

having opened his bag, he commenced fumbling in it, and presently pulled

out a sort of tomahawk, and a seal-skin wallet with the hair on. Placing

these on the old chest in the middle of the room, he then took the New

Zealand head--a ghastly thing enough--and crammed it down into the bag.

He now took off his hat--a new beaver hat--when I came nigh singing out

with fresh surprise. There was no hair on his head--none to speak of at

least--nothing but a small scalp-knot twisted up on his forehead. His

bald purplish head now looked for all the world like a mildewed skull.

Had not the stranger stood between me and the door, I would have bolted

out of it quicker than ever I bolted a dinner.

Even as it was, I thought something of slipping out of the window, but

it was the second floor back. I am no coward, but what to make of

this head-peddling purple rascal altogether passed my comprehension.

Ignorance is the parent of fear, and being completely nonplussed and

confounded about the stranger, I confess I was now as much afraid of him

as if it was the devil himself who had thus broken into my room at

the dead of night. In fact, I was so afraid of him that I was not

game enough just then to address him, and demand a satisfactory answer

concerning what seemed inexplicable in him.

Meanwhile, he continued the business of undressing, and at last showed

his chest and arms. As I live, these covered parts of him were checkered

with the same squares as his face; his back, too, was all over the same

dark squares; he seemed to have been in a Thirty Years' War, and just

escaped from it with a sticking-plaster shirt. Still more, his very

legs were marked, as if a parcel of dark green frogs were running up

the trunks of young palms. It was now quite plain that he must be some

abominable savage or other shipped aboard of a whaleman in the South

Seas, and so landed in this Christian country. I quaked to think of it.

A peddler of heads too--perhaps the heads of his own brothers. He might

take a fancy to mine--heavens! look at that tomahawk!

But there was no time for shuddering, for now the savage went about

something that completely fascinated my attention, and convinced me that

he must indeed be a heathen. Going to his heavy grego, or wrapall, or

dreadnaught, which he had previously hung on a chair, he fumbled in the

pockets, and produced at length a curious little deformed image with

a hunch on its back, and exactly the colour of a three days' old Congo

baby. Remembering the embalmed head, at first I almost thought that

this black manikin was a real baby preserved in some similar manner. But

seeing that it was not at all limber, and that it glistened a good deal

like polished ebony, I concluded that it must be nothing but a wooden

idol, which indeed it proved to be. For now the savage goes up to the

empty fire-place, and removing the papered fire-board, sets up this

little hunch-backed image, like a tenpin, between the andirons. The

chimney jambs and all the bricks inside were very sooty, so that I

thought this fire-place made a very appropriate little shrine or chapel

for his Congo idol.

I now screwed my eyes hard towards the half hidden image, feeling but

ill at ease meantime--to see what was next to follow. First he takes

about a double handful of shavings out of his grego pocket, and places

them carefully before the idol; then laying a bit of ship biscuit on

top and applying the flame from the lamp, he kindled the shavings into

a sacrificial blaze. Presently, after many hasty snatches into the fire,

and still hastier withdrawals of his fingers (whereby he seemed to be

scorching them badly), he at last succeeded in drawing out the biscuit;

then blowing off the heat and ashes a little, he made a polite offer of

it to the little negro. But the little devil did not seem to fancy such

dry sort of fare at all; he never moved his lips. All these strange

antics were accompanied by still stranger guttural noises from the

devotee, who seemed to be praying in a sing-song or else singing some

pagan psalmody or other, during which his face twitched about in the

most unnatural manner. At last extinguishing the fire, he took the idol

up very unceremoniously, and bagged it again in his grego pocket as

carelessly as if he were a sportsman bagging a dead woodcock.

All these queer proceedings increased my uncomfortableness, and

seeing him now exhibiting strong symptoms of concluding his business

operations, and jumping into bed with me, I thought it was high time,

now or never, before the light was put out, to break the spell in which

I had so long been bound.

But the interval I spent in deliberating what to say, was a fatal one.

Taking up his tomahawk from the table, he examined the head of it for an

instant, and then holding it to the light, with his mouth at the handle,

he puffed out great clouds of tobacco smoke. The next moment the light

was extinguished, and this wild cannibal, tomahawk between his teeth,

sprang into bed with me. I sang out, I could not help it now; and giving

a sudden grunt of astonishment he began feeling me.

Stammering out something, I knew not what, I rolled away from him

against the wall, and then conjured him, whoever or whatever he might

be, to keep quiet, and let me get up and light the lamp again. But his

guttural responses satisfied me at once that he but ill comprehended my

meaning.

"Who-e debel you?"--he at last said--"you no speak-e, dam-me, I kill-e."

And so saying the lighted tomahawk began flourishing about me in the

dark.

"Landlord, for God's sake, Peter Coffin!" shouted I. "Landlord! Watch!

Coffin! Angels! save me!"

"Speak-e! tell-ee me who-ee be, or dam-me, I kill-e!" again growled the

cannibal, while his horrid flourishings of the tomahawk scattered the

hot tobacco ashes about me till I thought my linen would get on fire.

But thank heaven, at that moment the landlord came into the room light

in hand, and leaping from the bed I ran up to him.

"Don't be afraid now," said he, grinning again, "Queequeg here wouldn't

harm a hair of your head."

"Stop your grinning," shouted I, "and why didn't you tell me that that

infernal harpooneer was a cannibal?"

"I thought ye know'd it;--didn't I tell ye, he was a peddlin' heads

around town?--but turn flukes again and go to sleep. Queequeg, look

here--you sabbee me, I sabbee--you this man sleepe you--you sabbee?"

"Me sabbee plenty"--grunted Queequeg, puffing away at his pipe and

sitting up in bed.

"You gettee in," he added, motioning to me with his tomahawk, and

throwing the clothes to one side. He really did this in not only a civil

but a really kind and charitable way. I stood looking at him a moment.

For all his tattooings he was on the whole a clean, comely looking

cannibal. What's all this fuss I have been making about, thought I to

myself--the man's a human being just as I am: he has just as much reason

to fear me, as I have to be afraid of him. Better sleep with a sober

cannibal than a drunken Christian.

"Landlord," said I, "tell him to stash his tomahawk there, or pipe, or

whatever you call it; tell him to stop smoking, in short, and I will

turn in with him. But I don't fancy having a man smoking in bed with me.

It's dangerous. Besides, I ain't insured."

This being told to Queequeg, he at once complied, and again politely

motioned me to get into bed--rolling over to one side as much as to

say--"I won't touch a leg of ye."

"Good night, landlord," said I, "you may go."

I turned in, and never slept better in my life.

CHAPTER 4. The Counterpane.

Upon waking next morning about daylight, I found Queequeg's arm thrown

over me in the most loving and affectionate manner. You had almost

thought I had been his wife. The counterpane was of patchwork, full of

odd little parti-coloured squares and triangles; and this arm of his

tattooed all over with an interminable Cretan labyrinth of a figure,

no two parts of which were of one precise shade--owing I suppose to

his keeping his arm at sea unmethodically in sun and shade, his shirt

sleeves irregularly rolled up at various times--this same arm of his, I

say, looked for all the world like a strip of that same patchwork quilt.

Indeed, partly lying on it as the arm did when I first awoke, I could

hardly tell it from the quilt, they so blended their hues together; and

it was only by the sense of weight and pressure that I could tell that

Queequeg was hugging me.

My sensations were strange. Let me try to explain them. When I was a

child, I well remember a somewhat similar circumstance that befell me;

whether it was a reality or a dream, I never could entirely settle.

The circumstance was this. I had been cutting up some caper or other--I

think it was trying to crawl up the chimney, as I had seen a little

sweep do a few days previous; and my stepmother who, somehow or other,

was all the time whipping me, or sending me to bed supperless,--my

mother dragged me by the legs out of the chimney and packed me off to

bed, though it was only two o'clock in the afternoon of the 21st June,

the longest day in the year in our hemisphere. I felt dreadfully. But

there was no help for it, so up stairs I went to my little room in the

third floor, undressed myself as slowly as possible so as to kill time,

and with a bitter sigh got between the sheets.

I lay there dismally calculating that sixteen entire hours must elapse

before I could hope for a resurrection. Sixteen hours in bed! the

small of my back ached to think of it. And it was so light too; the

sun shining in at the window, and a great rattling of coaches in the

streets, and the sound of gay voices all over the house. I felt worse

and worse--at last I got up, dressed, and softly going down in my

stockinged feet, sought out my stepmother, and suddenly threw myself

at her feet, beseeching her as a particular favour to give me a good

slippering for my misbehaviour; anything indeed but condemning me to lie

abed such an unendurable length of time. But she was the best and most

conscientious of stepmothers, and back I had to go to my room. For

several hours I lay there broad awake, feeling a great deal worse than I

have ever done since, even from the greatest subsequent misfortunes. At

last I must have fallen into a troubled nightmare of a doze; and slowly

waking from it--half steeped in dreams--I opened my eyes, and the before

sun-lit room was now wrapped in outer darkness. Instantly I felt a shock

running through all my frame; nothing was to be seen, and nothing was

to be heard; but a supernatural hand seemed placed in mine. My arm hung

over the counterpane, and the nameless, unimaginable, silent form

or phantom, to which the hand belonged, seemed closely seated by my

bed-side. For what seemed ages piled on ages, I lay there, frozen with

the most awful fears, not daring to drag away my hand; yet ever thinking

that if I could but stir it one single inch, the horrid spell would be

broken. I knew not how this consciousness at last glided away from me;

but waking in the morning, I shudderingly remembered it all, and for

days and weeks and months afterwards I lost myself in confounding

attempts to explain the mystery. Nay, to this very hour, I often puzzle

myself with it.

Now, take away the awful fear, and my sensations at feeling the

supernatural hand in mine were very similar, in their strangeness, to

those which I experienced on waking up and seeing Queequeg's pagan

arm thrown round me. But at length all the past night's events soberly

recurred, one by one, in fixed reality, and then I lay only alive to

the comical predicament. For though I tried to move his arm--unlock his

bridegroom clasp--yet, sleeping as he was, he still hugged me tightly,

as though naught but death should part us twain. I now strove to rouse

him--"Queequeg!"--but his only answer was a snore. I then rolled over,

my neck feeling as if it were in a horse-collar; and suddenly felt a

slight scratch. Throwing aside the counterpane, there lay the tomahawk

sleeping by the savage's side, as if it were a hatchet-faced baby. A

pretty pickle, truly, thought I; abed here in a strange house in the

broad day, with a cannibal and a tomahawk! "Queequeg!--in the name of

goodness, Queequeg, wake!" At length, by dint of much wriggling, and

loud and incessant expostulations upon the unbecomingness of his

hugging a fellow male in that matrimonial sort of style, I succeeded in

extracting a grunt; and presently, he drew back his arm, shook himself

all over like a Newfoundland dog just from the water, and sat up in bed,

stiff as a pike-staff, looking at me, and rubbing his eyes as if he

did not altogether remember how I came to be there, though a dim

consciousness of knowing something about me seemed slowly dawning over

him. Meanwhile, I lay quietly eyeing him, having no serious misgivings

now, and bent upon narrowly observing so curious a creature. When, at

last, his mind seemed made up touching the character of his bedfellow,

and he became, as it were, reconciled to the fact; he jumped out upon

the floor, and by certain signs and sounds gave me to understand that,

if it pleased me, he would dress first and then leave me to dress

afterwards, leaving the whole apartment to myself. Thinks I, Queequeg,

under the circumstances, this is a very civilized overture; but, the

truth is, these savages have an innate sense of delicacy, say what

you will; it is marvellous how essentially polite they are. I pay this

particular compliment to Queequeg, because he treated me with so much

civility and consideration, while I was guilty of great rudeness;

staring at him from the bed, and watching all his toilette motions; for

the time my curiosity getting the better of my breeding. Nevertheless,

a man like Queequeg you don't see every day, he and his ways were well

worth unusual regarding.

He commenced dressing at top by donning his beaver hat, a very tall one,

by the by, and then--still minus his trowsers--he hunted up his boots.

What under the heavens he did it for, I cannot tell, but his next

movement was to crush himself--boots in hand, and hat on--under the bed;

when, from sundry violent gaspings and strainings, I inferred he was

hard at work booting himself; though by no law of propriety that I ever

heard of, is any man required to be private when putting on his

boots. But Queequeg, do you see, was a creature in the transition

stage--neither caterpillar nor butterfly. He was just enough civilized

to show off his outlandishness in the strangest possible manners. His

education was not yet completed. He was an undergraduate. If he had not

been a small degree civilized, he very probably would not have troubled

himself with boots at all; but then, if he had not been still a savage,

he never would have dreamt of getting under the bed to put them on. At

last, he emerged with his hat very much dented and crushed down over his

eyes, and began creaking and limping about the room, as if, not

being much accustomed to boots, his pair of damp, wrinkled cowhide

ones--probably not made to order either--rather pinched and tormented

him at the first go off of a bitter cold morning.

Seeing, now, that there were no curtains to the window, and that the

street being very narrow, the house opposite commanded a plain view

into the room, and observing more and more the indecorous figure that

Queequeg made, staving about with little else but his hat and boots on;

I begged him as well as I could, to accelerate his toilet somewhat,

and particularly to get into his pantaloons as soon as possible. He

complied, and then proceeded to wash himself. At that time in the

morning any Christian would have washed his face; but Queequeg, to

my amazement, contented himself with restricting his ablutions to his

chest, arms, and hands. He then donned his waistcoat, and taking up a

piece of hard soap on the wash-stand centre table, dipped it into water

and commenced lathering his face. I was watching to see where he kept

his razor, when lo and behold, he takes the harpoon from the bed corner,

slips out the long wooden stock, unsheathes the head, whets it a little

on his boot, and striding up to the bit of mirror against the wall,

begins a vigorous scraping, or rather harpooning of his cheeks. Thinks

I, Queequeg, this is using Rogers's best cutlery with a vengeance.

Afterwards I wondered the less at this operation when I came to know of

what fine steel the head of a harpoon is made, and how exceedingly sharp

the long straight edges are always kept.

The rest of his toilet was soon achieved, and he proudly marched out of

the room, wrapped up in his great pilot monkey jacket, and sporting his

harpoon like a marshal's baton.

CHAPTER 5. Breakfast.

I quickly followed suit, and descending into the bar-room accosted the

grinning landlord very pleasantly. I cherished no malice towards him,

though he had been skylarking with me not a little in the matter of my

bedfellow.

However, a good laugh is a mighty good thing, and rather too scarce a

good thing; the more's the pity. So, if any one man, in his own

proper person, afford stuff for a good joke to anybody, let him not be

backward, but let him cheerfully allow himself to spend and be spent in

that way. And the man that has anything bountifully laughable about him,

be sure there is more in that man than you perhaps think for.

The bar-room was now full of the boarders who had been dropping in the

night previous, and whom I had not as yet had a good look at. They were

nearly all whalemen; chief mates, and second mates, and third mates, and

sea carpenters, and sea coopers, and sea blacksmiths, and harpooneers,

and ship keepers; a brown and brawny company, with bosky beards; an

unshorn, shaggy set, all wearing monkey jackets for morning gowns.

You could pretty plainly tell how long each one had been ashore. This

young fellow's healthy cheek is like a sun-toasted pear in hue, and

would seem to smell almost as musky; he cannot have been three days

landed from his Indian voyage. That man next him looks a few shades

lighter; you might say a touch of satin wood is in him. In the

complexion of a third still lingers a tropic tawn, but slightly bleached

withal; HE doubtless has tarried whole weeks ashore. But who could show

a cheek like Queequeg? which, barred with various tints, seemed like the

Andes' western slope, to show forth in one array, contrasting climates,

zone by zone.

"Grub, ho!" now cried the landlord, flinging open a door, and in we went

to breakfast.

They say that men who have seen the world, thereby become quite at ease

in manner, quite self-possessed in company. Not always, though: Ledyard,

the great New England traveller, and Mungo Park, the Scotch one; of all

men, they possessed the least assurance in the parlor. But perhaps the

mere crossing of Siberia in a sledge drawn by dogs as Ledyard did, or

the taking a long solitary walk on an empty stomach, in the negro heart

of Africa, which was the sum of poor Mungo's performances--this kind of

travel, I say, may not be the very best mode of attaining a high social

polish. Still, for the most part, that sort of thing is to be had

anywhere.

These reflections just here are occasioned by the circumstance that

after we were all seated at the table, and I was preparing to hear some

good stories about whaling; to my no small surprise, nearly every

man maintained a profound silence. And not only that, but they looked

embarrassed. Yes, here were a set of sea-dogs, many of whom without the

slightest bashfulness had boarded great whales on the high seas--entire

strangers to them--and duelled them dead without winking; and yet, here

they sat at a social breakfast table--all of the same calling, all of

kindred tastes--looking round as sheepishly at each other as though they

had never been out of sight of some sheepfold among the Green Mountains.

A curious sight; these bashful bears, these timid warrior whalemen!

But as for Queequeg--why, Queequeg sat there among them--at the head of

the table, too, it so chanced; as cool as an icicle. To be sure I cannot

say much for his breeding. His greatest admirer could not have cordially

justified his bringing his harpoon into breakfast with him, and using it

there without ceremony; reaching over the table with it, to the imminent

jeopardy of many heads, and grappling the beefsteaks towards him. But

THAT was certainly very coolly done by him, and every one knows that in

most people's estimation, to do anything coolly is to do it genteelly.

We will not speak of all Queequeg's peculiarities here; how he eschewed

coffee and hot rolls, and applied his undivided attention to beefsteaks,

done rare. Enough, that when breakfast was over he withdrew like the

rest into the public room, lighted his tomahawk-pipe, and was sitting

there quietly digesting and smoking with his inseparable hat on, when I

sallied out for a stroll.

CHAPTER 6. The Street.

If I had been astonished at first catching a glimpse of so outlandish

an individual as Queequeg circulating among the polite society of a

civilized town, that astonishment soon departed upon taking my first

daylight stroll through the streets of New Bedford.

In thoroughfares nigh the docks, any considerable seaport will

frequently offer to view the queerest looking nondescripts from foreign

parts. Even in Broadway and Chestnut streets, Mediterranean mariners

will sometimes jostle the affrighted ladies. Regent Street is not

unknown to Lascars and Malays; and at Bombay, in the Apollo Green, live

Yankees have often scared the natives. But New Bedford beats all Water

Street and Wapping. In these last-mentioned haunts you see only sailors;

but in New Bedford, actual cannibals stand chatting at street corners;

savages outright; many of whom yet carry on their bones unholy flesh. It

makes a stranger stare.

But, besides the Feegeeans, Tongatobooarrs, Erromanggoans, Pannangians,

and Brighggians, and, besides the wild specimens of the whaling-craft

which unheeded reel about the streets, you will see other sights still

more curious, certainly more comical. There weekly arrive in this town

scores of green Vermonters and New Hampshire men, all athirst for gain

and glory in the fishery. They are mostly young, of stalwart frames;

fellows who have felled forests, and now seek to drop the axe and snatch

the whale-lance. Many are as green as the Green Mountains whence they

came. In some things you would think them but a few hours old. Look

there! that chap strutting round the corner. He wears a beaver hat and

swallow-tailed coat, girdled with a sailor-belt and sheath-knife. Here

comes another with a sou'-wester and a bombazine cloak.

No town-bred dandy will compare with a country-bred one--I mean a

downright bumpkin dandy--a fellow that, in the dog-days, will mow his

two acres in buckskin gloves for fear of tanning his hands. Now when a

country dandy like this takes it into his head to make a distinguished

reputation, and joins the great whale-fishery, you should see the

comical things he does upon reaching the seaport. In bespeaking his

sea-outfit, he orders bell-buttons to his waistcoats; straps to his

canvas trowsers. Ah, poor Hay-Seed! how bitterly will burst those straps

in the first howling gale, when thou art driven, straps, buttons, and

all, down the throat of the tempest.

But think not that this famous town has only harpooneers, cannibals, and

bumpkins to show her visitors. Not at all. Still New Bedford is a queer

place. Had it not been for us whalemen, that tract of land would this

day perhaps have been in as howling condition as the coast of Labrador.

As it is, parts of her back country are enough to frighten one, they

look so bony. The town itself is perhaps the dearest place to live

in, in all New England. It is a land of oil, true enough: but not like

Canaan; a land, also, of corn and wine. The streets do not run with

milk; nor in the spring-time do they pave them with fresh eggs. Yet, in

spite of this, nowhere in all America will you find more patrician-like

houses; parks and gardens more opulent, than in New Bedford. Whence came

they? how planted upon this once scraggy scoria of a country?

Go and gaze upon the iron emblematical harpoons round yonder lofty

mansion, and your question will be answered. Yes; all these brave houses

and flowery gardens came from the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans.

One and all, they were harpooned and dragged up hither from the bottom

of the sea. Can Herr Alexander perform a feat like that?

In New Bedford, fathers, they say, give whales for dowers to their

daughters, and portion off their nieces with a few porpoises a-piece.

You must go to New Bedford to see a brilliant wedding; for, they say,

they have reservoirs of oil in every house, and every night recklessly

burn their lengths in spermaceti candles.

In summer time, the town is sweet to see; full of fine maples--long

avenues of green and gold. And in August, high in air, the beautiful and

bountiful horse-chestnuts, candelabra-wise, proffer the passer-by their

tapering upright cones of congregated blossoms. So omnipotent is art;

which in many a district of New Bedford has superinduced bright terraces

of flowers upon the barren refuse rocks thrown aside at creation's final

day.

And the women of New Bedford, they bloom like their own red roses. But

roses only bloom in summer; whereas the fine carnation of their cheeks

is perennial as sunlight in the seventh heavens. Elsewhere match that

bloom of theirs, ye cannot, save in Salem, where they tell me the young

girls breathe such musk, their sailor sweethearts smell them miles off

shore, as though they were drawing nigh the odorous Moluccas instead of

the Puritanic sands.

CHAPTER 7. The Chapel.

In this same New Bedford there stands a Whaleman's Chapel, and few are

the moody fishermen, shortly bound for the Indian Ocean or Pacific, who

fail to make a Sunday visit to the spot. I am sure that I did not.

Returning from my first morning stroll, I again sallied out upon this

special errand. The sky had changed from clear, sunny cold, to driving

sleet and mist. Wrapping myself in my shaggy jacket of the cloth called

bearskin, I fought my way against the stubborn storm. Entering, I

found a small scattered congregation of sailors, and sailors' wives and

widows. A muffled silence reigned, only broken at times by the shrieks

of the storm. Each silent worshipper seemed purposely sitting apart from

the other, as if each silent grief were insular and incommunicable. The

chaplain had not yet arrived; and there these silent islands of men and

women sat steadfastly eyeing several marble tablets, with black borders,

masoned into the wall on either side the pulpit. Three of them ran

something like the following, but I do not pretend to quote:--

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF JOHN TALBOT, Who, at the age of eighteen, was

lost overboard, Near the Isle of Desolation, off Patagonia, November

1st, 1836. THIS TABLET Is erected to his Memory BY HIS SISTER.

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF ROBERT LONG, WILLIS ELLERY, NATHAN COLEMAN,

WALTER CANNY, SETH MACY, AND SAMUEL GLEIG, Forming one of the boats'

crews OF THE SHIP ELIZA Who were towed out of sight by a Whale, On the

Off-shore Ground in the PACIFIC, December 31st, 1839. THIS MARBLE Is

here placed by their surviving SHIPMATES.

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF The late CAPTAIN EZEKIEL HARDY, Who in the bows

of his boat was killed by a Sperm Whale on the coast of Japan, AUGUST

3d, 1833. THIS TABLET Is erected to his Memory BY HIS WIDOW.

Shaking off the sleet from my ice-glazed hat and jacket, I seated myself

near the door, and turning sideways was surprised to see Queequeg near

me. Affected by the solemnity of the scene, there was a wondering gaze

of incredulous curiosity in his countenance. This savage was the only

person present who seemed to notice my entrance; because he was the only

one who could not read, and, therefore, was not reading those frigid

inscriptions on the wall. Whether any of the relatives of the seamen

whose names appeared there were now among the congregation, I knew not;

but so many are the unrecorded accidents in the fishery, and so plainly

did several women present wear the countenance if not the trappings

of some unceasing grief, that I feel sure that here before me were

assembled those, in whose unhealing hearts the sight of those bleak

tablets sympathetically caused the old wounds to bleed afresh.

Oh! ye whose dead lie buried beneath the green grass; who standing among

flowers can say--here, HERE lies my beloved; ye know not the desolation

that broods in bosoms like these. What bitter blanks in those

black-bordered marbles which cover no ashes! What despair in those

immovable inscriptions! What deadly voids and unbidden infidelities in

the lines that seem to gnaw upon all Faith, and refuse resurrections to

the beings who have placelessly perished without a grave. As well might

those tablets stand in the cave of Elephanta as here.

In what census of living creatures, the dead of mankind are included;

why it is that a universal proverb says of them, that they tell no

tales, though containing more secrets than the Goodwin Sands; how it is

that to his name who yesterday departed for the other world, we prefix

so significant and infidel a word, and yet do not thus entitle him, if

he but embarks for the remotest Indies of this living earth; why the

Life Insurance Companies pay death-forfeitures upon immortals; in what

eternal, unstirring paralysis, and deadly, hopeless trance, yet lies

antique Adam who died sixty round centuries ago; how it is that we

still refuse to be comforted for those who we nevertheless maintain are

dwelling in unspeakable bliss; why all the living so strive to hush all

the dead; wherefore but the rumor of a knocking in a tomb will terrify a

whole city. All these things are not without their meanings.

But Faith, like a jackal, feeds among the tombs, and even from these

dead doubts she gathers her most vital hope.

It needs scarcely to be told, with what feelings, on the eve of a

Nantucket voyage, I regarded those marble tablets, and by the murky

light of that darkened, doleful day read the fate of the whalemen

who had gone before me. Yes, Ishmael, the same fate may be thine. But

somehow I grew merry again. Delightful inducements to embark, fine

chance for promotion, it seems--aye, a stove boat will make me an

immortal by brevet. Yes, there is death in this business of whaling--a

speechlessly quick chaotic bundling of a man into Eternity. But what

then? Methinks we have hugely mistaken this matter of Life and Death.

Methinks that what they call my shadow here on earth is my true

substance. Methinks that in looking at things spiritual, we are too

much like oysters observing the sun through the water, and thinking that

thick water the thinnest of air. Methinks my body is but the lees of my

better being. In fact take my body who will, take it I say, it is not

me. And therefore three cheers for Nantucket; and come a stove boat and

stove body when they will, for stave my soul, Jove himself cannot.

CHAPTER 8. The Pulpit.

I had not been seated very long ere a man of a certain venerable

robustness entered; immediately as the storm-pelted door flew back upon

admitting him, a quick regardful eyeing of him by all the congregation,

sufficiently attested that this fine old man was the chaplain. Yes, it

was the famous Father Mapple, so called by the whalemen, among whom he

was a very great favourite. He had been a sailor and a harpooneer in his

youth, but for many years past had dedicated his life to the ministry.

At the time I now write of, Father Mapple was in the hardy winter of a

healthy old age; that sort of old age which seems merging into a second

flowering youth, for among all the fissures of his wrinkles, there shone

certain mild gleams of a newly developing bloom--the spring verdure

peeping forth even beneath February's snow. No one having previously

heard his history, could for the first time behold Father Mapple without

the utmost interest, because there were certain engrafted clerical

peculiarities about him, imputable to that adventurous maritime life

he had led. When he entered I observed that he carried no umbrella, and

certainly had not come in his carriage, for his tarpaulin hat ran down

with melting sleet, and his great pilot cloth jacket seemed almost to

drag him to the floor with the weight of the water it had absorbed.

However, hat and coat and overshoes were one by one removed, and hung up

in a little space in an adjacent corner; when, arrayed in a decent suit,

he quietly approached the pulpit.

Like most old fashioned pulpits, it was a very lofty one, and since a

regular stairs to such a height would, by its long angle with the floor,

seriously contract the already small area of the chapel, the architect,

it seemed, had acted upon the hint of Father Mapple, and finished the

pulpit without a stairs, substituting a perpendicular side ladder, like

those used in mounting a ship from a boat at sea. The wife of a whaling

captain had provided the chapel with a handsome pair of red worsted

man-ropes for this ladder, which, being itself nicely headed, and

stained with a mahogany colour, the whole contrivance, considering what

manner of chapel it was, seemed by no means in bad taste. Halting for

an instant at the foot of the ladder, and with both hands grasping the

ornamental knobs of the man-ropes, Father Mapple cast a look upwards,

and then with a truly sailor-like but still reverential dexterity, hand

over hand, mounted the steps as if ascending the main-top of his vessel.

The perpendicular parts of this side ladder, as is usually the case with

swinging ones, were of cloth-covered rope, only the rounds were of wood,

so that at every step there was a joint. At my first glimpse of the

pulpit, it had not escaped me that however convenient for a ship,

these joints in the present instance seemed unnecessary. For I was not

prepared to see Father Mapple after gaining the height, slowly turn

round, and stooping over the pulpit, deliberately drag up the ladder

step by step, till the whole was deposited within, leaving him

impregnable in his little Quebec.

I pondered some time without fully comprehending the reason for this.

Father Mapple enjoyed such a wide reputation for sincerity and sanctity,

that I could not suspect him of courting notoriety by any mere tricks

of the stage. No, thought I, there must be some sober reason for this

thing; furthermore, it must symbolize something unseen. Can it be,

then, that by that act of physical isolation, he signifies his spiritual

withdrawal for the time, from all outward worldly ties and connexions?

Yes, for replenished with the meat and wine of the word, to the faithful

man of God, this pulpit, I see, is a self-containing stronghold--a lofty

Ehrenbreitstein, with a perennial well of water within the walls.

But the side ladder was not the only strange feature of the place,

borrowed from the chaplain's former sea-farings. Between the marble

cenotaphs on either hand of the pulpit, the wall which formed its back

was adorned with a large painting representing a gallant ship beating

against a terrible storm off a lee coast of black rocks and snowy

breakers. But high above the flying scud and dark-rolling clouds, there

floated a little isle of sunlight, from which beamed forth an angel's

face; and this bright face shed a distinct spot of radiance upon the

ship's tossed deck, something like that silver plate now inserted into

the Victory's plank where Nelson fell. "Ah, noble ship," the angel

seemed to say, "beat on, beat on, thou noble ship, and bear a hardy

helm; for lo! the sun is breaking through; the clouds are rolling

off--serenest azure is at hand."

Nor was the pulpit itself without a trace of the same sea-taste that

had achieved the ladder and the picture. Its panelled front was in

the likeness of a ship's bluff bows, and the Holy Bible rested on a

projecting piece of scroll work, fashioned after a ship's fiddle-headed

beak.

What could be more full of meaning?--for the pulpit is ever this earth's

foremost part; all the rest comes in its rear; the pulpit leads the

world. From thence it is the storm of God's quick wrath is first

descried, and the bow must bear the earliest brunt. From thence it is

the God of breezes fair or foul is first invoked for favourable winds.

Yes, the world's a ship on its passage out, and not a voyage complete;

and the pulpit is its prow.

CHAPTER 9. The Sermon.

Father Mapple rose, and in a mild voice of unassuming authority ordered

the scattered people to condense. "Starboard gangway, there! side away

to larboard--larboard gangway to starboard! Midships! midships!"

There was a low rumbling of heavy sea-boots among the benches, and a

still slighter shuffling of women's shoes, and all was quiet again, and

every eye on the preacher.

He paused a little; then kneeling in the pulpit's bows, folded his large

brown hands across his chest, uplifted his closed eyes, and offered

a prayer so deeply devout that he seemed kneeling and praying at the

bottom of the sea.

This ended, in prolonged solemn tones, like the continual tolling of

a bell in a ship that is foundering at sea in a fog--in such tones he

commenced reading the following hymn; but changing his manner towards

the concluding stanzas, burst forth with a pealing exultation and joy--

"The ribs and terrors in the whale,

Arched over me a dismal gloom,

While all God's sun-lit waves rolled by,

And lift me deepening down to doom.

"I saw the opening maw of hell,

With endless pains and sorrows there;

Which none but they that feel can tell--

Oh, I was plunging to despair.

"In black distress, I called my God,

When I could scarce believe him mine,

He bowed his ear to my complaints--

No more the whale did me confine.

"With speed he flew to my relief,

As on a radiant dolphin borne;

Awful, yet bright, as lightning shone

The face of my Deliverer God.

"My song for ever shall record

That terrible, that joyful hour;

I give the glory to my God,

His all the mercy and the power."

Nearly all joined in singing this hymn, which swelled high above the

howling of the storm. A brief pause ensued; the preacher slowly turned

over the leaves of the Bible, and at last, folding his hand down upon

the proper page, said: "Beloved shipmates, clinch the last verse of the

first chapter of Jonah--'And God had prepared a great fish to swallow up

Jonah.'"

"Shipmates, this book, containing only four chapters--four yarns--is one

of the smallest strands in the mighty cable of the Scriptures. Yet what

depths of the soul does Jonah's deep sealine sound! what a pregnant

lesson to us is this prophet! What a noble thing is that canticle in the

fish's belly! How billow-like and boisterously grand! We feel the floods

surging over us; we sound with him to the kelpy bottom of the waters;

sea-weed and all the slime of the sea is about us! But WHAT is this

lesson that the book of Jonah teaches? Shipmates, it is a two-stranded

lesson; a lesson to us all as sinful men, and a lesson to me as a pilot

of the living God. As sinful men, it is a lesson to us all, because it

is a story of the sin, hard-heartedness, suddenly awakened fears, the

swift punishment, repentance, prayers, and finally the deliverance and

joy of Jonah. As with all sinners among men, the sin of this son of

Amittai was in his wilful disobedience of the command of God--never

mind now what that command was, or how conveyed--which he found a hard

command. But all the things that God would have us do are hard for us to

do--remember that--and hence, he oftener commands us than endeavors to

persuade. And if we obey God, we must disobey ourselves; and it is in

this disobeying ourselves, wherein the hardness of obeying God consists.

"With this sin of disobedience in him, Jonah still further flouts at

God, by seeking to flee from Him. He thinks that a ship made by men will

carry him into countries where God does not reign, but only the Captains

of this earth. He skulks about the wharves of Joppa, and seeks a ship

that's bound for Tarshish. There lurks, perhaps, a hitherto unheeded

meaning here. By all accounts Tarshish could have been no other city

than the modern Cadiz. That's the opinion of learned men. And where is

Cadiz, shipmates? Cadiz is in Spain; as far by water, from Joppa,

as Jonah could possibly have sailed in those ancient days, when the

Atlantic was an almost unknown sea. Because Joppa, the modern Jaffa,

shipmates, is on the most easterly coast of the Mediterranean, the

Syrian; and Tarshish or Cadiz more than two thousand miles to the

westward from that, just outside the Straits of Gibraltar. See ye

not then, shipmates, that Jonah sought to flee world-wide from God?

Miserable man! Oh! most contemptible and worthy of all scorn; with

slouched hat and guilty eye, skulking from his God; prowling among the

shipping like a vile burglar hastening to cross the seas. So disordered,

self-condemning is his look, that had there been policemen in those

days, Jonah, on the mere suspicion of something wrong, had been arrested

ere he touched a deck. How plainly he's a fugitive! no baggage, not a

hat-box, valise, or carpet-bag,--no friends accompany him to the wharf

with their adieux. At last, after much dodging search, he finds the

Tarshish ship receiving the last items of her cargo; and as he steps on

board to see its Captain in the cabin, all the sailors for the moment

desist from hoisting in the goods, to mark the stranger's evil eye.

Jonah sees this; but in vain he tries to look all ease and confidence;

in vain essays his wretched smile. Strong intuitions of the man assure

the mariners he can be no innocent. In their gamesome but still serious

way, one whispers to the other--"Jack, he's robbed a widow;" or, "Joe,

do you mark him; he's a bigamist;" or, "Harry lad, I guess he's the

adulterer that broke jail in old Gomorrah, or belike, one of the missing

murderers from Sodom." Another runs to read the bill that's stuck

against the spile upon the wharf to which the ship is moored, offering

five hundred gold coins for the apprehension of a parricide, and

containing a description of his person. He reads, and looks from Jonah

to the bill; while all his sympathetic shipmates now crowd round Jonah,

prepared to lay their hands upon him. Frighted Jonah trembles, and

summoning all his boldness to his face, only looks so much the more a

coward. He will not confess himself suspected; but that itself is strong

suspicion. So he makes the best of it; and when the sailors find him

not to be the man that is advertised, they let him pass, and he descends

into the cabin.

"'Who's there?' cries the Captain at his busy desk, hurriedly making

out his papers for the Customs--'Who's there?' Oh! how that harmless

question mangles Jonah! For the instant he almost turns to flee again.

But he rallies. 'I seek a passage in this ship to Tarshish; how soon

sail ye, sir?' Thus far the busy Captain had not looked up to Jonah,

though the man now stands before him; but no sooner does he hear that

hollow voice, than he darts a scrutinizing glance. 'We sail with the

next coming tide,' at last he slowly answered, still intently eyeing

him. 'No sooner, sir?'--'Soon enough for any honest man that goes a

passenger.' Ha! Jonah, that's another stab. But he swiftly calls away

the Captain from that scent. 'I'll sail with ye,'--he says,--'the

passage money how much is that?--I'll pay now.' For it is particularly

written, shipmates, as if it were a thing not to be overlooked in this

history, 'that he paid the fare thereof' ere the craft did sail. And

taken with the context, this is full of meaning.

"Now Jonah's Captain, shipmates, was one whose discernment detects crime

in any, but whose cupidity exposes it only in the penniless. In this

world, shipmates, sin that pays its way can travel freely, and without

a passport; whereas Virtue, if a pauper, is stopped at all frontiers.

So Jonah's Captain prepares to test the length of Jonah's purse, ere he

judge him openly. He charges him thrice the usual sum; and it's assented

to. Then the Captain knows that Jonah is a fugitive; but at the same

time resolves to help a flight that paves its rear with gold. Yet when

Jonah fairly takes out his purse, prudent suspicions still molest the

Captain. He rings every coin to find a counterfeit. Not a forger, any

way, he mutters; and Jonah is put down for his passage. 'Point out my

state-room, Sir,' says Jonah now, 'I'm travel-weary; I need sleep.'

'Thou lookest like it,' says the Captain, 'there's thy room.' Jonah

enters, and would lock the door, but the lock contains no key. Hearing

him foolishly fumbling there, the Captain laughs lowly to himself, and

mutters something about the doors of convicts' cells being never allowed

to be locked within. All dressed and dusty as he is, Jonah throws

himself into his berth, and finds the little state-room ceiling almost

resting on his forehead. The air is close, and Jonah gasps. Then, in

that contracted hole, sunk, too, beneath the ship's water-line, Jonah

feels the heralding presentiment of that stifling hour, when the whale

shall hold him in the smallest of his bowels' wards.

"Screwed at its axis against the side, a swinging lamp slightly

oscillates in Jonah's room; and the ship, heeling over towards the wharf

with the weight of the last bales received, the lamp, flame and all,

though in slight motion, still maintains a permanent obliquity with

reference to the room; though, in truth, infallibly straight itself, it

but made obvious the false, lying levels among which it hung. The lamp

alarms and frightens Jonah; as lying in his berth his tormented eyes

roll round the place, and this thus far successful fugitive finds no

refuge for his restless glance. But that contradiction in the lamp more

and more appals him. The floor, the ceiling, and the side, are all awry.

'Oh! so my conscience hangs in me!' he groans, 'straight upwards, so it

burns; but the chambers of my soul are all in crookedness!'

"Like one who after a night of drunken revelry hies to his bed, still

reeling, but with conscience yet pricking him, as the plungings of the

Roman race-horse but so much the more strike his steel tags into him; as

one who in that miserable plight still turns and turns in giddy anguish,

praying God for annihilation until the fit be passed; and at last amid

the whirl of woe he feels, a deep stupor steals over him, as over the

man who bleeds to death, for conscience is the wound, and there's naught

to staunch it; so, after sore wrestlings in his berth, Jonah's prodigy

of ponderous misery drags him drowning down to sleep.

"And now the time of tide has come; the ship casts off her cables; and

from the deserted wharf the uncheered ship for Tarshish, all careening,

glides to sea. That ship, my friends, was the first of recorded

smugglers! the contraband was Jonah. But the sea rebels; he will not

bear the wicked burden. A dreadful storm comes on, the ship is like to

break. But now when the boatswain calls all hands to lighten her;

when boxes, bales, and jars are clattering overboard; when the wind

is shrieking, and the men are yelling, and every plank thunders with

trampling feet right over Jonah's head; in all this raging tumult, Jonah

sleeps his hideous sleep. He sees no black sky and raging sea, feels not

the reeling timbers, and little hears he or heeds he the far rush of the

mighty whale, which even now with open mouth is cleaving the seas after

him. Aye, shipmates, Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship--a

berth in the cabin as I have taken it, and was fast asleep. But the

frightened master comes to him, and shrieks in his dead ear, 'What

meanest thou, O, sleeper! arise!' Startled from his lethargy by that

direful cry, Jonah staggers to his feet, and stumbling to the deck,

grasps a shroud, to look out upon the sea. But at that moment he is

sprung upon by a panther billow leaping over the bulwarks. Wave after

wave thus leaps into the ship, and finding no speedy vent runs roaring

fore and aft, till the mariners come nigh to drowning while yet afloat.

And ever, as the white moon shows her affrighted face from the steep

gullies in the blackness overhead, aghast Jonah sees the rearing

bowsprit pointing high upward, but soon beat downward again towards the

tormented deep.

"Terrors upon terrors run shouting through his soul. In all his cringing

attitudes, the God-fugitive is now too plainly known. The sailors mark

him; more and more certain grow their suspicions of him, and at last,

fully to test the truth, by referring the whole matter to high Heaven,

they fall to casting lots, to see for whose cause this great tempest was

upon them. The lot is Jonah's; that discovered, then how furiously they

mob him with their questions. 'What is thine occupation? Whence comest

thou? Thy country? What people? But mark now, my shipmates, the behavior

of poor Jonah. The eager mariners but ask him who he is, and where

from; whereas, they not only receive an answer to those questions,

but likewise another answer to a question not put by them, but the

unsolicited answer is forced from Jonah by the hard hand of God that is

upon him.

"'I am a Hebrew,' he cries--and then--'I fear the Lord the God of Heaven

who hath made the sea and the dry land!' Fear him, O Jonah? Aye, well

mightest thou fear the Lord God THEN! Straightway, he now goes on to

make a full confession; whereupon the mariners became more and more

appalled, but still are pitiful. For when Jonah, not yet supplicating

God for mercy, since he but too well knew the darkness of his

deserts,--when wretched Jonah cries out to them to take him and cast him

forth into the sea, for he knew that for HIS sake this great tempest

was upon them; they mercifully turn from him, and seek by other means to

save the ship. But all in vain; the indignant gale howls louder;

then, with one hand raised invokingly to God, with the other they not

unreluctantly lay hold of Jonah.

"And now behold Jonah taken up as an anchor and dropped into the sea;

when instantly an oily calmness floats out from the east, and the sea

is still, as Jonah carries down the gale with him, leaving smooth

water behind. He goes down in the whirling heart of such a masterless

commotion that he scarce heeds the moment when he drops seething into

the yawning jaws awaiting him; and the whale shoots-to all his ivory

teeth, like so many white bolts, upon his prison. Then Jonah prayed unto

the Lord out of the fish's belly. But observe his prayer, and learn a

weighty lesson. For sinful as he is, Jonah does not weep and wail for

direct deliverance. He feels that his dreadful punishment is just. He

leaves all his deliverance to God, contenting himself with this, that

spite of all his pains and pangs, he will still look towards His holy

temple. And here, shipmates, is true and faithful repentance; not

clamorous for pardon, but grateful for punishment. And how pleasing to

God was this conduct in Jonah, is shown in the eventual deliverance of

him from the sea and the whale. Shipmates, I do not place Jonah before

you to be copied for his sin but I do place him before you as a model

for repentance. Sin not; but if you do, take heed to repent of it like

Jonah."

While he was speaking these words, the howling of the shrieking,

slanting storm without seemed to add new power to the preacher, who,

when describing Jonah's sea-storm, seemed tossed by a storm himself.

His deep chest heaved as with a ground-swell; his tossed arms seemed the

warring elements at work; and the thunders that rolled away from off his

swarthy brow, and the light leaping from his eye, made all his simple

hearers look on him with a quick fear that was strange to them.

There now came a lull in his look, as he silently turned over the leaves

of the Book once more; and, at last, standing motionless, with closed

eyes, for the moment, seemed communing with God and himself.

But again he leaned over towards the people, and bowing his head lowly,

with an aspect of the deepest yet manliest humility, he spake these

words:

"Shipmates, God has laid but one hand upon you; both his hands press

upon me. I have read ye by what murky light may be mine the lesson that

Jonah teaches to all sinners; and therefore to ye, and still more to me,

for I am a greater sinner than ye. And now how gladly would I come down

from this mast-head and sit on the hatches there where you sit, and

listen as you listen, while some one of you reads ME that other and more

awful lesson which Jonah teaches to ME, as a pilot of the living God.

How being an anointed pilot-prophet, or speaker of true things, and

bidden by the Lord to sound those unwelcome truths in the ears of a

wicked Nineveh, Jonah, appalled at the hostility he should raise, fled

from his mission, and sought to escape his duty and his God by taking

ship at Joppa. But God is everywhere; Tarshish he never reached. As we

have seen, God came upon him in the whale, and swallowed him down to

living gulfs of doom, and with swift slantings tore him along 'into the

midst of the seas,' where the eddying depths sucked him ten thousand

fathoms down, and 'the weeds were wrapped about his head,' and all the

watery world of woe bowled over him. Yet even then beyond the reach of

any plummet--'out of the belly of hell'--when the whale grounded upon

the ocean's utmost bones, even then, God heard the engulphed, repenting

prophet when he cried. Then God spake unto the fish; and from the

shuddering cold and blackness of the sea, the whale came breeching

up towards the warm and pleasant sun, and all the delights of air and

earth; and 'vomited out Jonah upon the dry land;' when the word of the

Lord came a second time; and Jonah, bruised and beaten--his ears, like

two sea-shells, still multitudinously murmuring of the ocean--Jonah

did the Almighty's bidding. And what was that, shipmates? To preach the

Truth to the face of Falsehood! That was it!

"This, shipmates, this is that other lesson; and woe to that pilot of

the living God who slights it. Woe to him whom this world charms from

Gospel duty! Woe to him who seeks to pour oil upon the waters when God

has brewed them into a gale! Woe to him who seeks to please rather than

to appal! Woe to him whose good name is more to him than goodness! Woe

to him who, in this world, courts not dishonour! Woe to him who would

not be true, even though to be false were salvation! Yea, woe to him

who, as the great Pilot Paul has it, while preaching to others is

himself a castaway!"

He dropped and fell away from himself for a moment; then lifting his

face to them again, showed a deep joy in his eyes, as he cried out with

a heavenly enthusiasm,--"But oh! shipmates! on the starboard hand of

every woe, there is a sure delight; and higher the top of that delight,

than the bottom of the woe is deep. Is not the main-truck higher than

the kelson is low? Delight is to him--a far, far upward, and inward

delight--who against the proud gods and commodores of this earth, ever

stands forth his own inexorable self. Delight is to him whose strong

arms yet support him, when the ship of this base treacherous world has

gone down beneath him. Delight is to him, who gives no quarter in the

truth, and kills, burns, and destroys all sin though he pluck it out

from under the robes of Senators and Judges. Delight,--top-gallant

delight is to him, who acknowledges no law or lord, but the Lord his

God, and is only a patriot to heaven. Delight is to him, whom all the

waves of the billows of the seas of the boisterous mob can never shake

from this sure Keel of the Ages. And eternal delight and deliciousness

will be his, who coming to lay him down, can say with his final

breath--O Father!--chiefly known to me by Thy rod--mortal or immortal,

here I die. I have striven to be Thine, more than to be this world's, or

mine own. Yet this is nothing: I leave eternity to Thee; for what is man

that he should live out the lifetime of his God?"

He said no more, but slowly waving a benediction, covered his face with

his hands, and so remained kneeling, till all the people had departed,

and he was left alone in the place.

CHAPTER 10. A Bosom Friend.

Returning to the Spouter-Inn from the Chapel, I found Queequeg there

quite alone; he having left the Chapel before the benediction some time.

He was sitting on a bench before the fire, with his feet on the stove

hearth, and in one hand was holding close up to his face that little

negro idol of his; peering hard into its face, and with a jack-knife

gently whittling away at its nose, meanwhile humming to himself in his

heathenish way.

But being now interrupted, he put up the image; and pretty soon, going

to the table, took up a large book there, and placing it on his lap

began counting the pages with deliberate regularity; at every fiftieth

page--as I fancied--stopping a moment, looking vacantly around him, and

giving utterance to a long-drawn gurgling whistle of astonishment. He

would then begin again at the next fifty; seeming to commence at number

one each time, as though he could not count more than fifty, and it was

only by such a large number of fifties being found together, that his

astonishment at the multitude of pages was excited.

With much interest I sat watching him. Savage though he was, and

hideously marred about the face--at least to my taste--his countenance

yet had a something in it which was by no means disagreeable. You cannot

hide the soul. Through all his unearthly tattooings, I thought I saw

the traces of a simple honest heart; and in his large, deep eyes,

fiery black and bold, there seemed tokens of a spirit that would dare a

thousand devils. And besides all this, there was a certain lofty bearing

about the Pagan, which even his uncouthness could not altogether maim.

He looked like a man who had never cringed and never had had a creditor.

Whether it was, too, that his head being shaved, his forehead was drawn

out in freer and brighter relief, and looked more expansive than it

otherwise would, this I will not venture to decide; but certain it was

his head was phrenologically an excellent one. It may seem ridiculous,

but it reminded me of General Washington's head, as seen in the popular

busts of him. It had the same long regularly graded retreating slope

from above the brows, which were likewise very projecting, like two

long promontories thickly wooded on top. Queequeg was George Washington

cannibalistically developed.

Whilst I was thus closely scanning him, half-pretending meanwhile to be

looking out at the storm from the casement, he never heeded my presence,

never troubled himself with so much as a single glance; but appeared

wholly occupied with counting the pages of the marvellous book.

Considering how sociably we had been sleeping together the night

previous, and especially considering the affectionate arm I had found

thrown over me upon waking in the morning, I thought this indifference

of his very strange. But savages are strange beings; at times you do not

know exactly how to take them. At first they are overawing; their calm

self-collectedness of simplicity seems a Socratic wisdom. I had noticed

also that Queequeg never consorted at all, or but very little, with the

other seamen in the inn. He made no advances whatever; appeared to have

no desire to enlarge the circle of his acquaintances. All this struck

me as mighty singular; yet, upon second thoughts, there was something

almost sublime in it. Here was a man some twenty thousand miles from

home, by the way of Cape Horn, that is--which was the only way he could

get there--thrown among people as strange to him as though he were in

the planet Jupiter; and yet he seemed entirely at his ease; preserving

the utmost serenity; content with his own companionship; always equal to

himself. Surely this was a touch of fine philosophy; though no doubt he

had never heard there was such a thing as that. But, perhaps, to be

true philosophers, we mortals should not be conscious of so living or

so striving. So soon as I hear that such or such a man gives himself

out for a philosopher, I conclude that, like the dyspeptic old woman, he

must have "broken his digester."

As I sat there in that now lonely room; the fire burning low, in that

mild stage when, after its first intensity has warmed the air, it then

only glows to be looked at; the evening shades and phantoms gathering

round the casements, and peering in upon us silent, solitary twain;

the storm booming without in solemn swells; I began to be sensible of

strange feelings. I felt a melting in me. No more my splintered heart

and maddened hand were turned against the wolfish world. This soothing

savage had redeemed it. There he sat, his very indifference speaking a

nature in which there lurked no civilized hypocrisies and bland deceits.

Wild he was; a very sight of sights to see; yet I began to feel myself

mysteriously drawn towards him. And those same things that would have

repelled most others, they were the very magnets that thus drew me. I'll

try a pagan friend, thought I, since Christian kindness has proved but

hollow courtesy. I drew my bench near him, and made some friendly signs

and hints, doing my best to talk with him meanwhile. At first he little

noticed these advances; but presently, upon my referring to his last

night's hospitalities, he made out to ask me whether we were again to be

bedfellows. I told him yes; whereat I thought he looked pleased, perhaps

a little complimented.

We then turned over the book together, and I endeavored to explain to

him the purpose of the printing, and the meaning of the few pictures

that were in it. Thus I soon engaged his interest; and from that we went

to jabbering the best we could about the various outer sights to be seen

in this famous town. Soon I proposed a social smoke; and, producing

his pouch and tomahawk, he quietly offered me a puff. And then we sat

exchanging puffs from that wild pipe of his, and keeping it regularly

passing between us.

If there yet lurked any ice of indifference towards me in the Pagan's

breast, this pleasant, genial smoke we had, soon thawed it out, and left

us cronies. He seemed to take to me quite as naturally and unbiddenly as

I to him; and when our smoke was over, he pressed his forehead against

mine, clasped me round the waist, and said that henceforth we were

married; meaning, in his country's phrase, that we were bosom friends;

he would gladly die for me, if need should be. In a countryman, this

sudden flame of friendship would have seemed far too premature, a thing

to be much distrusted; but in this simple savage those old rules would

not apply.

After supper, and another social chat and smoke, we went to our room

together. He made me a present of his embalmed head; took out his

enormous tobacco wallet, and groping under the tobacco, drew out

some thirty dollars in silver; then spreading them on the table, and

mechanically dividing them into two equal portions, pushed one of them

towards me, and said it was mine. I was going to remonstrate; but he

silenced me by pouring them into my trowsers' pockets. I let them stay.

He then went about his evening prayers, took out his idol, and removed

the paper fireboard. By certain signs and symptoms, I thought he seemed

anxious for me to join him; but well knowing what was to follow, I

deliberated a moment whether, in case he invited me, I would comply or

otherwise.

I was a good Christian; born and bred in the bosom of the infallible

Presbyterian Church. How then could I unite with this wild idolator in

worshipping his piece of wood? But what is worship? thought I. Do

you suppose now, Ishmael, that the magnanimous God of heaven and

earth--pagans and all included--can possibly be jealous of an

insignificant bit of black wood? Impossible! But what is worship?--to do

the will of God--THAT is worship. And what is the will of God?--to do to

my fellow man what I would have my fellow man to do to me--THAT is the

will of God. Now, Queequeg is my fellow man. And what do I wish that

this Queequeg would do to me? Why, unite with me in my particular

Presbyterian form of worship. Consequently, I must then unite with him

in his; ergo, I must turn idolator. So I kindled the shavings; helped

prop up the innocent little idol; offered him burnt biscuit with

Queequeg; salamed before him twice or thrice; kissed his nose; and that

done, we undressed and went to bed, at peace with our own consciences

and all the world. But we did not go to sleep without some little chat.

How it is I know not; but there is no place like a bed for confidential

disclosures between friends. Man and wife, they say, there open the very

bottom of their souls to each other; and some old couples often lie

and chat over old times till nearly morning. Thus, then, in our hearts'

honeymoon, lay I and Queequeg--a cosy, loving pair.

CHAPTER 11. Nightgown.

We had lain thus in bed, chatting and napping at short intervals, and

Queequeg now and then affectionately throwing his brown tattooed legs

over mine, and then drawing them back; so entirely sociable and free

and easy were we; when, at last, by reason of our confabulations, what

little nappishness remained in us altogether departed, and we felt like

getting up again, though day-break was yet some way down the future.

Yes, we became very wakeful; so much so that our recumbent position

began to grow wearisome, and by little and little we found ourselves

sitting up; the clothes well tucked around us, leaning against the

head-board with our four knees drawn up close together, and our two

noses bending over them, as if our kneepans were warming-pans. We felt

very nice and snug, the more so since it was so chilly out of doors;

indeed out of bed-clothes too, seeing that there was no fire in the

room. The more so, I say, because truly to enjoy bodily warmth, some

small part of you must be cold, for there is no quality in this world

that is not what it is merely by contrast. Nothing exists in itself. If

you flatter yourself that you are all over comfortable, and have been so

a long time, then you cannot be said to be comfortable any more. But if,

like Queequeg and me in the bed, the tip of your nose or the crown

of your head be slightly chilled, why then, indeed, in the general

consciousness you feel most delightfully and unmistakably warm. For this

reason a sleeping apartment should never be furnished with a fire, which

is one of the luxurious discomforts of the rich. For the height of this

sort of deliciousness is to have nothing but the blanket between you and

your snugness and the cold of the outer air. Then there you lie like the

one warm spark in the heart of an arctic crystal.

We had been sitting in this crouching manner for some time, when all at

once I thought I would open my eyes; for when between sheets, whether

by day or by night, and whether asleep or awake, I have a way of always

keeping my eyes shut, in order the more to concentrate the snugness

of being in bed. Because no man can ever feel his own identity aright

except his eyes be closed; as if darkness were indeed the proper element

of our essences, though light be more congenial to our clayey part. Upon

opening my eyes then, and coming out of my own pleasant and self-created

darkness into the imposed and coarse outer gloom of the unilluminated

twelve-o'clock-at-night, I experienced a disagreeable revulsion. Nor did

I at all object to the hint from Queequeg that perhaps it were best to

strike a light, seeing that we were so wide awake; and besides he felt

a strong desire to have a few quiet puffs from his Tomahawk. Be it said,

that though I had felt such a strong repugnance to his smoking in the

bed the night before, yet see how elastic our stiff prejudices grow when

love once comes to bend them. For now I liked nothing better than to

have Queequeg smoking by me, even in bed, because he seemed to be full

of such serene household joy then. I no more felt unduly concerned for

the landlord's policy of insurance. I was only alive to the condensed

confidential comfortableness of sharing a pipe and a blanket with a real

friend. With our shaggy jackets drawn about our shoulders, we now passed

the Tomahawk from one to the other, till slowly there grew over us a

blue hanging tester of smoke, illuminated by the flame of the new-lit

lamp.

Whether it was that this undulating tester rolled the savage away to far

distant scenes, I know not, but he now spoke of his native island; and,

eager to hear his history, I begged him to go on and tell it. He gladly

complied. Though at the time I but ill comprehended not a few of his

words, yet subsequent disclosures, when I had become more familiar with

his broken phraseology, now enable me to present the whole story such as

it may prove in the mere skeleton I give.

CHAPTER 12. Biographical.

Queequeg was a native of Rokovoko, an island far away to the West and

South. It is not down in any map; true places never are.

When a new-hatched savage running wild about his native woodlands in

a grass clout, followed by the nibbling goats, as if he were a green

sapling; even then, in Queequeg's ambitious soul, lurked a strong desire

to see something more of Christendom than a specimen whaler or two. His

father was a High Chief, a King; his uncle a High Priest; and on the

maternal side he boasted aunts who were the wives of unconquerable

warriors. There was excellent blood in his veins--royal stuff; though

sadly vitiated, I fear, by the cannibal propensity he nourished in his

untutored youth.

A Sag Harbor ship visited his father's bay, and Queequeg sought a

passage to Christian lands. But the ship, having her full complement of

seamen, spurned his suit; and not all the King his father's influence

could prevail. But Queequeg vowed a vow. Alone in his canoe, he paddled

off to a distant strait, which he knew the ship must pass through when

she quitted the island. On one side was a coral reef; on the other a low

tongue of land, covered with mangrove thickets that grew out into the

water. Hiding his canoe, still afloat, among these thickets, with its

prow seaward, he sat down in the stern, paddle low in hand; and when the

ship was gliding by, like a flash he darted out; gained her side; with

one backward dash of his foot capsized and sank his canoe; climbed up

the chains; and throwing himself at full length upon the deck, grappled

a ring-bolt there, and swore not to let it go, though hacked in pieces.

In vain the captain threatened to throw him overboard; suspended a

cutlass over his naked wrists; Queequeg was the son of a King, and

Queequeg budged not. Struck by his desperate dauntlessness, and his wild

desire to visit Christendom, the captain at last relented, and told

him he might make himself at home. But this fine young savage--this sea

Prince of Wales, never saw the Captain's cabin. They put him down among

the sailors, and made a whaleman of him. But like Czar Peter content to

toil in the shipyards of foreign cities, Queequeg disdained no seeming

ignominy, if thereby he might happily gain the power of enlightening his

untutored countrymen. For at bottom--so he told me--he was actuated by a

profound desire to learn among the Christians, the arts whereby to

make his people still happier than they were; and more than that,

still better than they were. But, alas! the practices of whalemen soon

convinced him that even Christians could be both miserable and wicked;

infinitely more so, than all his father's heathens. Arrived at last in

old Sag Harbor; and seeing what the sailors did there; and then going on

to Nantucket, and seeing how they spent their wages in that place also,

poor Queequeg gave it up for lost. Thought he, it's a wicked world in

all meridians; I'll die a pagan.

And thus an old idolator at heart, he yet lived among these Christians,

wore their clothes, and tried to talk their gibberish. Hence the queer

ways about him, though now some time from home.

By hints, I asked him whether he did not propose going back, and having

a coronation; since he might now consider his father dead and gone, he

being very old and feeble at the last accounts. He answered no, not yet;

and added that he was fearful Christianity, or rather Christians, had

unfitted him for ascending the pure and undefiled throne of thirty pagan

Kings before him. But by and by, he said, he would return,--as soon as

he felt himself baptized again. For the nonce, however, he proposed to

sail about, and sow his wild oats in all four oceans. They had made a

harpooneer of him, and that barbed iron was in lieu of a sceptre now.

I asked him what might be his immediate purpose, touching his future

movements. He answered, to go to sea again, in his old vocation. Upon

this, I told him that whaling was my own design, and informed him of my

intention to sail out of Nantucket, as being the most promising port for

an adventurous whaleman to embark from. He at once resolved to accompany

me to that island, ship aboard the same vessel, get into the same watch,

the same boat, the same mess with me, in short to share my every hap;

with both my hands in his, boldly dip into the Potluck of both worlds.

To all this I joyously assented; for besides the affection I now felt

for Queequeg, he was an experienced harpooneer, and as such, could not

fail to be of great usefulness to one, who, like me, was wholly ignorant

of the mysteries of whaling, though well acquainted with the sea, as

known to merchant seamen.

His story being ended with his pipe's last dying puff, Queequeg embraced

me, pressed his forehead against mine, and blowing out the light, we

rolled over from each other, this way and that, and very soon were

sleeping.

CHAPTER 13. Wheelbarrow.

Next morning, Monday, after disposing of the embalmed head to a barber,

for a block, I settled my own and comrade's bill; using, however, my

comrade's money. The grinning landlord, as well as the boarders, seemed

amazingly tickled at the sudden friendship which had sprung up between

me and Queequeg--especially as Peter Coffin's cock and bull stories

about him had previously so much alarmed me concerning the very person

whom I now companied with.

We borrowed a wheelbarrow, and embarking our things, including my own

poor carpet-bag, and Queequeg's canvas sack and hammock, away we went

down to "the Moss," the little Nantucket packet schooner moored at the

wharf. As we were going along the people stared; not at Queequeg

so much--for they were used to seeing cannibals like him in their

streets,--but at seeing him and me upon such confidential terms. But we

heeded them not, going along wheeling the barrow by turns, and Queequeg

now and then stopping to adjust the sheath on his harpoon barbs. I asked

him why he carried such a troublesome thing with him ashore, and

whether all whaling ships did not find their own harpoons. To this, in

substance, he replied, that though what I hinted was true enough, yet

he had a particular affection for his own harpoon, because it was of

assured stuff, well tried in many a mortal combat, and deeply intimate

with the hearts of whales. In short, like many inland reapers

and mowers, who go into the farmers' meadows armed with their own

scythes--though in no wise obliged to furnish them--even so, Queequeg,

for his own private reasons, preferred his own harpoon.

Shifting the barrow from my hand to his, he told me a funny story about

the first wheelbarrow he had ever seen. It was in Sag Harbor. The owners

of his ship, it seems, had lent him one, in which to carry his

heavy chest to his boarding house. Not to seem ignorant about the

thing--though in truth he was entirely so, concerning the precise way in

which to manage the barrow--Queequeg puts his chest upon it; lashes it

fast; and then shoulders the barrow and marches up the wharf. "Why,"

said I, "Queequeg, you might have known better than that, one would

think. Didn't the people laugh?"

Upon this, he told me another story. The people of his island of

Rokovoko, it seems, at their wedding feasts express the fragrant water

of young cocoanuts into a large stained calabash like a punchbowl; and

this punchbowl always forms the great central ornament on the braided

mat where the feast is held. Now a certain grand merchant ship once

touched at Rokovoko, and its commander--from all accounts, a very

stately punctilious gentleman, at least for a sea captain--this

commander was invited to the wedding feast of Queequeg's sister, a

pretty young princess just turned of ten. Well; when all the wedding

guests were assembled at the bride's bamboo cottage, this Captain

marches in, and being assigned the post of honour, placed himself over

against the punchbowl, and between the High Priest and his majesty the

King, Queequeg's father. Grace being said,--for those people have their

grace as well as we--though Queequeg told me that unlike us, who at such

times look downwards to our platters, they, on the contrary, copying the

ducks, glance upwards to the great Giver of all feasts--Grace, I say,

being said, the High Priest opens the banquet by the immemorial ceremony

of the island; that is, dipping his consecrated and consecrating fingers

into the bowl before the blessed beverage circulates. Seeing himself

placed next the Priest, and noting the ceremony, and thinking

himself--being Captain of a ship--as having plain precedence over a

mere island King, especially in the King's own house--the Captain coolly

proceeds to wash his hands in the punchbowl;--taking it I suppose for a

huge finger-glass. "Now," said Queequeg, "what you tink now?--Didn't our

people laugh?"

At last, passage paid, and luggage safe, we stood on board the schooner.

Hoisting sail, it glided down the Acushnet river. On one side, New

Bedford rose in terraces of streets, their ice-covered trees all

glittering in the clear, cold air. Huge hills and mountains of casks on

casks were piled upon her wharves, and side by side the world-wandering

whale ships lay silent and safely moored at last; while from others

came a sound of carpenters and coopers, with blended noises of fires and

forges to melt the pitch, all betokening that new cruises were on the

start; that one most perilous and long voyage ended, only begins a

second; and a second ended, only begins a third, and so on, for ever

and for aye. Such is the endlessness, yea, the intolerableness of all

earthly effort.

Gaining the more open water, the bracing breeze waxed fresh; the little

Moss tossed the quick foam from her bows, as a young colt his snortings.

How I snuffed that Tartar air!--how I spurned that turnpike earth!--that

common highway all over dented with the marks of slavish heels and

hoofs; and turned me to admire the magnanimity of the sea which will

permit no records.

At the same foam-fountain, Queequeg seemed to drink and reel with me.

His dusky nostrils swelled apart; he showed his filed and pointed teeth.

On, on we flew; and our offing gained, the Moss did homage to the

blast; ducked and dived her bows as a slave before the Sultan. Sideways

leaning, we sideways darted; every ropeyarn tingling like a wire; the

two tall masts buckling like Indian canes in land tornadoes. So full of

this reeling scene were we, as we stood by the plunging bowsprit, that

for some time we did not notice the jeering glances of the passengers, a

lubber-like assembly, who marvelled that two fellow beings should be so

companionable; as though a white man were anything more dignified than a

whitewashed negro. But there were some boobies and bumpkins there, who,

by their intense greenness, must have come from the heart and centre of

all verdure. Queequeg caught one of these young saplings mimicking him

behind his back. I thought the bumpkin's hour of doom was come. Dropping

his harpoon, the brawny savage caught him in his arms, and by an almost

miraculous dexterity and strength, sent him high up bodily into the air;

then slightly tapping his stern in mid-somerset, the fellow landed with

bursting lungs upon his feet, while Queequeg, turning his back upon him,

lighted his tomahawk pipe and passed it to me for a puff.

"Capting! Capting!" yelled the bumpkin, running towards that officer;

"Capting, Capting, here's the devil."

"Hallo, \_you\_ sir," cried the Captain, a gaunt rib of the sea, stalking

up to Queequeg, "what in thunder do you mean by that? Don't you know you

might have killed that chap?"

"What him say?" said Queequeg, as he mildly turned to me.

"He say," said I, "that you came near kill-e that man there," pointing

to the still shivering greenhorn.

"Kill-e," cried Queequeg, twisting his tattooed face into an unearthly

expression of disdain, "ah! him bevy small-e fish-e; Queequeg no kill-e

so small-e fish-e; Queequeg kill-e big whale!"

"Look you," roared the Captain, "I'll kill-e YOU, you cannibal, if you

try any more of your tricks aboard here; so mind your eye."

But it so happened just then, that it was high time for the Captain to

mind his own eye. The prodigious strain upon the main-sail had parted

the weather-sheet, and the tremendous boom was now flying from side to

side, completely sweeping the entire after part of the deck. The poor

fellow whom Queequeg had handled so roughly, was swept overboard; all

hands were in a panic; and to attempt snatching at the boom to stay it,

seemed madness. It flew from right to left, and back again, almost

in one ticking of a watch, and every instant seemed on the point of

snapping into splinters. Nothing was done, and nothing seemed capable of

being done; those on deck rushed towards the bows, and stood eyeing the

boom as if it were the lower jaw of an exasperated whale. In the

midst of this consternation, Queequeg dropped deftly to his knees, and

crawling under the path of the boom, whipped hold of a rope, secured one

end to the bulwarks, and then flinging the other like a lasso, caught it

round the boom as it swept over his head, and at the next jerk, the spar

was that way trapped, and all was safe. The schooner was run into the

wind, and while the hands were clearing away the stern boat, Queequeg,

stripped to the waist, darted from the side with a long living arc of

a leap. For three minutes or more he was seen swimming like a dog,

throwing his long arms straight out before him, and by turns revealing

his brawny shoulders through the freezing foam. I looked at the grand

and glorious fellow, but saw no one to be saved. The greenhorn had gone

down. Shooting himself perpendicularly from the water, Queequeg, now

took an instant's glance around him, and seeming to see just how matters

were, dived down and disappeared. A few minutes more, and he rose again,

one arm still striking out, and with the other dragging a lifeless form.

The boat soon picked them up. The poor bumpkin was restored. All hands

voted Queequeg a noble trump; the captain begged his pardon. From that

hour I clove to Queequeg like a barnacle; yea, till poor Queequeg took

his last long dive.

Was there ever such unconsciousness? He did not seem to think that he at

all deserved a medal from the Humane and Magnanimous Societies. He only

asked for water--fresh water--something to wipe the brine off; that

done, he put on dry clothes, lighted his pipe, and leaning against the

bulwarks, and mildly eyeing those around him, seemed to be saying

to himself--"It's a mutual, joint-stock world, in all meridians. We

cannibals must help these Christians."

CHAPTER 14. Nantucket.

Nothing more happened on the passage worthy the mentioning; so, after a

fine run, we safely arrived in Nantucket.

Nantucket! Take out your map and look at it. See what a real corner of

the world it occupies; how it stands there, away off shore, more lonely

than the Eddystone lighthouse. Look at it--a mere hillock, and elbow of

sand; all beach, without a background. There is more sand there than

you would use in twenty years as a substitute for blotting paper. Some

gamesome wights will tell you that they have to plant weeds there, they

don't grow naturally; that they import Canada thistles; that they have

to send beyond seas for a spile to stop a leak in an oil cask; that

pieces of wood in Nantucket are carried about like bits of the true

cross in Rome; that people there plant toadstools before their houses,

to get under the shade in summer time; that one blade of grass makes an

oasis, three blades in a day's walk a prairie; that they wear quicksand

shoes, something like Laplander snow-shoes; that they are so shut up,

belted about, every way inclosed, surrounded, and made an utter island

of by the ocean, that to their very chairs and tables small clams will

sometimes be found adhering, as to the backs of sea turtles. But these

extravaganzas only show that Nantucket is no Illinois.

Look now at the wondrous traditional story of how this island was

settled by the red-men. Thus goes the legend. In olden times an eagle

swooped down upon the New England coast, and carried off an infant

Indian in his talons. With loud lament the parents saw their child borne

out of sight over the wide waters. They resolved to follow in the same

direction. Setting out in their canoes, after a perilous passage they

discovered the island, and there they found an empty ivory casket,--the

poor little Indian's skeleton.

What wonder, then, that these Nantucketers, born on a beach, should take

to the sea for a livelihood! They first caught crabs and quohogs in

the sand; grown bolder, they waded out with nets for mackerel; more

experienced, they pushed off in boats and captured cod; and at last,

launching a navy of great ships on the sea, explored this watery world;

put an incessant belt of circumnavigations round it; peeped in

at Behring's Straits; and in all seasons and all oceans declared

everlasting war with the mightiest animated mass that has survived the

flood; most monstrous and most mountainous! That Himmalehan, salt-sea

Mastodon, clothed with such portentousness of unconscious power, that

his very panics are more to be dreaded than his most fearless and

malicious assaults!

And thus have these naked Nantucketers, these sea hermits, issuing from

their ant-hill in the sea, overrun and conquered the watery world like

so many Alexanders; parcelling out among them the Atlantic, Pacific, and

Indian oceans, as the three pirate powers did Poland. Let America add

Mexico to Texas, and pile Cuba upon Canada; let the English overswarm

all India, and hang out their blazing banner from the sun; two thirds

of this terraqueous globe are the Nantucketer's. For the sea is his; he

owns it, as Emperors own empires; other seamen having but a right of

way through it. Merchant ships are but extension bridges; armed ones but

floating forts; even pirates and privateers, though following the sea

as highwaymen the road, they but plunder other ships, other fragments of

the land like themselves, without seeking to draw their living from the

bottomless deep itself. The Nantucketer, he alone resides and riots on

the sea; he alone, in Bible language, goes down to it in ships; to and

fro ploughing it as his own special plantation. THERE is his home; THERE

lies his business, which a Noah's flood would not interrupt, though it

overwhelmed all the millions in China. He lives on the sea, as prairie

cocks in the prairie; he hides among the waves, he climbs them as

chamois hunters climb the Alps. For years he knows not the land; so

that when he comes to it at last, it smells like another world, more

strangely than the moon would to an Earthsman. With the landless gull,

that at sunset folds her wings and is rocked to sleep between billows;

so at nightfall, the Nantucketer, out of sight of land, furls his sails,

and lays him to his rest, while under his very pillow rush herds of

walruses and whales.

CHAPTER 15. Chowder.

It was quite late in the evening when the little Moss came snugly

to anchor, and Queequeg and I went ashore; so we could attend to no

business that day, at least none but a supper and a bed. The landlord of

the Spouter-Inn had recommended us to his cousin Hosea Hussey of the

Try Pots, whom he asserted to be the proprietor of one of the best kept

hotels in all Nantucket, and moreover he had assured us that Cousin

Hosea, as he called him, was famous for his chowders. In short, he

plainly hinted that we could not possibly do better than try pot-luck at

the Try Pots. But the directions he had given us about keeping a yellow

warehouse on our starboard hand till we opened a white church to the

larboard, and then keeping that on the larboard hand till we made a

corner three points to the starboard, and that done, then ask the first

man we met where the place was: these crooked directions of his very

much puzzled us at first, especially as, at the outset, Queequeg

insisted that the yellow warehouse--our first point of departure--must

be left on the larboard hand, whereas I had understood Peter Coffin to

say it was on the starboard. However, by dint of beating about a little

in the dark, and now and then knocking up a peaceable inhabitant

to inquire the way, we at last came to something which there was no

mistaking.

Two enormous wooden pots painted black, and suspended by asses' ears,

swung from the cross-trees of an old top-mast, planted in front of an

old doorway. The horns of the cross-trees were sawed off on the other

side, so that this old top-mast looked not a little like a gallows.

Perhaps I was over sensitive to such impressions at the time, but I

could not help staring at this gallows with a vague misgiving. A sort of

crick was in my neck as I gazed up to the two remaining horns; yes, TWO

of them, one for Queequeg, and one for me. It's ominous, thinks I. A

Coffin my Innkeeper upon landing in my first whaling port; tombstones

staring at me in the whalemen's chapel; and here a gallows! and a pair

of prodigious black pots too! Are these last throwing out oblique hints

touching Tophet?

I was called from these reflections by the sight of a freckled woman

with yellow hair and a yellow gown, standing in the porch of the inn,

under a dull red lamp swinging there, that looked much like an injured

eye, and carrying on a brisk scolding with a man in a purple woollen

shirt.

"Get along with ye," said she to the man, "or I'll be combing ye!"

"Come on, Queequeg," said I, "all right. There's Mrs. Hussey."

And so it turned out; Mr. Hosea Hussey being from home, but leaving

Mrs. Hussey entirely competent to attend to all his affairs. Upon

making known our desires for a supper and a bed, Mrs. Hussey, postponing

further scolding for the present, ushered us into a little room, and

seating us at a table spread with the relics of a recently concluded

repast, turned round to us and said--"Clam or Cod?"

"What's that about Cods, ma'am?" said I, with much politeness.

"Clam or Cod?" she repeated.

"A clam for supper? a cold clam; is THAT what you mean, Mrs. Hussey?"

says I, "but that's a rather cold and clammy reception in the winter

time, ain't it, Mrs. Hussey?"

But being in a great hurry to resume scolding the man in the purple

Shirt, who was waiting for it in the entry, and seeming to hear nothing

but the word "clam," Mrs. Hussey hurried towards an open door leading to

the kitchen, and bawling out "clam for two," disappeared.

"Queequeg," said I, "do you think that we can make out a supper for us

both on one clam?"

However, a warm savory steam from the kitchen served to belie the

apparently cheerless prospect before us. But when that smoking chowder

came in, the mystery was delightfully explained. Oh, sweet friends!

hearken to me. It was made of small juicy clams, scarcely bigger than

hazel nuts, mixed with pounded ship biscuit, and salted pork cut up into

little flakes; the whole enriched with butter, and plentifully seasoned

with pepper and salt. Our appetites being sharpened by the frosty

voyage, and in particular, Queequeg seeing his favourite fishing food

before him, and the chowder being surpassingly excellent, we despatched

it with great expedition: when leaning back a moment and bethinking

me of Mrs. Hussey's clam and cod announcement, I thought I would try

a little experiment. Stepping to the kitchen door, I uttered the word

"cod" with great emphasis, and resumed my seat. In a few moments the

savoury steam came forth again, but with a different flavor, and in good

time a fine cod-chowder was placed before us.

We resumed business; and while plying our spoons in the bowl, thinks I

to myself, I wonder now if this here has any effect on the head?

What's that stultifying saying about chowder-headed people? "But look,

Queequeg, ain't that a live eel in your bowl? Where's your harpoon?"

Fishiest of all fishy places was the Try Pots, which well deserved

its name; for the pots there were always boiling chowders. Chowder for

breakfast, and chowder for dinner, and chowder for supper, till you

began to look for fish-bones coming through your clothes. The area

before the house was paved with clam-shells. Mrs. Hussey wore a polished

necklace of codfish vertebra; and Hosea Hussey had his account books

bound in superior old shark-skin. There was a fishy flavor to the milk,

too, which I could not at all account for, till one morning happening

to take a stroll along the beach among some fishermen's boats, I saw

Hosea's brindled cow feeding on fish remnants, and marching along the

sand with each foot in a cod's decapitated head, looking very slip-shod,

I assure ye.

Supper concluded, we received a lamp, and directions from Mrs. Hussey

concerning the nearest way to bed; but, as Queequeg was about to precede

me up the stairs, the lady reached forth her arm, and demanded his

harpoon; she allowed no harpoon in her chambers. "Why not?" said I;

"every true whaleman sleeps with his harpoon--but why not?" "Because

it's dangerous," says she. "Ever since young Stiggs coming from that

unfort'nt v'y'ge of his, when he was gone four years and a half, with

only three barrels of \_ile\_, was found dead in my first floor back, with

his harpoon in his side; ever since then I allow no boarders to take

sich dangerous weepons in their rooms at night. So, Mr. Queequeg" (for

she had learned his name), "I will just take this here iron, and keep

it for you till morning. But the chowder; clam or cod to-morrow for

breakfast, men?"

"Both," says I; "and let's have a couple of smoked herring by way of

variety."

CHAPTER 16. The Ship.

In bed we concocted our plans for the morrow. But to my surprise and

no small concern, Queequeg now gave me to understand, that he had been

diligently consulting Yojo--the name of his black little god--and Yojo

had told him two or three times over, and strongly insisted upon it

everyway, that instead of our going together among the whaling-fleet in

harbor, and in concert selecting our craft; instead of this, I say, Yojo

earnestly enjoined that the selection of the ship should rest wholly

with me, inasmuch as Yojo purposed befriending us; and, in order to

do so, had already pitched upon a vessel, which, if left to myself, I,

Ishmael, should infallibly light upon, for all the world as though it

had turned out by chance; and in that vessel I must immediately ship

myself, for the present irrespective of Queequeg.

I have forgotten to mention that, in many things, Queequeg placed great

confidence in the excellence of Yojo's judgment and surprising forecast

of things; and cherished Yojo with considerable esteem, as a rather good

sort of god, who perhaps meant well enough upon the whole, but in all

cases did not succeed in his benevolent designs.

Now, this plan of Queequeg's, or rather Yojo's, touching the selection

of our craft; I did not like that plan at all. I had not a little relied

upon Queequeg's sagacity to point out the whaler best fitted to carry

us and our fortunes securely. But as all my remonstrances produced

no effect upon Queequeg, I was obliged to acquiesce; and accordingly

prepared to set about this business with a determined rushing sort

of energy and vigor, that should quickly settle that trifling little

affair. Next morning early, leaving Queequeg shut up with Yojo in our

little bedroom--for it seemed that it was some sort of Lent or Ramadan,

or day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer with Queequeg and Yojo that

day; HOW it was I never could find out, for, though I applied myself

to it several times, I never could master his liturgies and XXXIX

Articles--leaving Queequeg, then, fasting on his tomahawk pipe, and Yojo

warming himself at his sacrificial fire of shavings, I sallied out among

the shipping. After much prolonged sauntering and many random inquiries,

I learnt that there were three ships up for three-years' voyages--The

Devil-dam, the Tit-bit, and the Pequod. DEVIL-DAM, I do not know the

origin of; TIT-BIT is obvious; PEQUOD, you will no doubt remember, was

the name of a celebrated tribe of Massachusetts Indians; now extinct

as the ancient Medes. I peered and pryed about the Devil-dam; from her,

hopped over to the Tit-bit; and finally, going on board the Pequod,

looked around her for a moment, and then decided that this was the very

ship for us.

You may have seen many a quaint craft in your day, for aught I

know;--square-toed luggers; mountainous Japanese junks; butter-box

galliots, and what not; but take my word for it, you never saw such a

rare old craft as this same rare old Pequod. She was a ship of the old

school, rather small if anything; with an old-fashioned claw-footed look

about her. Long seasoned and weather-stained in the typhoons and calms

of all four oceans, her old hull's complexion was darkened like a French

grenadier's, who has alike fought in Egypt and Siberia. Her venerable

bows looked bearded. Her masts--cut somewhere on the coast of Japan,

where her original ones were lost overboard in a gale--her masts stood

stiffly up like the spines of the three old kings of Cologne. Her

ancient decks were worn and wrinkled, like the pilgrim-worshipped

flag-stone in Canterbury Cathedral where Becket bled. But to all these

her old antiquities, were added new and marvellous features, pertaining

to the wild business that for more than half a century she had followed.

Old Captain Peleg, many years her chief-mate, before he commanded

another vessel of his own, and now a retired seaman, and one of the

principal owners of the Pequod,--this old Peleg, during the term of his

chief-mateship, had built upon her original grotesqueness, and inlaid

it, all over, with a quaintness both of material and device, unmatched

by anything except it be Thorkill-Hake's carved buckler or bedstead. She

was apparelled like any barbaric Ethiopian emperor, his neck heavy with

pendants of polished ivory. She was a thing of trophies. A cannibal of

a craft, tricking herself forth in the chased bones of her enemies. All

round, her unpanelled, open bulwarks were garnished like one continuous

jaw, with the long sharp teeth of the sperm whale, inserted there for

pins, to fasten her old hempen thews and tendons to. Those thews ran not

through base blocks of land wood, but deftly travelled over sheaves of

sea-ivory. Scorning a turnstile wheel at her reverend helm, she sported

there a tiller; and that tiller was in one mass, curiously carved

from the long narrow lower jaw of her hereditary foe. The helmsman who

steered by that tiller in a tempest, felt like the Tartar, when he holds

back his fiery steed by clutching its jaw. A noble craft, but somehow a

most melancholy! All noble things are touched with that.

Now when I looked about the quarter-deck, for some one having authority,

in order to propose myself as a candidate for the voyage, at first I saw

nobody; but I could not well overlook a strange sort of tent, or

rather wigwam, pitched a little behind the main-mast. It seemed only

a temporary erection used in port. It was of a conical shape, some ten

feet high; consisting of the long, huge slabs of limber black bone taken

from the middle and highest part of the jaws of the right-whale.

Planted with their broad ends on the deck, a circle of these slabs laced

together, mutually sloped towards each other, and at the apex united in

a tufted point, where the loose hairy fibres waved to and fro like the

top-knot on some old Pottowottamie Sachem's head. A triangular opening

faced towards the bows of the ship, so that the insider commanded a

complete view forward.

And half concealed in this queer tenement, I at length found one who

by his aspect seemed to have authority; and who, it being noon, and

the ship's work suspended, was now enjoying respite from the burden of

command. He was seated on an old-fashioned oaken chair, wriggling all

over with curious carving; and the bottom of which was formed of a

stout interlacing of the same elastic stuff of which the wigwam was

constructed.

There was nothing so very particular, perhaps, about the appearance of

the elderly man I saw; he was brown and brawny, like most old seamen,

and heavily rolled up in blue pilot-cloth, cut in the Quaker style;

only there was a fine and almost microscopic net-work of the minutest

wrinkles interlacing round his eyes, which must have arisen from

his continual sailings in many hard gales, and always looking to

windward;--for this causes the muscles about the eyes to become pursed

together. Such eye-wrinkles are very effectual in a scowl.

"Is this the Captain of the Pequod?" said I, advancing to the door of

the tent.

"Supposing it be the captain of the Pequod, what dost thou want of him?"

he demanded.

"I was thinking of shipping."

"Thou wast, wast thou? I see thou art no Nantucketer--ever been in a

stove boat?"

"No, Sir, I never have."

"Dost know nothing at all about whaling, I dare say--eh?

"Nothing, Sir; but I have no doubt I shall soon learn. I've been several

voyages in the merchant service, and I think that--"

"Merchant service be damned. Talk not that lingo to me. Dost see that

leg?--I'll take that leg away from thy stern, if ever thou talkest of

the marchant service to me again. Marchant service indeed! I suppose now

ye feel considerable proud of having served in those marchant ships.

But flukes! man, what makes thee want to go a whaling, eh?--it looks

a little suspicious, don't it, eh?--Hast not been a pirate, hast

thou?--Didst not rob thy last Captain, didst thou?--Dost not think of

murdering the officers when thou gettest to sea?"

I protested my innocence of these things. I saw that under the mask

of these half humorous innuendoes, this old seaman, as an insulated

Quakerish Nantucketer, was full of his insular prejudices, and rather

distrustful of all aliens, unless they hailed from Cape Cod or the

Vineyard.

"But what takes thee a-whaling? I want to know that before I think of

shipping ye."

"Well, sir, I want to see what whaling is. I want to see the world."

"Want to see what whaling is, eh? Have ye clapped eye on Captain Ahab?"

"Who is Captain Ahab, sir?"

"Aye, aye, I thought so. Captain Ahab is the Captain of this ship."

"I am mistaken then. I thought I was speaking to the Captain himself."

"Thou art speaking to Captain Peleg--that's who ye are speaking to,

young man. It belongs to me and Captain Bildad to see the Pequod fitted

out for the voyage, and supplied with all her needs, including crew. We

are part owners and agents. But as I was going to say, if thou wantest

to know what whaling is, as thou tellest ye do, I can put ye in a way of

finding it out before ye bind yourself to it, past backing out. Clap

eye on Captain Ahab, young man, and thou wilt find that he has only one

leg."

"What do you mean, sir? Was the other one lost by a whale?"

"Lost by a whale! Young man, come nearer to me: it was devoured,

chewed up, crunched by the monstrousest parmacetty that ever chipped a

boat!--ah, ah!"

I was a little alarmed by his energy, perhaps also a little touched at

the hearty grief in his concluding exclamation, but said as calmly as I

could, "What you say is no doubt true enough, sir; but how could I know

there was any peculiar ferocity in that particular whale, though indeed

I might have inferred as much from the simple fact of the accident."

"Look ye now, young man, thy lungs are a sort of soft, d'ye see; thou

dost not talk shark a bit. SURE, ye've been to sea before now; sure of

that?"

"Sir," said I, "I thought I told you that I had been four voyages in the

merchant--"

"Hard down out of that! Mind what I said about the marchant

service--don't aggravate me--I won't have it. But let us understand each

other. I have given thee a hint about what whaling is; do ye yet feel

inclined for it?"

"I do, sir."

"Very good. Now, art thou the man to pitch a harpoon down a live whale's

throat, and then jump after it? Answer, quick!"

"I am, sir, if it should be positively indispensable to do so; not to be

got rid of, that is; which I don't take to be the fact."

"Good again. Now then, thou not only wantest to go a-whaling, to find

out by experience what whaling is, but ye also want to go in order to

see the world? Was not that what ye said? I thought so. Well then, just

step forward there, and take a peep over the weather-bow, and then back

to me and tell me what ye see there."

For a moment I stood a little puzzled by this curious request, not

knowing exactly how to take it, whether humorously or in earnest. But

concentrating all his crow's feet into one scowl, Captain Peleg started

me on the errand.

Going forward and glancing over the weather bow, I perceived that the

ship swinging to her anchor with the flood-tide, was now obliquely

pointing towards the open ocean. The prospect was unlimited, but

exceedingly monotonous and forbidding; not the slightest variety that I

could see.

"Well, what's the report?" said Peleg when I came back; "what did ye

see?"

"Not much," I replied--"nothing but water; considerable horizon though,

and there's a squall coming up, I think."

"Well, what does thou think then of seeing the world? Do ye wish to go

round Cape Horn to see any more of it, eh? Can't ye see the world where

you stand?"

I was a little staggered, but go a-whaling I must, and I would; and the

Pequod was as good a ship as any--I thought the best--and all this I now

repeated to Peleg. Seeing me so determined, he expressed his willingness

to ship me.

"And thou mayest as well sign the papers right off," he added--"come

along with ye." And so saying, he led the way below deck into the cabin.

Seated on the transom was what seemed to me a most uncommon and

surprising figure. It turned out to be Captain Bildad, who along with

Captain Peleg was one of the largest owners of the vessel; the other

shares, as is sometimes the case in these ports, being held by a crowd

of old annuitants; widows, fatherless children, and chancery wards; each

owning about the value of a timber head, or a foot of plank, or a nail

or two in the ship. People in Nantucket invest their money in whaling

vessels, the same way that you do yours in approved state stocks

bringing in good interest.

Now, Bildad, like Peleg, and indeed many other Nantucketers, was a

Quaker, the island having been originally settled by that sect; and to

this day its inhabitants in general retain in an uncommon measure the

peculiarities of the Quaker, only variously and anomalously modified

by things altogether alien and heterogeneous. For some of these same

Quakers are the most sanguinary of all sailors and whale-hunters. They

are fighting Quakers; they are Quakers with a vengeance.

So that there are instances among them of men, who, named with Scripture

names--a singularly common fashion on the island--and in childhood

naturally imbibing the stately dramatic thee and thou of the Quaker

idiom; still, from the audacious, daring, and boundless adventure

of their subsequent lives, strangely blend with these unoutgrown

peculiarities, a thousand bold dashes of character, not unworthy a

Scandinavian sea-king, or a poetical Pagan Roman. And when these things

unite in a man of greatly superior natural force, with a globular brain

and a ponderous heart; who has also by the stillness and seclusion

of many long night-watches in the remotest waters, and beneath

constellations never seen here at the north, been led to think

untraditionally and independently; receiving all nature's sweet or

savage impressions fresh from her own virgin voluntary and confiding

breast, and thereby chiefly, but with some help from accidental

advantages, to learn a bold and nervous lofty language--that man makes

one in a whole nation's census--a mighty pageant creature, formed for

noble tragedies. Nor will it at all detract from him, dramatically

regarded, if either by birth or other circumstances, he have what seems

a half wilful overruling morbidness at the bottom of his nature. For all

men tragically great are made so through a certain morbidness. Be sure

of this, O young ambition, all mortal greatness is but disease. But,

as yet we have not to do with such an one, but with quite another; and

still a man, who, if indeed peculiar, it only results again from another

phase of the Quaker, modified by individual circumstances.

Like Captain Peleg, Captain Bildad was a well-to-do, retired whaleman.

But unlike Captain Peleg--who cared not a rush for what are called

serious things, and indeed deemed those self-same serious things the

veriest of all trifles--Captain Bildad had not only been originally

educated according to the strictest sect of Nantucket Quakerism, but all

his subsequent ocean life, and the sight of many unclad, lovely island

creatures, round the Horn--all that had not moved this native born

Quaker one single jot, had not so much as altered one angle of his

vest. Still, for all this immutableness, was there some lack of

common consistency about worthy Captain Peleg. Though refusing, from

conscientious scruples, to bear arms against land invaders, yet himself

had illimitably invaded the Atlantic and Pacific; and though a sworn foe

to human bloodshed, yet had he in his straight-bodied coat, spilled tuns

upon tuns of leviathan gore. How now in the contemplative evening of his

days, the pious Bildad reconciled these things in the reminiscence, I do

not know; but it did not seem to concern him much, and very probably

he had long since come to the sage and sensible conclusion that a man's

religion is one thing, and this practical world quite another. This

world pays dividends. Rising from a little cabin-boy in short clothes

of the drabbest drab, to a harpooneer in a broad shad-bellied waistcoat;

from that becoming boat-header, chief-mate, and captain, and finally a

ship owner; Bildad, as I hinted before, had concluded his adventurous

career by wholly retiring from active life at the goodly age of

sixty, and dedicating his remaining days to the quiet receiving of his

well-earned income.

Now, Bildad, I am sorry to say, had the reputation of being an

incorrigible old hunks, and in his sea-going days, a bitter, hard

task-master. They told me in Nantucket, though it certainly seems a

curious story, that when he sailed the old Categut whaleman, his crew,

upon arriving home, were mostly all carried ashore to the hospital, sore

exhausted and worn out. For a pious man, especially for a Quaker, he was

certainly rather hard-hearted, to say the least. He never used to swear,

though, at his men, they said; but somehow he got an inordinate

quantity of cruel, unmitigated hard work out of them. When Bildad was a

chief-mate, to have his drab-coloured eye intently looking at you, made

you feel completely nervous, till you could clutch something--a hammer

or a marling-spike, and go to work like mad, at something or other,

never mind what. Indolence and idleness perished before him. His own

person was the exact embodiment of his utilitarian character. On his

long, gaunt body, he carried no spare flesh, no superfluous beard,

his chin having a soft, economical nap to it, like the worn nap of his

broad-brimmed hat.

Such, then, was the person that I saw seated on the transom when I

followed Captain Peleg down into the cabin. The space between the decks

was small; and there, bolt-upright, sat old Bildad, who always sat so,

and never leaned, and this to save his coat tails. His broad-brim was

placed beside him; his legs were stiffly crossed; his drab vesture was

buttoned up to his chin; and spectacles on nose, he seemed absorbed in

reading from a ponderous volume.

"Bildad," cried Captain Peleg, "at it again, Bildad, eh? Ye have been

studying those Scriptures, now, for the last thirty years, to my certain

knowledge. How far ye got, Bildad?"

As if long habituated to such profane talk from his old shipmate,

Bildad, without noticing his present irreverence, quietly looked up, and

seeing me, glanced again inquiringly towards Peleg.

"He says he's our man, Bildad," said Peleg, "he wants to ship."

"Dost thee?" said Bildad, in a hollow tone, and turning round to me.

"I dost," said I unconsciously, he was so intense a Quaker.

"What do ye think of him, Bildad?" said Peleg.

"He'll do," said Bildad, eyeing me, and then went on spelling away at

his book in a mumbling tone quite audible.

I thought him the queerest old Quaker I ever saw, especially as Peleg,

his friend and old shipmate, seemed such a blusterer. But I said

nothing, only looking round me sharply. Peleg now threw open a chest,

and drawing forth the ship's articles, placed pen and ink before him,

and seated himself at a little table. I began to think it was high time

to settle with myself at what terms I would be willing to engage for the

voyage. I was already aware that in the whaling business they paid no

wages; but all hands, including the captain, received certain shares of

the profits called lays, and that these lays were proportioned to the

degree of importance pertaining to the respective duties of the ship's

company. I was also aware that being a green hand at whaling, my own

lay would not be very large; but considering that I was used to the sea,

could steer a ship, splice a rope, and all that, I made no doubt that

from all I had heard I should be offered at least the 275th lay--that

is, the 275th part of the clear net proceeds of the voyage, whatever

that might eventually amount to. And though the 275th lay was what they

call a rather LONG LAY, yet it was better than nothing; and if we had a

lucky voyage, might pretty nearly pay for the clothing I would wear out

on it, not to speak of my three years' beef and board, for which I would

not have to pay one stiver.

It might be thought that this was a poor way to accumulate a princely

fortune--and so it was, a very poor way indeed. But I am one of those

that never take on about princely fortunes, and am quite content if the

world is ready to board and lodge me, while I am putting up at this grim

sign of the Thunder Cloud. Upon the whole, I thought that the 275th lay

would be about the fair thing, but would not have been surprised had I

been offered the 200th, considering I was of a broad-shouldered make.

But one thing, nevertheless, that made me a little distrustful about

receiving a generous share of the profits was this: Ashore, I had heard

something of both Captain Peleg and his unaccountable old crony Bildad;

how that they being the principal proprietors of the Pequod, therefore

the other and more inconsiderable and scattered owners, left nearly the

whole management of the ship's affairs to these two. And I did not know

but what the stingy old Bildad might have a mighty deal to say about

shipping hands, especially as I now found him on board the Pequod,

quite at home there in the cabin, and reading his Bible as if at his

own fireside. Now while Peleg was vainly trying to mend a pen with his

jack-knife, old Bildad, to my no small surprise, considering that he was

such an interested party in these proceedings; Bildad never heeded

us, but went on mumbling to himself out of his book, "LAY not up for

yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth--"

"Well, Captain Bildad," interrupted Peleg, "what d'ye say, what lay

shall we give this young man?"

"Thou knowest best," was the sepulchral reply, "the seven hundred and

seventy-seventh wouldn't be too much, would it?--'where moth and rust do

corrupt, but LAY--'"

LAY, indeed, thought I, and such a lay! the seven hundred and

seventy-seventh! Well, old Bildad, you are determined that I, for one,

shall not LAY up many LAYS here below, where moth and rust do corrupt.

It was an exceedingly LONG LAY that, indeed; and though from the

magnitude of the figure it might at first deceive a landsman, yet

the slightest consideration will show that though seven hundred and

seventy-seven is a pretty large number, yet, when you come to make

a TEENTH of it, you will then see, I say, that the seven hundred and

seventy-seventh part of a farthing is a good deal less than seven

hundred and seventy-seven gold doubloons; and so I thought at the time.

"Why, blast your eyes, Bildad," cried Peleg, "thou dost not want to

swindle this young man! he must have more than that."

"Seven hundred and seventy-seventh," again said Bildad, without lifting

his eyes; and then went on mumbling--"for where your treasure is, there

will your heart be also."

"I am going to put him down for the three hundredth," said Peleg, "do ye

hear that, Bildad! The three hundredth lay, I say."

Bildad laid down his book, and turning solemnly towards him said,

"Captain Peleg, thou hast a generous heart; but thou must consider the

duty thou owest to the other owners of this ship--widows and orphans,

many of them--and that if we too abundantly reward the labors of this

young man, we may be taking the bread from those widows and those

orphans. The seven hundred and seventy-seventh lay, Captain Peleg."

"Thou Bildad!" roared Peleg, starting up and clattering about the

cabin. "Blast ye, Captain Bildad, if I had followed thy advice in these

matters, I would afore now had a conscience to lug about that would be

heavy enough to founder the largest ship that ever sailed round Cape

Horn."

"Captain Peleg," said Bildad steadily, "thy conscience may be drawing

ten inches of water, or ten fathoms, I can't tell; but as thou art still

an impenitent man, Captain Peleg, I greatly fear lest thy conscience be

but a leaky one; and will in the end sink thee foundering down to the

fiery pit, Captain Peleg."

"Fiery pit! fiery pit! ye insult me, man; past all natural bearing, ye

insult me. It's an all-fired outrage to tell any human creature that

he's bound to hell. Flukes and flames! Bildad, say that again to me, and

start my soul-bolts, but I'll--I'll--yes, I'll swallow a live goat with

all his hair and horns on. Out of the cabin, ye canting, drab-coloured

son of a wooden gun--a straight wake with ye!"

As he thundered out this he made a rush at Bildad, but with a marvellous

oblique, sliding celerity, Bildad for that time eluded him.

Alarmed at this terrible outburst between the two principal and

responsible owners of the ship, and feeling half a mind to give up

all idea of sailing in a vessel so questionably owned and temporarily

commanded, I stepped aside from the door to give egress to Bildad, who,

I made no doubt, was all eagerness to vanish from before the awakened

wrath of Peleg. But to my astonishment, he sat down again on the

transom very quietly, and seemed to have not the slightest intention of

withdrawing. He seemed quite used to impenitent Peleg and his ways. As

for Peleg, after letting off his rage as he had, there seemed no more

left in him, and he, too, sat down like a lamb, though he twitched a

little as if still nervously agitated. "Whew!" he whistled at last--"the

squall's gone off to leeward, I think. Bildad, thou used to be good at

sharpening a lance, mend that pen, will ye. My jack-knife here needs

the grindstone. That's he; thank ye, Bildad. Now then, my young man,

Ishmael's thy name, didn't ye say? Well then, down ye go here, Ishmael,

for the three hundredth lay."

"Captain Peleg," said I, "I have a friend with me who wants to ship

too--shall I bring him down to-morrow?"

"To be sure," said Peleg. "Fetch him along, and we'll look at him."

"What lay does he want?" groaned Bildad, glancing up from the book in

which he had again been burying himself.

"Oh! never thee mind about that, Bildad," said Peleg. "Has he ever

whaled it any?" turning to me.

"Killed more whales than I can count, Captain Peleg."

"Well, bring him along then."

And, after signing the papers, off I went; nothing doubting but that I

had done a good morning's work, and that the Pequod was the identical

ship that Yojo had provided to carry Queequeg and me round the Cape.

But I had not proceeded far, when I began to bethink me that the Captain

with whom I was to sail yet remained unseen by me; though, indeed, in

many cases, a whale-ship will be completely fitted out, and receive all

her crew on board, ere the captain makes himself visible by arriving

to take command; for sometimes these voyages are so prolonged, and the

shore intervals at home so exceedingly brief, that if the captain have

a family, or any absorbing concernment of that sort, he does not trouble

himself much about his ship in port, but leaves her to the owners till

all is ready for sea. However, it is always as well to have a look at

him before irrevocably committing yourself into his hands. Turning back

I accosted Captain Peleg, inquiring where Captain Ahab was to be found.

"And what dost thou want of Captain Ahab? It's all right enough; thou

art shipped."

"Yes, but I should like to see him."

"But I don't think thou wilt be able to at present. I don't know exactly

what's the matter with him; but he keeps close inside the house; a sort

of sick, and yet he don't look so. In fact, he ain't sick; but no, he

isn't well either. Any how, young man, he won't always see me, so I

don't suppose he will thee. He's a queer man, Captain Ahab--so some

think--but a good one. Oh, thou'lt like him well enough; no fear, no

fear. He's a grand, ungodly, god-like man, Captain Ahab; doesn't speak

much; but, when he does speak, then you may well listen. Mark ye, be

forewarned; Ahab's above the common; Ahab's been in colleges, as well as

'mong the cannibals; been used to deeper wonders than the waves; fixed

his fiery lance in mightier, stranger foes than whales. His lance!

aye, the keenest and the surest that out of all our isle! Oh! he ain't

Captain Bildad; no, and he ain't Captain Peleg; HE'S AHAB, boy; and Ahab

of old, thou knowest, was a crowned king!"

"And a very vile one. When that wicked king was slain, the dogs, did

they not lick his blood?"

"Come hither to me--hither, hither," said Peleg, with a significance in

his eye that almost startled me. "Look ye, lad; never say that on board

the Pequod. Never say it anywhere. Captain Ahab did not name himself.

'Twas a foolish, ignorant whim of his crazy, widowed mother, who died

when he was only a twelvemonth old. And yet the old squaw Tistig, at

Gayhead, said that the name would somehow prove prophetic. And, perhaps,

other fools like her may tell thee the same. I wish to warn thee. It's a

lie. I know Captain Ahab well; I've sailed with him as mate years ago;

I know what he is--a good man--not a pious, good man, like Bildad, but

a swearing good man--something like me--only there's a good deal more of

him. Aye, aye, I know that he was never very jolly; and I know that on

the passage home, he was a little out of his mind for a spell; but it

was the sharp shooting pains in his bleeding stump that brought that

about, as any one might see. I know, too, that ever since he lost

his leg last voyage by that accursed whale, he's been a kind of

moody--desperate moody, and savage sometimes; but that will all pass

off. And once for all, let me tell thee and assure thee, young man, it's

better to sail with a moody good captain than a laughing bad one. So

good-bye to thee--and wrong not Captain Ahab, because he happens to

have a wicked name. Besides, my boy, he has a wife--not three voyages

wedded--a sweet, resigned girl. Think of that; by that sweet girl that

old man has a child: hold ye then there can be any utter, hopeless

harm in Ahab? No, no, my lad; stricken, blasted, if he be, Ahab has his

humanities!"

As I walked away, I was full of thoughtfulness; what had been

incidentally revealed to me of Captain Ahab, filled me with a certain

wild vagueness of painfulness concerning him. And somehow, at the time,

I felt a sympathy and a sorrow for him, but for I don't know what,

unless it was the cruel loss of his leg. And yet I also felt a strange

awe of him; but that sort of awe, which I cannot at all describe, was

not exactly awe; I do not know what it was. But I felt it; and it did

not disincline me towards him; though I felt impatience at what seemed

like mystery in him, so imperfectly as he was known to me then. However,

my thoughts were at length carried in other directions, so that for the

present dark Ahab slipped my mind.

CHAPTER 17. The Ramadan.

As Queequeg's Ramadan, or Fasting and Humiliation, was to continue all

day, I did not choose to disturb him till towards night-fall; for I

cherish the greatest respect towards everybody's religious obligations,

never mind how comical, and could not find it in my heart to undervalue

even a congregation of ants worshipping a toad-stool; or those other

creatures in certain parts of our earth, who with a degree of footmanism

quite unprecedented in other planets, bow down before the torso of

a deceased landed proprietor merely on account of the inordinate

possessions yet owned and rented in his name.

I say, we good Presbyterian Christians should be charitable in these

things, and not fancy ourselves so vastly superior to other mortals,

pagans and what not, because of their half-crazy conceits on these

subjects. There was Queequeg, now, certainly entertaining the most

absurd notions about Yojo and his Ramadan;--but what of that? Queequeg

thought he knew what he was about, I suppose; he seemed to be content;

and there let him rest. All our arguing with him would not avail; let

him be, I say: and Heaven have mercy on us all--Presbyterians and Pagans

alike--for we are all somehow dreadfully cracked about the head, and

sadly need mending.

Towards evening, when I felt assured that all his performances and

rituals must be over, I went up to his room and knocked at the door; but

no answer. I tried to open it, but it was fastened inside. "Queequeg,"

said I softly through the key-hole:--all silent. "I say, Queequeg! why

don't you speak? It's I--Ishmael." But all remained still as before. I

began to grow alarmed. I had allowed him such abundant time; I thought

he might have had an apoplectic fit. I looked through the key-hole; but

the door opening into an odd corner of the room, the key-hole prospect

was but a crooked and sinister one. I could only see part of the

foot-board of the bed and a line of the wall, but nothing more. I

was surprised to behold resting against the wall the wooden shaft of

Queequeg's harpoon, which the landlady the evening previous had taken

from him, before our mounting to the chamber. That's strange, thought I;

but at any rate, since the harpoon stands yonder, and he seldom or

never goes abroad without it, therefore he must be inside here, and no

possible mistake.

"Queequeg!--Queequeg!"--all still. Something must have happened.

Apoplexy! I tried to burst open the door; but it stubbornly resisted.

Running down stairs, I quickly stated my suspicions to the first person

I met--the chamber-maid. "La! la!" she cried, "I thought something must

be the matter. I went to make the bed after breakfast, and the door was

locked; and not a mouse to be heard; and it's been just so silent ever

since. But I thought, may be, you had both gone off and locked your

baggage in for safe keeping. La! la, ma'am!--Mistress! murder! Mrs.

Hussey! apoplexy!"--and with these cries, she ran towards the kitchen, I

following.

Mrs. Hussey soon appeared, with a mustard-pot in one hand and a

vinegar-cruet in the other, having just broken away from the occupation

of attending to the castors, and scolding her little black boy meantime.

"Wood-house!" cried I, "which way to it? Run for God's sake, and fetch

something to pry open the door--the axe!--the axe! he's had a stroke;

depend upon it!"--and so saying I was unmethodically rushing up stairs

again empty-handed, when Mrs. Hussey interposed the mustard-pot and

vinegar-cruet, and the entire castor of her countenance.

"What's the matter with you, young man?"

"Get the axe! For God's sake, run for the doctor, some one, while I pry

it open!"

"Look here," said the landlady, quickly putting down the vinegar-cruet,

so as to have one hand free; "look here; are you talking about prying

open any of my doors?"--and with that she seized my arm. "What's the

matter with you? What's the matter with you, shipmate?"

In as calm, but rapid a manner as possible, I gave her to understand the

whole case. Unconsciously clapping the vinegar-cruet to one side of her

nose, she ruminated for an instant; then exclaimed--"No! I haven't seen

it since I put it there." Running to a little closet under the landing

of the stairs, she glanced in, and returning, told me that Queequeg's

harpoon was missing. "He's killed himself," she cried. "It's unfort'nate

Stiggs done over again there goes another counterpane--God pity his poor

mother!--it will be the ruin of my house. Has the poor lad a sister?

Where's that girl?--there, Betty, go to Snarles the Painter, and tell

him to paint me a sign, with--"no suicides permitted here, and no

smoking in the parlor;"--might as well kill both birds at once. Kill?

The Lord be merciful to his ghost! What's that noise there? You, young

man, avast there!"

And running up after me, she caught me as I was again trying to force

open the door.

"I don't allow it; I won't have my premises spoiled. Go for the

locksmith, there's one about a mile from here. But avast!" putting her

hand in her side-pocket, "here's a key that'll fit, I guess; let's

see." And with that, she turned it in the lock; but, alas! Queequeg's

supplemental bolt remained unwithdrawn within.

"Have to burst it open," said I, and was running down the entry a

little, for a good start, when the landlady caught at me, again vowing

I should not break down her premises; but I tore from her, and with a

sudden bodily rush dashed myself full against the mark.

With a prodigious noise the door flew open, and the knob slamming

against the wall, sent the plaster to the ceiling; and there, good

heavens! there sat Queequeg, altogether cool and self-collected; right

in the middle of the room; squatting on his hams, and holding Yojo on

top of his head. He looked neither one way nor the other way, but sat

like a carved image with scarce a sign of active life.

"Queequeg," said I, going up to him, "Queequeg, what's the matter with

you?"

"He hain't been a sittin' so all day, has he?" said the landlady.

But all we said, not a word could we drag out of him; I almost felt

like pushing him over, so as to change his position, for it was almost

intolerable, it seemed so painfully and unnaturally constrained;

especially, as in all probability he had been sitting so for upwards of

eight or ten hours, going too without his regular meals.

"Mrs. Hussey," said I, "he's ALIVE at all events; so leave us, if you

please, and I will see to this strange affair myself."

Closing the door upon the landlady, I endeavored to prevail upon

Queequeg to take a chair; but in vain. There he sat; and all he could

do--for all my polite arts and blandishments--he would not move a peg,

nor say a single word, nor even look at me, nor notice my presence in

the slightest way.

I wonder, thought I, if this can possibly be a part of his Ramadan; do

they fast on their hams that way in his native island. It must be so;

yes, it's part of his creed, I suppose; well, then, let him rest; he'll

get up sooner or later, no doubt. It can't last for ever, thank God,

and his Ramadan only comes once a year; and I don't believe it's very

punctual then.

I went down to supper. After sitting a long time listening to the long

stories of some sailors who had just come from a plum-pudding voyage, as

they called it (that is, a short whaling-voyage in a schooner or brig,

confined to the north of the line, in the Atlantic Ocean only); after

listening to these plum-puddingers till nearly eleven o'clock, I went

up stairs to go to bed, feeling quite sure by this time Queequeg must

certainly have brought his Ramadan to a termination. But no; there he

was just where I had left him; he had not stirred an inch. I began to

grow vexed with him; it seemed so downright senseless and insane to be

sitting there all day and half the night on his hams in a cold room,

holding a piece of wood on his head.

"For heaven's sake, Queequeg, get up and shake yourself; get up and have

some supper. You'll starve; you'll kill yourself, Queequeg." But not a

word did he reply.

Despairing of him, therefore, I determined to go to bed and to sleep;

and no doubt, before a great while, he would follow me. But previous to

turning in, I took my heavy bearskin jacket, and threw it over him, as

it promised to be a very cold night; and he had nothing but his ordinary

round jacket on. For some time, do all I would, I could not get into

the faintest doze. I had blown out the candle; and the mere thought

of Queequeg--not four feet off--sitting there in that uneasy position,

stark alone in the cold and dark; this made me really wretched. Think of

it; sleeping all night in the same room with a wide awake pagan on his

hams in this dreary, unaccountable Ramadan!

But somehow I dropped off at last, and knew nothing more till break of

day; when, looking over the bedside, there squatted Queequeg, as if he

had been screwed down to the floor. But as soon as the first glimpse of

sun entered the window, up he got, with stiff and grating joints,

but with a cheerful look; limped towards me where I lay; pressed his

forehead again against mine; and said his Ramadan was over.

Now, as I before hinted, I have no objection to any person's religion,

be it what it may, so long as that person does not kill or insult any

other person, because that other person don't believe it also. But when

a man's religion becomes really frantic; when it is a positive torment

to him; and, in fine, makes this earth of ours an uncomfortable inn to

lodge in; then I think it high time to take that individual aside and

argue the point with him.

And just so I now did with Queequeg. "Queequeg," said I, "get into bed

now, and lie and listen to me." I then went on, beginning with the rise

and progress of the primitive religions, and coming down to the various

religions of the present time, during which time I labored to show

Queequeg that all these Lents, Ramadans, and prolonged ham-squattings in

cold, cheerless rooms were stark nonsense; bad for the health; useless

for the soul; opposed, in short, to the obvious laws of Hygiene and

common sense. I told him, too, that he being in other things such an

extremely sensible and sagacious savage, it pained me, very badly pained

me, to see him now so deplorably foolish about this ridiculous Ramadan

of his. Besides, argued I, fasting makes the body cave in; hence the

spirit caves in; and all thoughts born of a fast must necessarily be

half-starved. This is the reason why most dyspeptic religionists cherish

such melancholy notions about their hereafters. In one word, Queequeg,

said I, rather digressively; hell is an idea first born on an undigested

apple-dumpling; and since then perpetuated through the hereditary

dyspepsias nurtured by Ramadans.

I then asked Queequeg whether he himself was ever troubled with

dyspepsia; expressing the idea very plainly, so that he could take it

in. He said no; only upon one memorable occasion. It was after a great

feast given by his father the king, on the gaining of a great battle

wherein fifty of the enemy had been killed by about two o'clock in the

afternoon, and all cooked and eaten that very evening.

"No more, Queequeg," said I, shuddering; "that will do;" for I knew the

inferences without his further hinting them. I had seen a sailor who had

visited that very island, and he told me that it was the custom, when

a great battle had been gained there, to barbecue all the slain in the

yard or garden of the victor; and then, one by one, they were placed

in great wooden trenchers, and garnished round like a pilau, with

breadfruit and cocoanuts; and with some parsley in their mouths, were

sent round with the victor's compliments to all his friends, just as

though these presents were so many Christmas turkeys.

After all, I do not think that my remarks about religion made much

impression upon Queequeg. Because, in the first place, he somehow seemed

dull of hearing on that important subject, unless considered from his

own point of view; and, in the second place, he did not more than one

third understand me, couch my ideas simply as I would; and, finally, he

no doubt thought he knew a good deal more about the true religion than

I did. He looked at me with a sort of condescending concern and

compassion, as though he thought it a great pity that such a sensible

young man should be so hopelessly lost to evangelical pagan piety.

At last we rose and dressed; and Queequeg, taking a prodigiously hearty

breakfast of chowders of all sorts, so that the landlady should not

make much profit by reason of his Ramadan, we sallied out to board the

Pequod, sauntering along, and picking our teeth with halibut bones.

CHAPTER 18. His Mark.

As we were walking down the end of the wharf towards the ship, Queequeg

carrying his harpoon, Captain Peleg in his gruff voice loudly hailed us

from his wigwam, saying he had not suspected my friend was a cannibal,

and furthermore announcing that he let no cannibals on board that craft,

unless they previously produced their papers.

"What do you mean by that, Captain Peleg?" said I, now jumping on the

bulwarks, and leaving my comrade standing on the wharf.

"I mean," he replied, "he must show his papers."

"Yes," said Captain Bildad in his hollow voice, sticking his head from

behind Peleg's, out of the wigwam. "He must show that he's converted.

Son of darkness," he added, turning to Queequeg, "art thou at present in

communion with any Christian church?"

"Why," said I, "he's a member of the first Congregational Church." Here

be it said, that many tattooed savages sailing in Nantucket ships at

last come to be converted into the churches.

"First Congregational Church," cried Bildad, "what! that worships in

Deacon Deuteronomy Coleman's meeting-house?" and so saying, taking

out his spectacles, he rubbed them with his great yellow bandana

handkerchief, and putting them on very carefully, came out of the

wigwam, and leaning stiffly over the bulwarks, took a good long look at

Queequeg.

"How long hath he been a member?" he then said, turning to me; "not very

long, I rather guess, young man."

"No," said Peleg, "and he hasn't been baptized right either, or it would

have washed some of that devil's blue off his face."

"Do tell, now," cried Bildad, "is this Philistine a regular member of

Deacon Deuteronomy's meeting? I never saw him going there, and I pass it

every Lord's day."

"I don't know anything about Deacon Deuteronomy or his meeting," said

I; "all I know is, that Queequeg here is a born member of the First

Congregational Church. He is a deacon himself, Queequeg is."

"Young man," said Bildad sternly, "thou art skylarking with me--explain

thyself, thou young Hittite. What church dost thee mean? answer me."

Finding myself thus hard pushed, I replied. "I mean, sir, the same

ancient Catholic Church to which you and I, and Captain Peleg there,

and Queequeg here, and all of us, and every mother's son and soul of

us belong; the great and everlasting First Congregation of this whole

worshipping world; we all belong to that; only some of us cherish some

queer crotchets no ways touching the grand belief; in THAT we all join

hands."

"Splice, thou mean'st SPLICE hands," cried Peleg, drawing nearer. "Young

man, you'd better ship for a missionary, instead of a fore-mast hand;

I never heard a better sermon. Deacon Deuteronomy--why Father Mapple

himself couldn't beat it, and he's reckoned something. Come aboard, come

aboard; never mind about the papers. I say, tell Quohog there--what's

that you call him? tell Quohog to step along. By the great anchor, what

a harpoon he's got there! looks like good stuff that; and he handles it

about right. I say, Quohog, or whatever your name is, did you ever stand

in the head of a whale-boat? did you ever strike a fish?"

Without saying a word, Queequeg, in his wild sort of way, jumped upon

the bulwarks, from thence into the bows of one of the whale-boats

hanging to the side; and then bracing his left knee, and poising his

harpoon, cried out in some such way as this:--

"Cap'ain, you see him small drop tar on water dere? You see him? well,

spose him one whale eye, well, den!" and taking sharp aim at it, he

darted the iron right over old Bildad's broad brim, clean across the

ship's decks, and struck the glistening tar spot out of sight.

"Now," said Queequeg, quietly hauling in the line, "spos-ee him whale-e

eye; why, dad whale dead."

"Quick, Bildad," said Peleg, his partner, who, aghast at the close

vicinity of the flying harpoon, had retreated towards the cabin gangway.

"Quick, I say, you Bildad, and get the ship's papers. We must have

Hedgehog there, I mean Quohog, in one of our boats. Look ye, Quohog,

we'll give ye the ninetieth lay, and that's more than ever was given a

harpooneer yet out of Nantucket."

So down we went into the cabin, and to my great joy Queequeg was soon

enrolled among the same ship's company to which I myself belonged.

When all preliminaries were over and Peleg had got everything ready for

signing, he turned to me and said, "I guess, Quohog there don't know how

to write, does he? I say, Quohog, blast ye! dost thou sign thy name or

make thy mark?"

But at this question, Queequeg, who had twice or thrice before taken

part in similar ceremonies, looked no ways abashed; but taking the

offered pen, copied upon the paper, in the proper place, an exact

counterpart of a queer round figure which was tattooed upon his arm; so

that through Captain Peleg's obstinate mistake touching his appellative,

it stood something like this:--

Quohog. his X mark.

Meanwhile Captain Bildad sat earnestly and steadfastly eyeing Queequeg,

and at last rising solemnly and fumbling in the huge pockets of his

broad-skirted drab coat, took out a bundle of tracts, and selecting

one entitled "The Latter Day Coming; or No Time to Lose," placed it in

Queequeg's hands, and then grasping them and the book with both his,

looked earnestly into his eyes, and said, "Son of darkness, I must do my

duty by thee; I am part owner of this ship, and feel concerned for the

souls of all its crew; if thou still clingest to thy Pagan ways, which I

sadly fear, I beseech thee, remain not for aye a Belial bondsman. Spurn

the idol Bell, and the hideous dragon; turn from the wrath to come; mind

thine eye, I say; oh! goodness gracious! steer clear of the fiery pit!"

Something of the salt sea yet lingered in old Bildad's language,

heterogeneously mixed with Scriptural and domestic phrases.

"Avast there, avast there, Bildad, avast now spoiling our harpooneer,"

cried Peleg. "Pious harpooneers never make good voyagers--it takes the shark

out of 'em; no harpooneer is worth a straw who aint pretty sharkish.

There was young Nat Swaine, once the bravest boat-header out of all

Nantucket and the Vineyard; he joined the meeting, and never came to

good. He got so frightened about his plaguy soul, that he shrinked and

sheered away from whales, for fear of after-claps, in case he got stove

and went to Davy Jones."

"Peleg! Peleg!" said Bildad, lifting his eyes and hands, "thou thyself,

as I myself, hast seen many a perilous time; thou knowest, Peleg, what

it is to have the fear of death; how, then, can'st thou prate in this

ungodly guise. Thou beliest thine own heart, Peleg. Tell me, when this

same Pequod here had her three masts overboard in that typhoon on Japan,

that same voyage when thou went mate with Captain Ahab, did'st thou not

think of Death and the Judgment then?"

"Hear him, hear him now," cried Peleg, marching across the cabin, and

thrusting his hands far down into his pockets,--"hear him, all of ye.

Think of that! When every moment we thought the ship would sink!

Death and the Judgment then? What? With all three masts making such an

everlasting thundering against the side; and every sea breaking over us,

fore and aft. Think of Death and the Judgment then? No! no time to think

about Death then. Life was what Captain Ahab and I was thinking of;

and how to save all hands--how to rig jury-masts--how to get into the

nearest port; that was what I was thinking of."

Bildad said no more, but buttoning up his coat, stalked on deck,

where we followed him. There he stood, very quietly overlooking some

sailmakers who were mending a top-sail in the waist. Now and then

he stooped to pick up a patch, or save an end of tarred twine, which

otherwise might have been wasted.

CHAPTER 19. The Prophet.

"Shipmates, have ye shipped in that ship?"

Queequeg and I had just left the Pequod, and were sauntering away from

the water, for the moment each occupied with his own thoughts, when

the above words were put to us by a stranger, who, pausing before us,

levelled his massive forefinger at the vessel in question. He was but

shabbily apparelled in faded jacket and patched trowsers; a rag of a

black handkerchief investing his neck. A confluent small-pox had in all

directions flowed over his face, and left it like the complicated ribbed

bed of a torrent, when the rushing waters have been dried up.

"Have ye shipped in her?" he repeated.

"You mean the ship Pequod, I suppose," said I, trying to gain a little

more time for an uninterrupted look at him.

"Aye, the Pequod--that ship there," he said, drawing back his whole

arm, and then rapidly shoving it straight out from him, with the fixed

bayonet of his pointed finger darted full at the object.

"Yes," said I, "we have just signed the articles."

"Anything down there about your souls?"

"About what?"

"Oh, perhaps you hav'n't got any," he said quickly. "No matter though,

I know many chaps that hav'n't got any,--good luck to 'em; and they are

all the better off for it. A soul's a sort of a fifth wheel to a wagon."

"What are you jabbering about, shipmate?" said I.

"HE'S got enough, though, to make up for all deficiencies of that sort

in other chaps," abruptly said the stranger, placing a nervous emphasis

upon the word HE.

"Queequeg," said I, "let's go; this fellow has broken loose from

somewhere; he's talking about something and somebody we don't know."

"Stop!" cried the stranger. "Ye said true--ye hav'n't seen Old Thunder

yet, have ye?"

"Who's Old Thunder?" said I, again riveted with the insane earnestness

of his manner.

"Captain Ahab."

"What! the captain of our ship, the Pequod?"

"Aye, among some of us old sailor chaps, he goes by that name. Ye

hav'n't seen him yet, have ye?"

"No, we hav'n't. He's sick they say, but is getting better, and will be

all right again before long."

"All right again before long!" laughed the stranger, with a solemnly

derisive sort of laugh. "Look ye; when Captain Ahab is all right, then

this left arm of mine will be all right; not before."

"What do you know about him?"

"What did they TELL you about him? Say that!"

"They didn't tell much of anything about him; only I've heard that he's

a good whale-hunter, and a good captain to his crew."

"That's true, that's true--yes, both true enough. But you must jump when

he gives an order. Step and growl; growl and go--that's the word with

Captain Ahab. But nothing about that thing that happened to him off Cape

Horn, long ago, when he lay like dead for three days and nights;

nothing about that deadly skrimmage with the Spaniard afore the altar in

Santa?--heard nothing about that, eh? Nothing about the silver calabash

he spat into? And nothing about his losing his leg last voyage,

according to the prophecy. Didn't ye hear a word about them matters and

something more, eh? No, I don't think ye did; how could ye? Who knows

it? Not all Nantucket, I guess. But hows'ever, mayhap, ye've heard tell

about the leg, and how he lost it; aye, ye have heard of that, I dare

say. Oh yes, THAT every one knows a'most--I mean they know he's only one

leg; and that a parmacetti took the other off."

"My friend," said I, "what all this gibberish of yours is about, I

don't know, and I don't much care; for it seems to me that you must be a

little damaged in the head. But if you are speaking of Captain Ahab, of

that ship there, the Pequod, then let me tell you, that I know all about

the loss of his leg."

"ALL about it, eh--sure you do?--all?"

"Pretty sure."

With finger pointed and eye levelled at the Pequod, the beggar-like

stranger stood a moment, as if in a troubled reverie; then starting a

little, turned and said:--"Ye've shipped, have ye? Names down on the

papers? Well, well, what's signed, is signed; and what's to be, will be;

and then again, perhaps it won't be, after all. Anyhow, it's all fixed

and arranged a'ready; and some sailors or other must go with him, I

suppose; as well these as any other men, God pity 'em! Morning to ye,

shipmates, morning; the ineffable heavens bless ye; I'm sorry I stopped

ye."

"Look here, friend," said I, "if you have anything important to tell

us, out with it; but if you are only trying to bamboozle us, you are

mistaken in your game; that's all I have to say."

"And it's said very well, and I like to hear a chap talk up that way;

you are just the man for him--the likes of ye. Morning to ye, shipmates,

morning! Oh! when ye get there, tell 'em I've concluded not to make one

of 'em."

"Ah, my dear fellow, you can't fool us that way--you can't fool us. It

is the easiest thing in the world for a man to look as if he had a great

secret in him."

"Morning to ye, shipmates, morning."

"Morning it is," said I. "Come along, Queequeg, let's leave this crazy

man. But stop, tell me your name, will you?"

"Elijah."

Elijah! thought I, and we walked away, both commenting, after each

other's fashion, upon this ragged old sailor; and agreed that he was

nothing but a humbug, trying to be a bugbear. But we had not gone

perhaps above a hundred yards, when chancing to turn a corner, and

looking back as I did so, who should be seen but Elijah following us,

though at a distance. Somehow, the sight of him struck me so, that I

said nothing to Queequeg of his being behind, but passed on with my

comrade, anxious to see whether the stranger would turn the same corner

that we did. He did; and then it seemed to me that he was dogging

us, but with what intent I could not for the life of me imagine. This

circumstance, coupled with his ambiguous, half-hinting, half-revealing,

shrouded sort of talk, now begat in me all kinds of vague wonderments

and half-apprehensions, and all connected with the Pequod; and Captain

Ahab; and the leg he had lost; and the Cape Horn fit; and the silver

calabash; and what Captain Peleg had said of him, when I left the ship

the day previous; and the prediction of the squaw Tistig; and the voyage

we had bound ourselves to sail; and a hundred other shadowy things.

I was resolved to satisfy myself whether this ragged Elijah was really

dogging us or not, and with that intent crossed the way with Queequeg,

and on that side of it retraced our steps. But Elijah passed on, without

seeming to notice us. This relieved me; and once more, and finally as it

seemed to me, I pronounced him in my heart, a humbug.

CHAPTER 20. All Astir.

A day or two passed, and there was great activity aboard the Pequod.

Not only were the old sails being mended, but new sails were coming on

board, and bolts of canvas, and coils of rigging; in short, everything

betokened that the ship's preparations were hurrying to a close. Captain

Peleg seldom or never went ashore, but sat in his wigwam keeping a sharp

look-out upon the hands: Bildad did all the purchasing and providing

at the stores; and the men employed in the hold and on the rigging were

working till long after night-fall.

On the day following Queequeg's signing the articles, word was given at

all the inns where the ship's company were stopping, that their chests

must be on board before night, for there was no telling how soon

the vessel might be sailing. So Queequeg and I got down our traps,

resolving, however, to sleep ashore till the last. But it seems they

always give very long notice in these cases, and the ship did not sail

for several days. But no wonder; there was a good deal to be done, and

there is no telling how many things to be thought of, before the Pequod

was fully equipped.

Every one knows what a multitude of things--beds, sauce-pans, knives

and forks, shovels and tongs, napkins, nut-crackers, and what not, are

indispensable to the business of housekeeping. Just so with whaling,

which necessitates a three-years' housekeeping upon the wide ocean,

far from all grocers, costermongers, doctors, bakers, and bankers. And

though this also holds true of merchant vessels, yet not by any means

to the same extent as with whalemen. For besides the great length of the

whaling voyage, the numerous articles peculiar to the prosecution of the

fishery, and the impossibility of replacing them at the remote harbors

usually frequented, it must be remembered, that of all ships, whaling

vessels are the most exposed to accidents of all kinds, and especially

to the destruction and loss of the very things upon which the success of

the voyage most depends. Hence, the spare boats, spare spars, and spare

lines and harpoons, and spare everythings, almost, but a spare Captain

and duplicate ship.

At the period of our arrival at the Island, the heaviest storage of the

Pequod had been almost completed; comprising her beef, bread, water,

fuel, and iron hoops and staves. But, as before hinted, for some time

there was a continual fetching and carrying on board of divers odds and

ends of things, both large and small.

Chief among those who did this fetching and carrying was Captain

Bildad's sister, a lean old lady of a most determined and indefatigable

spirit, but withal very kindhearted, who seemed resolved that, if SHE

could help it, nothing should be found wanting in the Pequod, after once

fairly getting to sea. At one time she would come on board with a jar

of pickles for the steward's pantry; another time with a bunch of quills

for the chief mate's desk, where he kept his log; a third time with a

roll of flannel for the small of some one's rheumatic back. Never did

any woman better deserve her name, which was Charity--Aunt Charity, as

everybody called her. And like a sister of charity did this charitable

Aunt Charity bustle about hither and thither, ready to turn her hand

and heart to anything that promised to yield safety, comfort, and

consolation to all on board a ship in which her beloved brother

Bildad was concerned, and in which she herself owned a score or two of

well-saved dollars.

But it was startling to see this excellent hearted Quakeress coming on

board, as she did the last day, with a long oil-ladle in one hand, and

a still longer whaling lance in the other. Nor was Bildad himself nor

Captain Peleg at all backward. As for Bildad, he carried about with him

a long list of the articles needed, and at every fresh arrival, down

went his mark opposite that article upon the paper. Every once in a

while Peleg came hobbling out of his whalebone den, roaring at the men

down the hatchways, roaring up to the riggers at the mast-head, and then

concluded by roaring back into his wigwam.

During these days of preparation, Queequeg and I often visited the

craft, and as often I asked about Captain Ahab, and how he was, and when

he was going to come on board his ship. To these questions they would

answer, that he was getting better and better, and was expected aboard

every day; meantime, the two captains, Peleg and Bildad, could attend

to everything necessary to fit the vessel for the voyage. If I had been

downright honest with myself, I would have seen very plainly in my heart

that I did but half fancy being committed this way to so long a voyage,

without once laying my eyes on the man who was to be the absolute

dictator of it, so soon as the ship sailed out upon the open sea.

But when a man suspects any wrong, it sometimes happens that if he be

already involved in the matter, he insensibly strives to cover up his

suspicions even from himself. And much this way it was with me. I said

nothing, and tried to think nothing.

At last it was given out that some time next day the ship would

certainly sail. So next morning, Queequeg and I took a very early start.

CHAPTER 21. Going Aboard.

It was nearly six o'clock, but only grey imperfect misty dawn, when we

drew nigh the wharf.

"There are some sailors running ahead there, if I see right," said I to

Queequeg, "it can't be shadows; she's off by sunrise, I guess; come on!"

"Avast!" cried a voice, whose owner at the same time coming close behind

us, laid a hand upon both our shoulders, and then insinuating himself

between us, stood stooping forward a little, in the uncertain twilight,

strangely peering from Queequeg to me. It was Elijah.

"Going aboard?"

"Hands off, will you," said I.

"Lookee here," said Queequeg, shaking himself, "go 'way!"

"Ain't going aboard, then?"

"Yes, we are," said I, "but what business is that of yours? Do you know,

Mr. Elijah, that I consider you a little impertinent?"

"No, no, no; I wasn't aware of that," said Elijah, slowly and

wonderingly looking from me to Queequeg, with the most unaccountable

glances.

"Elijah," said I, "you will oblige my friend and me by withdrawing. We

are going to the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and would prefer not to be

detained."

"Ye be, be ye? Coming back afore breakfast?"

"He's cracked, Queequeg," said I, "come on."

"Holloa!" cried stationary Elijah, hailing us when we had removed a few

paces.

"Never mind him," said I, "Queequeg, come on."

But he stole up to us again, and suddenly clapping his hand on my

shoulder, said--"Did ye see anything looking like men going towards that

ship a while ago?"

Struck by this plain matter-of-fact question, I answered, saying, "Yes,

I thought I did see four or five men; but it was too dim to be sure."

"Very dim, very dim," said Elijah. "Morning to ye."

Once more we quitted him; but once more he came softly after us; and

touching my shoulder again, said, "See if you can find 'em now, will ye?

"Find who?"

"Morning to ye! morning to ye!" he rejoined, again moving off. "Oh! I

was going to warn ye against--but never mind, never mind--it's all one,

all in the family too;--sharp frost this morning, ain't it? Good-bye to

ye. Shan't see ye again very soon, I guess; unless it's before the Grand

Jury." And with these cracked words he finally departed, leaving me, for

the moment, in no small wonderment at his frantic impudence.

At last, stepping on board the Pequod, we found everything in profound

quiet, not a soul moving. The cabin entrance was locked within; the

hatches were all on, and lumbered with coils of rigging. Going forward

to the forecastle, we found the slide of the scuttle open. Seeing a

light, we went down, and found only an old rigger there, wrapped in a

tattered pea-jacket. He was thrown at whole length upon two chests, his

face downwards and inclosed in his folded arms. The profoundest slumber

slept upon him.

"Those sailors we saw, Queequeg, where can they have gone to?" said I,

looking dubiously at the sleeper. But it seemed that, when on the wharf,

Queequeg had not at all noticed what I now alluded to; hence I would

have thought myself to have been optically deceived in that matter,

were it not for Elijah's otherwise inexplicable question. But I beat the

thing down; and again marking the sleeper, jocularly hinted to Queequeg

that perhaps we had best sit up with the body; telling him to establish

himself accordingly. He put his hand upon the sleeper's rear, as though

feeling if it was soft enough; and then, without more ado, sat quietly

down there.

"Gracious! Queequeg, don't sit there," said I.

"Oh! perry dood seat," said Queequeg, "my country way; won't hurt him

face."

"Face!" said I, "call that his face? very benevolent countenance then;

but how hard he breathes, he's heaving himself; get off, Queequeg, you

are heavy, it's grinding the face of the poor. Get off, Queequeg! Look,

he'll twitch you off soon. I wonder he don't wake."

Queequeg removed himself to just beyond the head of the sleeper, and

lighted his tomahawk pipe. I sat at the feet. We kept the pipe passing

over the sleeper, from one to the other. Meanwhile, upon questioning him

in his broken fashion, Queequeg gave me to understand that, in his

land, owing to the absence of settees and sofas of all sorts, the king,

chiefs, and great people generally, were in the custom of fattening some

of the lower orders for ottomans; and to furnish a house comfortably in

that respect, you had only to buy up eight or ten lazy fellows, and lay

them round in the piers and alcoves. Besides, it was very convenient on

an excursion; much better than those garden-chairs which are convertible

into walking-sticks; upon occasion, a chief calling his attendant, and

desiring him to make a settee of himself under a spreading tree, perhaps

in some damp marshy place.

While narrating these things, every time Queequeg received the tomahawk

from me, he flourished the hatchet-side of it over the sleeper's head.

"What's that for, Queequeg?"

"Perry easy, kill-e; oh! perry easy!"

He was going on with some wild reminiscences about his tomahawk-pipe,

which, it seemed, had in its two uses both brained his foes and soothed

his soul, when we were directly attracted to the sleeping rigger. The

strong vapour now completely filling the contracted hole, it began

to tell upon him. He breathed with a sort of muffledness; then seemed

troubled in the nose; then revolved over once or twice; then sat up and

rubbed his eyes.

"Holloa!" he breathed at last, "who be ye smokers?"

"Shipped men," answered I, "when does she sail?"

"Aye, aye, ye are going in her, be ye? She sails to-day. The Captain

came aboard last night."

"What Captain?--Ahab?"

"Who but him indeed?"

I was going to ask him some further questions concerning Ahab, when we

heard a noise on deck.

"Holloa! Starbuck's astir," said the rigger. "He's a lively chief mate,

that; good man, and a pious; but all alive now, I must turn to." And so

saying he went on deck, and we followed.

It was now clear sunrise. Soon the crew came on board in twos and

threes; the riggers bestirred themselves; the mates were actively

engaged; and several of the shore people were busy in bringing various

last things on board. Meanwhile Captain Ahab remained invisibly

enshrined within his cabin.

CHAPTER 22. Merry Christmas.

At length, towards noon, upon the final dismissal of the ship's riggers,

and after the Pequod had been hauled out from the wharf, and after the

ever-thoughtful Charity had come off in a whale-boat, with her last

gift--a night-cap for Stubb, the second mate, her brother-in-law, and a

spare Bible for the steward--after all this, the two Captains, Peleg

and Bildad, issued from the cabin, and turning to the chief mate, Peleg

said:

"Now, Mr. Starbuck, are you sure everything is right? Captain Ahab is

all ready--just spoke to him--nothing more to be got from shore, eh?

Well, call all hands, then. Muster 'em aft here--blast 'em!"

"No need of profane words, however great the hurry, Peleg," said Bildad,

"but away with thee, friend Starbuck, and do our bidding."

How now! Here upon the very point of starting for the voyage, Captain

Peleg and Captain Bildad were going it with a high hand on the

quarter-deck, just as if they were to be joint-commanders at sea, as

well as to all appearances in port. And, as for Captain Ahab, no sign of

him was yet to be seen; only, they said he was in the cabin. But then,

the idea was, that his presence was by no means necessary in getting the

ship under weigh, and steering her well out to sea. Indeed, as that was

not at all his proper business, but the pilot's; and as he was not

yet completely recovered--so they said--therefore, Captain Ahab stayed

below. And all this seemed natural enough; especially as in the merchant

service many captains never show themselves on deck for a considerable

time after heaving up the anchor, but remain over the cabin table,

having a farewell merry-making with their shore friends, before they

quit the ship for good with the pilot.

But there was not much chance to think over the matter, for Captain

Peleg was now all alive. He seemed to do most of the talking and

commanding, and not Bildad.

"Aft here, ye sons of bachelors," he cried, as the sailors lingered at

the main-mast. "Mr. Starbuck, drive'em aft."

"Strike the tent there!"--was the next order. As I hinted before, this

whalebone marquee was never pitched except in port; and on board the

Pequod, for thirty years, the order to strike the tent was well known to

be the next thing to heaving up the anchor.

"Man the capstan! Blood and thunder!--jump!"--was the next command, and

the crew sprang for the handspikes.

Now in getting under weigh, the station generally occupied by the pilot

is the forward part of the ship. And here Bildad, who, with Peleg, be it

known, in addition to his other officers, was one of the licensed pilots

of the port--he being suspected to have got himself made a pilot in

order to save the Nantucket pilot-fee to all the ships he was concerned

in, for he never piloted any other craft--Bildad, I say, might now

be seen actively engaged in looking over the bows for the approaching

anchor, and at intervals singing what seemed a dismal stave of psalmody,

to cheer the hands at the windlass, who roared forth some sort of

a chorus about the girls in Booble Alley, with hearty good will.

Nevertheless, not three days previous, Bildad had told them that no

profane songs would be allowed on board the Pequod, particularly in

getting under weigh; and Charity, his sister, had placed a small choice

copy of Watts in each seaman's berth.

Meantime, overseeing the other part of the ship, Captain Peleg ripped

and swore astern in the most frightful manner. I almost thought he would

sink the ship before the anchor could be got up; involuntarily I paused

on my handspike, and told Queequeg to do the same, thinking of the

perils we both ran, in starting on the voyage with such a devil for a

pilot. I was comforting myself, however, with the thought that in pious

Bildad might be found some salvation, spite of his seven hundred and

seventy-seventh lay; when I felt a sudden sharp poke in my rear, and

turning round, was horrified at the apparition of Captain Peleg in the

act of withdrawing his leg from my immediate vicinity. That was my first

kick.

"Is that the way they heave in the marchant service?" he roared.

"Spring, thou sheep-head; spring, and break thy backbone! Why don't ye

spring, I say, all of ye--spring! Quohog! spring, thou chap with the red

whiskers; spring there, Scotch-cap; spring, thou green pants. Spring, I

say, all of ye, and spring your eyes out!" And so saying, he moved

along the windlass, here and there using his leg very freely, while

imperturbable Bildad kept leading off with his psalmody. Thinks I,

Captain Peleg must have been drinking something to-day.

At last the anchor was up, the sails were set, and off we glided. It

was a short, cold Christmas; and as the short northern day merged into

night, we found ourselves almost broad upon the wintry ocean, whose

freezing spray cased us in ice, as in polished armor. The long rows of

teeth on the bulwarks glistened in the moonlight; and like the white

ivory tusks of some huge elephant, vast curving icicles depended from

the bows.

Lank Bildad, as pilot, headed the first watch, and ever and anon, as the

old craft deep dived into the green seas, and sent the shivering frost

all over her, and the winds howled, and the cordage rang, his steady

notes were heard,--

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood, Stand dressed in living green.

So to the Jews old Canaan stood, While Jordan rolled between."

Never did those sweet words sound more sweetly to me than then. They

were full of hope and fruition. Spite of this frigid winter night in the

boisterous Atlantic, spite of my wet feet and wetter jacket, there was

yet, it then seemed to me, many a pleasant haven in store; and meads

and glades so eternally vernal, that the grass shot up by the spring,

untrodden, unwilted, remains at midsummer.

At last we gained such an offing, that the two pilots were needed

no longer. The stout sail-boat that had accompanied us began ranging

alongside.

It was curious and not unpleasing, how Peleg and Bildad were affected at

this juncture, especially Captain Bildad. For loath to depart, yet;

very loath to leave, for good, a ship bound on so long and perilous a

voyage--beyond both stormy Capes; a ship in which some thousands of

his hard earned dollars were invested; a ship, in which an old shipmate

sailed as captain; a man almost as old as he, once more starting to

encounter all the terrors of the pitiless jaw; loath to say good-bye to

a thing so every way brimful of every interest to him,--poor old Bildad

lingered long; paced the deck with anxious strides; ran down into the

cabin to speak another farewell word there; again came on deck, and

looked to windward; looked towards the wide and endless waters, only

bounded by the far-off unseen Eastern Continents; looked towards

the land; looked aloft; looked right and left; looked everywhere

and nowhere; and at last, mechanically coiling a rope upon its pin,

convulsively grasped stout Peleg by the hand, and holding up a lantern,

for a moment stood gazing heroically in his face, as much as to say,

"Nevertheless, friend Peleg, I can stand it; yes, I can."

As for Peleg himself, he took it more like a philosopher; but for all

his philosophy, there was a tear twinkling in his eye, when the lantern

came too near. And he, too, did not a little run from cabin to deck--now

a word below, and now a word with Starbuck, the chief mate.

But, at last, he turned to his comrade, with a final sort of look

about him,--"Captain Bildad--come, old shipmate, we must go. Back the

main-yard there! Boat ahoy! Stand by to come close alongside, now!

Careful, careful!--come, Bildad, boy--say your last. Luck to ye,

Starbuck--luck to ye, Mr. Stubb--luck to ye, Mr. Flask--good-bye and

good luck to ye all--and this day three years I'll have a hot supper

smoking for ye in old Nantucket. Hurrah and away!"

"God bless ye, and have ye in His holy keeping, men," murmured old

Bildad, almost incoherently. "I hope ye'll have fine weather now, so

that Captain Ahab may soon be moving among ye--a pleasant sun is all

he needs, and ye'll have plenty of them in the tropic voyage ye go.

Be careful in the hunt, ye mates. Don't stave the boats needlessly,

ye harpooneers; good white cedar plank is raised full three per cent.

within the year. Don't forget your prayers, either. Mr. Starbuck, mind

that cooper don't waste the spare staves. Oh! the sail-needles are in

the green locker! Don't whale it too much a' Lord's days, men; but don't

miss a fair chance either, that's rejecting Heaven's good gifts. Have an

eye to the molasses tierce, Mr. Stubb; it was a little leaky, I thought.

If ye touch at the islands, Mr. Flask, beware of fornication. Good-bye,

good-bye! Don't keep that cheese too long down in the hold, Mr.

Starbuck; it'll spoil. Be careful with the butter--twenty cents the

pound it was, and mind ye, if--"

"Come, come, Captain Bildad; stop palavering,--away!" and with that,

Peleg hurried him over the side, and both dropt into the boat.

Ship and boat diverged; the cold, damp night breeze blew between; a

screaming gull flew overhead; the two hulls wildly rolled; we gave

three heavy-hearted cheers, and blindly plunged like fate into the lone

Atlantic.

CHAPTER 23. The Lee Shore.

Some chapters back, one Bulkington was spoken of, a tall, newlanded

mariner, encountered in New Bedford at the inn.

When on that shivering winter's night, the Pequod thrust her vindictive

bows into the cold malicious waves, who should I see standing at her

helm but Bulkington! I looked with sympathetic awe and fearfulness upon

the man, who in mid-winter just landed from a four years' dangerous

voyage, could so unrestingly push off again for still another

tempestuous term. The land seemed scorching to his feet. Wonderfullest

things are ever the unmentionable; deep memories yield no epitaphs; this

six-inch chapter is the stoneless grave of Bulkington. Let me only say

that it fared with him as with the storm-tossed ship, that miserably

drives along the leeward land. The port would fain give succor; the port

is pitiful; in the port is safety, comfort, hearthstone, supper, warm

blankets, friends, all that's kind to our mortalities. But in that gale,

the port, the land, is that ship's direst jeopardy; she must fly all

hospitality; one touch of land, though it but graze the keel, would make

her shudder through and through. With all her might she crowds all sail

off shore; in so doing, fights 'gainst the very winds that fain would

blow her homeward; seeks all the lashed sea's landlessness again;

for refuge's sake forlornly rushing into peril; her only friend her

bitterest foe!

Know ye now, Bulkington? Glimpses do ye seem to see of that mortally

intolerable truth; that all deep, earnest thinking is but the intrepid

effort of the soul to keep the open independence of her sea; while

the wildest winds of heaven and earth conspire to cast her on the

treacherous, slavish shore?

But as in landlessness alone resides highest truth, shoreless,

indefinite as God--so, better is it to perish in that howling infinite,

than be ingloriously dashed upon the lee, even if that were safety!

For worm-like, then, oh! who would craven crawl to land! Terrors of

the terrible! is all this agony so vain? Take heart, take heart,

O Bulkington! Bear thee grimly, demigod! Up from the spray of thy

ocean-perishing--straight up, leaps thy apotheosis!

CHAPTER 24. The Advocate.

As Queequeg and I are now fairly embarked in this business of whaling;

and as this business of whaling has somehow come to be regarded among

landsmen as a rather unpoetical and disreputable pursuit; therefore, I

am all anxiety to convince ye, ye landsmen, of the injustice hereby done

to us hunters of whales.

In the first place, it may be deemed almost superfluous to establish

the fact, that among people at large, the business of whaling is not

accounted on a level with what are called the liberal professions. If a

stranger were introduced into any miscellaneous metropolitan society,

it would but slightly advance the general opinion of his merits, were

he presented to the company as a harpooneer, say; and if in emulation

of the naval officers he should append the initials S.W.F. (Sperm

Whale Fishery) to his visiting card, such a procedure would be deemed

pre-eminently presuming and ridiculous.

Doubtless one leading reason why the world declines honouring us

whalemen, is this: they think that, at best, our vocation amounts to a

butchering sort of business; and that when actively engaged therein, we

are surrounded by all manner of defilements. Butchers we are, that is

true. But butchers, also, and butchers of the bloodiest badge have been

all Martial Commanders whom the world invariably delights to honour. And

as for the matter of the alleged uncleanliness of our business, ye shall

soon be initiated into certain facts hitherto pretty generally unknown,

and which, upon the whole, will triumphantly plant the sperm whale-ship

at least among the cleanliest things of this tidy earth. But even

granting the charge in question to be true; what disordered slippery

decks of a whale-ship are comparable to the unspeakable carrion of those

battle-fields from which so many soldiers return to drink in all ladies'

plaudits? And if the idea of peril so much enhances the popular conceit

of the soldier's profession; let me assure ye that many a veteran

who has freely marched up to a battery, would quickly recoil at the

apparition of the sperm whale's vast tail, fanning into eddies the air

over his head. For what are the comprehensible terrors of man compared

with the interlinked terrors and wonders of God!

But, though the world scouts at us whale hunters, yet does it

unwittingly pay us the profoundest homage; yea, an all-abounding

adoration! for almost all the tapers, lamps, and candles that burn round

the globe, burn, as before so many shrines, to our glory!

But look at this matter in other lights; weigh it in all sorts of

scales; see what we whalemen are, and have been.

Why did the Dutch in De Witt's time have admirals of their whaling

fleets? Why did Louis XVI. of France, at his own personal expense, fit

out whaling ships from Dunkirk, and politely invite to that town some

score or two of families from our own island of Nantucket? Why did

Britain between the years 1750 and 1788 pay to her whalemen in bounties

upwards of L1,000,000? And lastly, how comes it that we whalemen of

America now outnumber all the rest of the banded whalemen in the world;

sail a navy of upwards of seven hundred vessels; manned by eighteen

thousand men; yearly consuming 4,000,000 of dollars; the ships worth,

at the time of sailing, $20,000,000! and every year importing into our

harbors a well reaped harvest of $7,000,000. How comes all this, if

there be not something puissant in whaling?

But this is not the half; look again.

I freely assert, that the cosmopolite philosopher cannot, for his life,

point out one single peaceful influence, which within the last sixty

years has operated more potentially upon the whole broad world, taken in

one aggregate, than the high and mighty business of whaling. One way

and another, it has begotten events so remarkable in themselves, and so

continuously momentous in their sequential issues, that whaling may

well be regarded as that Egyptian mother, who bore offspring themselves

pregnant from her womb. It would be a hopeless, endless task to

catalogue all these things. Let a handful suffice. For many years past

the whale-ship has been the pioneer in ferreting out the remotest and

least known parts of the earth. She has explored seas and archipelagoes

which had no chart, where no Cook or Vancouver had ever sailed. If

American and European men-of-war now peacefully ride in once savage

harbors, let them fire salutes to the honour and glory of the

whale-ship, which originally showed them the way, and first interpreted

between them and the savages. They may celebrate as they will the heroes

of Exploring Expeditions, your Cooks, your Krusensterns; but I say that

scores of anonymous Captains have sailed out of Nantucket, that were

as great, and greater than your Cook and your Krusenstern. For in their

succourless empty-handedness, they, in the heathenish sharked waters,

and by the beaches of unrecorded, javelin islands, battled with virgin

wonders and terrors that Cook with all his marines and muskets would

not willingly have dared. All that is made such a flourish of in the old

South Sea Voyages, those things were but the life-time commonplaces of

our heroic Nantucketers. Often, adventures which Vancouver dedicates

three chapters to, these men accounted unworthy of being set down in the

ship's common log. Ah, the world! Oh, the world!

Until the whale fishery rounded Cape Horn, no commerce but colonial,

scarcely any intercourse but colonial, was carried on between Europe and

the long line of the opulent Spanish provinces on the Pacific coast.

It was the whaleman who first broke through the jealous policy of the

Spanish crown, touching those colonies; and, if space permitted, it

might be distinctly shown how from those whalemen at last eventuated the

liberation of Peru, Chili, and Bolivia from the yoke of Old Spain, and

the establishment of the eternal democracy in those parts.

That great America on the other side of the sphere, Australia, was given

to the enlightened world by the whaleman. After its first blunder-born

discovery by a Dutchman, all other ships long shunned those shores

as pestiferously barbarous; but the whale-ship touched there. The

whale-ship is the true mother of that now mighty colony. Moreover,

in the infancy of the first Australian settlement, the emigrants were

several times saved from starvation by the benevolent biscuit of the

whale-ship luckily dropping an anchor in their waters. The uncounted

isles of all Polynesia confess the same truth, and do commercial homage

to the whale-ship, that cleared the way for the missionary and the

merchant, and in many cases carried the primitive missionaries to their

first destinations. If that double-bolted land, Japan, is ever to become

hospitable, it is the whale-ship alone to whom the credit will be due;

for already she is on the threshold.

But if, in the face of all this, you still declare that whaling has no

aesthetically noble associations connected with it, then am I ready to

shiver fifty lances with you there, and unhorse you with a split helmet

every time.

The whale has no famous author, and whaling no famous chronicler, you

will say.

THE WHALE NO FAMOUS AUTHOR, AND WHALING NO FAMOUS CHRONICLER? Who wrote

the first account of our Leviathan? Who but mighty Job! And who composed

the first narrative of a whaling-voyage? Who, but no less a prince than

Alfred the Great, who, with his own royal pen, took down the words from

Other, the Norwegian whale-hunter of those times! And who pronounced our

glowing eulogy in Parliament? Who, but Edmund Burke!

True enough, but then whalemen themselves are poor devils; they have no

good blood in their veins.

NO GOOD BLOOD IN THEIR VEINS? They have something better than royal

blood there. The grandmother of Benjamin Franklin was Mary Morrel;

afterwards, by marriage, Mary Folger, one of the old settlers

of Nantucket, and the ancestress to a long line of Folgers and

harpooneers--all kith and kin to noble Benjamin--this day darting the

barbed iron from one side of the world to the other.

Good again; but then all confess that somehow whaling is not

respectable.

WHALING NOT RESPECTABLE? Whaling is imperial! By old English statutory

law, the whale is declared "a royal fish."\*

Oh, that's only nominal! The whale himself has never figured in any

grand imposing way.

THE WHALE NEVER FIGURED IN ANY GRAND IMPOSING WAY? In one of the mighty

triumphs given to a Roman general upon his entering the world's capital,

the bones of a whale, brought all the way from the Syrian coast, were

the most conspicuous object in the cymballed procession.\*

\*See subsequent chapters for something more on this head.

Grant it, since you cite it; but, say what you will, there is no real

dignity in whaling.

NO DIGNITY IN WHALING? The dignity of our calling the very heavens

attest. Cetus is a constellation in the South! No more! Drive down your

hat in presence of the Czar, and take it off to Queequeg! No more! I

know a man that, in his lifetime, has taken three hundred and fifty

whales. I account that man more honourable than that great captain of

antiquity who boasted of taking as many walled towns.

And, as for me, if, by any possibility, there be any as yet undiscovered

prime thing in me; if I shall ever deserve any real repute in that small

but high hushed world which I might not be unreasonably ambitious of; if

hereafter I shall do anything that, upon the whole, a man might rather

have done than to have left undone; if, at my death, my executors, or

more properly my creditors, find any precious MSS. in my desk, then here

I prospectively ascribe all the honour and the glory to whaling; for a

whale-ship was my Yale College and my Harvard.

CHAPTER 25. Postscript.

In behalf of the dignity of whaling, I would fain advance naught but

substantiated facts. But after embattling his facts, an advocate who

should wholly suppress a not unreasonable surmise, which might

tell eloquently upon his cause--such an advocate, would he not be

blameworthy?

It is well known that at the coronation of kings and queens, even modern

ones, a certain curious process of seasoning them for their functions is

gone through. There is a saltcellar of state, so called, and there

may be a castor of state. How they use the salt, precisely--who knows?

Certain I am, however, that a king's head is solemnly oiled at his

coronation, even as a head of salad. Can it be, though, that they

anoint it with a view of making its interior run well, as they anoint

machinery? Much might be ruminated here, concerning the essential

dignity of this regal process, because in common life we esteem but

meanly and contemptibly a fellow who anoints his hair, and palpably

smells of that anointing. In truth, a mature man who uses hair-oil,

unless medicinally, that man has probably got a quoggy spot in him

somewhere. As a general rule, he can't amount to much in his totality.

But the only thing to be considered here, is this--what kind of oil is

used at coronations? Certainly it cannot be olive oil, nor macassar oil,

nor castor oil, nor bear's oil, nor train oil, nor cod-liver oil. What

then can it possibly be, but sperm oil in its unmanufactured, unpolluted

state, the sweetest of all oils?

Think of that, ye loyal Britons! we whalemen supply your kings and

queens with coronation stuff!

CHAPTER 26. Knights and Squires.

The chief mate of the Pequod was Starbuck, a native of Nantucket, and a

Quaker by descent. He was a long, earnest man, and though born on an icy

coast, seemed well adapted to endure hot latitudes, his flesh being hard

as twice-baked biscuit. Transported to the Indies, his live blood would

not spoil like bottled ale. He must have been born in some time of

general drought and famine, or upon one of those fast days for which

his state is famous. Only some thirty arid summers had he seen; those

summers had dried up all his physical superfluousness. But this, his

thinness, so to speak, seemed no more the token of wasting anxieties and

cares, than it seemed the indication of any bodily blight. It was merely

the condensation of the man. He was by no means ill-looking; quite the

contrary. His pure tight skin was an excellent fit; and closely wrapped

up in it, and embalmed with inner health and strength, like a revivified

Egyptian, this Starbuck seemed prepared to endure for long ages to come,

and to endure always, as now; for be it Polar snow or torrid sun, like

a patent chronometer, his interior vitality was warranted to do well

in all climates. Looking into his eyes, you seemed to see there the yet

lingering images of those thousand-fold perils he had calmly confronted

through life. A staid, steadfast man, whose life for the most part was a

telling pantomime of action, and not a tame chapter of sounds. Yet, for

all his hardy sobriety and fortitude, there were certain qualities

in him which at times affected, and in some cases seemed well nigh to

overbalance all the rest. Uncommonly conscientious for a seaman, and

endued with a deep natural reverence, the wild watery loneliness of his

life did therefore strongly incline him to superstition; but to that

sort of superstition, which in some organizations seems rather to

spring, somehow, from intelligence than from ignorance. Outward portents

and inward presentiments were his. And if at times these things bent the

welded iron of his soul, much more did his far-away domestic memories

of his young Cape wife and child, tend to bend him still more from the

original ruggedness of his nature, and open him still further to those

latent influences which, in some honest-hearted men, restrain the gush

of dare-devil daring, so often evinced by others in the more perilous

vicissitudes of the fishery. "I will have no man in my boat," said

Starbuck, "who is not afraid of a whale." By this, he seemed to mean,

not only that the most reliable and useful courage was that which arises

from the fair estimation of the encountered peril, but that an utterly

fearless man is a far more dangerous comrade than a coward.

"Aye, aye," said Stubb, the second mate, "Starbuck, there, is as careful

a man as you'll find anywhere in this fishery." But we shall ere long

see what that word "careful" precisely means when used by a man like

Stubb, or almost any other whale hunter.

Starbuck was no crusader after perils; in him courage was not a

sentiment; but a thing simply useful to him, and always at hand upon all

mortally practical occasions. Besides, he thought, perhaps, that in this

business of whaling, courage was one of the great staple outfits of

the ship, like her beef and her bread, and not to be foolishly wasted.

Wherefore he had no fancy for lowering for whales after sun-down; nor

for persisting in fighting a fish that too much persisted in fighting

him. For, thought Starbuck, I am here in this critical ocean to kill

whales for my living, and not to be killed by them for theirs; and that

hundreds of men had been so killed Starbuck well knew. What doom was

his own father's? Where, in the bottomless deeps, could he find the torn

limbs of his brother?

With memories like these in him, and, moreover, given to a certain

superstitiousness, as has been said; the courage of this Starbuck which

could, nevertheless, still flourish, must indeed have been extreme. But

it was not in reasonable nature that a man so organized, and with such

terrible experiences and remembrances as he had; it was not in nature

that these things should fail in latently engendering an element in

him, which, under suitable circumstances, would break out from its

confinement, and burn all his courage up. And brave as he might be, it

was that sort of bravery chiefly, visible in some intrepid men, which,

while generally abiding firm in the conflict with seas, or winds, or

whales, or any of the ordinary irrational horrors of the world, yet

cannot withstand those more terrific, because more spiritual terrors,

which sometimes menace you from the concentrating brow of an enraged and

mighty man.

But were the coming narrative to reveal in any instance, the complete

abasement of poor Starbuck's fortitude, scarce might I have the heart to

write it; for it is a thing most sorrowful, nay shocking, to expose

the fall of valour in the soul. Men may seem detestable as joint

stock-companies and nations; knaves, fools, and murderers there may be;

men may have mean and meagre faces; but man, in the ideal, is so noble

and so sparkling, such a grand and glowing creature, that over any

ignominious blemish in him all his fellows should run to throw their

costliest robes. That immaculate manliness we feel within ourselves,

so far within us, that it remains intact though all the outer character

seem gone; bleeds with keenest anguish at the undraped spectacle of

a valor-ruined man. Nor can piety itself, at such a shameful sight,

completely stifle her upbraidings against the permitting stars. But this

august dignity I treat of, is not the dignity of kings and robes, but

that abounding dignity which has no robed investiture. Thou shalt see it

shining in the arm that wields a pick or drives a spike; that democratic

dignity which, on all hands, radiates without end from God; Himself! The

great God absolute! The centre and circumference of all democracy! His

omnipresence, our divine equality!

If, then, to meanest mariners, and renegades and castaways, I shall

hereafter ascribe high qualities, though dark; weave round them tragic

graces; if even the most mournful, perchance the most abased, among them

all, shall at times lift himself to the exalted mounts; if I shall touch

that workman's arm with some ethereal light; if I shall spread a rainbow

over his disastrous set of sun; then against all mortal critics bear

me out in it, thou Just Spirit of Equality, which hast spread one royal

mantle of humanity over all my kind! Bear me out in it, thou great

democratic God! who didst not refuse to the swart convict, Bunyan, the

pale, poetic pearl; Thou who didst clothe with doubly hammered leaves

of finest gold, the stumped and paupered arm of old Cervantes; Thou who

didst pick up Andrew Jackson from the pebbles; who didst hurl him upon a

war-horse; who didst thunder him higher than a throne! Thou who, in all

Thy mighty, earthly marchings, ever cullest Thy selectest champions from

the kingly commons; bear me out in it, O God!

CHAPTER 27. Knights and Squires.

Stubb was the second mate. He was a native of Cape Cod; and hence,

according to local usage, was called a Cape-Cod-man. A happy-go-lucky;

neither craven nor valiant; taking perils as they came with an

indifferent air; and while engaged in the most imminent crisis of the

chase, toiling away, calm and collected as a journeyman joiner engaged

for the year. Good-humored, easy, and careless, he presided over his

whale-boat as if the most deadly encounter were but a dinner, and his

crew all invited guests. He was as particular about the comfortable

arrangement of his part of the boat, as an old stage-driver is about the

snugness of his box. When close to the whale, in the very death-lock of

the fight, he handled his unpitying lance coolly and off-handedly, as

a whistling tinker his hammer. He would hum over his old rigadig tunes

while flank and flank with the most exasperated monster. Long usage had,

for this Stubb, converted the jaws of death into an easy chair. What he

thought of death itself, there is no telling. Whether he ever thought of

it at all, might be a question; but, if he ever did chance to cast his

mind that way after a comfortable dinner, no doubt, like a good sailor,

he took it to be a sort of call of the watch to tumble aloft, and bestir

themselves there, about something which he would find out when he obeyed

the order, and not sooner.

What, perhaps, with other things, made Stubb such an easy-going,

unfearing man, so cheerily trudging off with the burden of life in a

world full of grave pedlars, all bowed to the ground with their packs;

what helped to bring about that almost impious good-humor of his; that

thing must have been his pipe. For, like his nose, his short, black

little pipe was one of the regular features of his face. You would

almost as soon have expected him to turn out of his bunk without his

nose as without his pipe. He kept a whole row of pipes there ready

loaded, stuck in a rack, within easy reach of his hand; and, whenever he

turned in, he smoked them all out in succession, lighting one from

the other to the end of the chapter; then loading them again to be in

readiness anew. For, when Stubb dressed, instead of first putting his

legs into his trowsers, he put his pipe into his mouth.

I say this continual smoking must have been one cause, at least, of his

peculiar disposition; for every one knows that this earthly air, whether

ashore or afloat, is terribly infected with the nameless miseries of

the numberless mortals who have died exhaling it; and as in time of the

cholera, some people go about with a camphorated handkerchief to their

mouths; so, likewise, against all mortal tribulations, Stubb's tobacco

smoke might have operated as a sort of disinfecting agent.

The third mate was Flask, a native of Tisbury, in Martha's Vineyard. A

short, stout, ruddy young fellow, very pugnacious concerning whales,

who somehow seemed to think that the great leviathans had personally

and hereditarily affronted him; and therefore it was a sort of point of

honour with him, to destroy them whenever encountered. So utterly lost

was he to all sense of reverence for the many marvels of their majestic

bulk and mystic ways; and so dead to anything like an apprehension of

any possible danger from encountering them; that in his poor opinion,

the wondrous whale was but a species of magnified mouse, or at least

water-rat, requiring only a little circumvention and some small

application of time and trouble in order to kill and boil. This

ignorant, unconscious fearlessness of his made him a little waggish in

the matter of whales; he followed these fish for the fun of it; and a

three years' voyage round Cape Horn was only a jolly joke that lasted

that length of time. As a carpenter's nails are divided into wrought

nails and cut nails; so mankind may be similarly divided. Little Flask

was one of the wrought ones; made to clinch tight and last long. They

called him King-Post on board of the Pequod; because, in form, he could

be well likened to the short, square timber known by that name in Arctic

whalers; and which by the means of many radiating side timbers inserted

into it, serves to brace the ship against the icy concussions of those

battering seas.

Now these three mates--Starbuck, Stubb, and Flask, were momentous

men. They it was who by universal prescription commanded three of the

Pequod's boats as headsmen. In that grand order of battle in which

Captain Ahab would probably marshal his forces to descend on the whales,

these three headsmen were as captains of companies. Or, being armed with

their long keen whaling spears, they were as a picked trio of lancers;

even as the harpooneers were flingers of javelins.

And since in this famous fishery, each mate or headsman, like a Gothic

Knight of old, is always accompanied by his boat-steerer or harpooneer,

who in certain conjunctures provides him with a fresh lance, when

the former one has been badly twisted, or elbowed in the assault; and

moreover, as there generally subsists between the two, a close intimacy

and friendliness; it is therefore but meet, that in this place we set

down who the Pequod's harpooneers were, and to what headsman each of

them belonged.

First of all was Queequeg, whom Starbuck, the chief mate, had selected

for his squire. But Queequeg is already known.

Next was Tashtego, an unmixed Indian from Gay Head, the most westerly

promontory of Martha's Vineyard, where there still exists the last

remnant of a village of red men, which has long supplied the neighboring

island of Nantucket with many of her most daring harpooneers. In the

fishery, they usually go by the generic name of Gay-Headers. Tashtego's

long, lean, sable hair, his high cheek bones, and black rounding

eyes--for an Indian, Oriental in their largeness, but Antarctic in their

glittering expression--all this sufficiently proclaimed him an inheritor

of the unvitiated blood of those proud warrior hunters, who, in quest

of the great New England moose, had scoured, bow in hand, the aboriginal

forests of the main. But no longer snuffing in the trail of the wild

beasts of the woodland, Tashtego now hunted in the wake of the great

whales of the sea; the unerring harpoon of the son fitly replacing the

infallible arrow of the sires. To look at the tawny brawn of his lithe

snaky limbs, you would almost have credited the superstitions of some of

the earlier Puritans, and half-believed this wild Indian to be a son

of the Prince of the Powers of the Air. Tashtego was Stubb the second

mate's squire.

Third among the harpooneers was Daggoo, a gigantic, coal-black

negro-savage, with a lion-like tread--an Ahasuerus to behold. Suspended

from his ears were two golden hoops, so large that the sailors called

them ring-bolts, and would talk of securing the top-sail halyards to

them. In his youth Daggoo had voluntarily shipped on board of a whaler,

lying in a lonely bay on his native coast. And never having been

anywhere in the world but in Africa, Nantucket, and the pagan harbors

most frequented by whalemen; and having now led for many years the bold

life of the fishery in the ships of owners uncommonly heedful of what

manner of men they shipped; Daggoo retained all his barbaric virtues,

and erect as a giraffe, moved about the decks in all the pomp of six

feet five in his socks. There was a corporeal humility in looking up at

him; and a white man standing before him seemed a white flag come to

beg truce of a fortress. Curious to tell, this imperial negro, Ahasuerus

Daggoo, was the Squire of little Flask, who looked like a chess-man

beside him. As for the residue of the Pequod's company, be it said, that

at the present day not one in two of the many thousand men before the

mast employed in the American whale fishery, are Americans born, though

pretty nearly all the officers are. Herein it is the same with the

American whale fishery as with the American army and military and

merchant navies, and the engineering forces employed in the construction

of the American Canals and Railroads. The same, I say, because in all

these cases the native American liberally provides the brains, the rest

of the world as generously supplying the muscles. No small number of

these whaling seamen belong to the Azores, where the outward bound

Nantucket whalers frequently touch to augment their crews from the hardy

peasants of those rocky shores. In like manner, the Greenland whalers

sailing out of Hull or London, put in at the Shetland Islands, to

receive the full complement of their crew. Upon the passage homewards,

they drop them there again. How it is, there is no telling, but

Islanders seem to make the best whalemen. They were nearly all Islanders

in the Pequod, ISOLATOES too, I call such, not acknowledging the common

continent of men, but each ISOLATO living on a separate continent of his

own. Yet now, federated along one keel, what a set these Isolatoes were!

An Anacharsis Clootz deputation from all the isles of the sea, and all

the ends of the earth, accompanying Old Ahab in the Pequod to lay the

world's grievances before that bar from which not very many of them ever

come back. Black Little Pip--he never did--oh, no! he went before. Poor

Alabama boy! On the grim Pequod's forecastle, ye shall ere long see him,

beating his tambourine; prelusive of the eternal time, when sent for,

to the great quarter-deck on high, he was bid strike in with angels, and

beat his tambourine in glory; called a coward here, hailed a hero there!

CHAPTER 28. Ahab.

For several days after leaving Nantucket, nothing above hatches was seen

of Captain Ahab. The mates regularly relieved each other at the watches,

and for aught that could be seen to the contrary, they seemed to be the

only commanders of the ship; only they sometimes issued from the cabin

with orders so sudden and peremptory, that after all it was plain they

but commanded vicariously. Yes, their supreme lord and dictator was

there, though hitherto unseen by any eyes not permitted to penetrate

into the now sacred retreat of the cabin.

Every time I ascended to the deck from my watches below, I instantly

gazed aft to mark if any strange face were visible; for my first vague

disquietude touching the unknown captain, now in the seclusion of the

sea, became almost a perturbation. This was strangely heightened

at times by the ragged Elijah's diabolical incoherences uninvitedly

recurring to me, with a subtle energy I could not have before conceived

of. But poorly could I withstand them, much as in other moods I was

almost ready to smile at the solemn whimsicalities of that outlandish

prophet of the wharves. But whatever it was of apprehensiveness or

uneasiness--to call it so--which I felt, yet whenever I came to look

about me in the ship, it seemed against all warrantry to cherish such

emotions. For though the harpooneers, with the great body of the crew,

were a far more barbaric, heathenish, and motley set than any of the

tame merchant-ship companies which my previous experiences had made me

acquainted with, still I ascribed this--and rightly ascribed it--to the

fierce uniqueness of the very nature of that wild Scandinavian vocation

in which I had so abandonedly embarked. But it was especially the aspect

of the three chief officers of the ship, the mates, which was most

forcibly calculated to allay these colourless misgivings, and induce

confidence and cheerfulness in every presentment of the voyage. Three

better, more likely sea-officers and men, each in his own different way,

could not readily be found, and they were every one of them Americans; a

Nantucketer, a Vineyarder, a Cape man. Now, it being Christmas when the

ship shot from out her harbor, for a space we had biting Polar weather,

though all the time running away from it to the southward; and by every

degree and minute of latitude which we sailed, gradually leaving that

merciless winter, and all its intolerable weather behind us. It was one

of those less lowering, but still grey and gloomy enough mornings of the

transition, when with a fair wind the ship was rushing through the water

with a vindictive sort of leaping and melancholy rapidity, that as I

mounted to the deck at the call of the forenoon watch, so soon as I

levelled my glance towards the taffrail, foreboding shivers ran over me.

Reality outran apprehension; Captain Ahab stood upon his quarter-deck.

There seemed no sign of common bodily illness about him, nor of the

recovery from any. He looked like a man cut away from the stake, when

the fire has overrunningly wasted all the limbs without consuming them,

or taking away one particle from their compacted aged robustness. His

whole high, broad form, seemed made of solid bronze, and shaped in an

unalterable mould, like Cellini's cast Perseus. Threading its way out

from among his grey hairs, and continuing right down one side of his

tawny scorched face and neck, till it disappeared in his clothing,

you saw a slender rod-like mark, lividly whitish. It resembled that

perpendicular seam sometimes made in the straight, lofty trunk of

a great tree, when the upper lightning tearingly darts down it, and

without wrenching a single twig, peels and grooves out the bark from top

to bottom, ere running off into the soil, leaving the tree still greenly

alive, but branded. Whether that mark was born with him, or whether it

was the scar left by some desperate wound, no one could certainly say.

By some tacit consent, throughout the voyage little or no allusion was

made to it, especially by the mates. But once Tashtego's senior, an old

Gay-Head Indian among the crew, superstitiously asserted that not till

he was full forty years old did Ahab become that way branded, and

then it came upon him, not in the fury of any mortal fray, but in

an elemental strife at sea. Yet, this wild hint seemed inferentially

negatived, by what a grey Manxman insinuated, an old sepulchral man,

who, having never before sailed out of Nantucket, had never ere this

laid eye upon wild Ahab. Nevertheless, the old sea-traditions, the

immemorial credulities, popularly invested this old Manxman with

preternatural powers of discernment. So that no white sailor seriously

contradicted him when he said that if ever Captain Ahab should

be tranquilly laid out--which might hardly come to pass, so he

muttered--then, whoever should do that last office for the dead, would

find a birth-mark on him from crown to sole.

So powerfully did the whole grim aspect of Ahab affect me, and the livid

brand which streaked it, that for the first few moments I hardly noted

that not a little of this overbearing grimness was owing to the barbaric

white leg upon which he partly stood. It had previously come to me that

this ivory leg had at sea been fashioned from the polished bone of

the sperm whale's jaw. "Aye, he was dismasted off Japan," said the old

Gay-Head Indian once; "but like his dismasted craft, he shipped another

mast without coming home for it. He has a quiver of 'em."

I was struck with the singular posture he maintained. Upon each side of

the Pequod's quarter deck, and pretty close to the mizzen shrouds, there

was an auger hole, bored about half an inch or so, into the plank.

His bone leg steadied in that hole; one arm elevated, and holding by a

shroud; Captain Ahab stood erect, looking straight out beyond the

ship's ever-pitching prow. There was an infinity of firmest fortitude,

a determinate, unsurrenderable wilfulness, in the fixed and fearless,

forward dedication of that glance. Not a word he spoke; nor did his

officers say aught to him; though by all their minutest gestures

and expressions, they plainly showed the uneasy, if not painful,

consciousness of being under a troubled master-eye. And not only that,

but moody stricken Ahab stood before them with a crucifixion in his

face; in all the nameless regal overbearing dignity of some mighty woe.

Ere long, from his first visit in the air, he withdrew into his cabin.

But after that morning, he was every day visible to the crew; either

standing in his pivot-hole, or seated upon an ivory stool he had; or

heavily walking the deck. As the sky grew less gloomy; indeed, began to

grow a little genial, he became still less and less a recluse; as

if, when the ship had sailed from home, nothing but the dead wintry

bleakness of the sea had then kept him so secluded. And, by and by, it

came to pass, that he was almost continually in the air; but, as yet,

for all that he said, or perceptibly did, on the at last sunny deck,

he seemed as unnecessary there as another mast. But the Pequod was

only making a passage now; not regularly cruising; nearly all whaling

preparatives needing supervision the mates were fully competent to, so

that there was little or nothing, out of himself, to employ or excite

Ahab, now; and thus chase away, for that one interval, the clouds that

layer upon layer were piled upon his brow, as ever all clouds choose the

loftiest peaks to pile themselves upon.

Nevertheless, ere long, the warm, warbling persuasiveness of the

pleasant, holiday weather we came to, seemed gradually to charm him from

his mood. For, as when the red-cheeked, dancing girls, April and May,

trip home to the wintry, misanthropic woods; even the barest, ruggedest,

most thunder-cloven old oak will at least send forth some few green

sprouts, to welcome such glad-hearted visitants; so Ahab did, in the

end, a little respond to the playful allurings of that girlish air. More

than once did he put forth the faint blossom of a look, which, in any

other man, would have soon flowered out in a smile.

CHAPTER 29. Enter Ahab; to Him, Stubb.

Some days elapsed, and ice and icebergs all astern, the Pequod now

went rolling through the bright Quito spring, which, at sea, almost

perpetually reigns on the threshold of the eternal August of the Tropic.

The warmly cool, clear, ringing, perfumed, overflowing, redundant days,

were as crystal goblets of Persian sherbet, heaped up--flaked up, with

rose-water snow. The starred and stately nights seemed haughty dames in

jewelled velvets, nursing at home in lonely pride, the memory of their

absent conquering Earls, the golden helmeted suns! For sleeping man,

'twas hard to choose between such winsome days and such seducing nights.

But all the witcheries of that unwaning weather did not merely lend new

spells and potencies to the outward world. Inward they turned upon the

soul, especially when the still mild hours of eve came on; then, memory

shot her crystals as the clear ice most forms of noiseless twilights.

And all these subtle agencies, more and more they wrought on Ahab's

texture.

Old age is always wakeful; as if, the longer linked with life, the less

man has to do with aught that looks like death. Among sea-commanders,

the old greybeards will oftenest leave their berths to visit the

night-cloaked deck. It was so with Ahab; only that now, of late, he

seemed so much to live in the open air, that truly speaking, his visits

were more to the cabin, than from the cabin to the planks. "It feels

like going down into one's tomb,"--he would mutter to himself--"for an

old captain like me to be descending this narrow scuttle, to go to my

grave-dug berth."

So, almost every twenty-four hours, when the watches of the night were

set, and the band on deck sentinelled the slumbers of the band below;

and when if a rope was to be hauled upon the forecastle, the sailors

flung it not rudely down, as by day, but with some cautiousness dropt

it to its place for fear of disturbing their slumbering shipmates; when

this sort of steady quietude would begin to prevail, habitually, the

silent steersman would watch the cabin-scuttle; and ere long the old man

would emerge, gripping at the iron banister, to help his crippled way.

Some considering touch of humanity was in him; for at times like these,

he usually abstained from patrolling the quarter-deck; because to his

wearied mates, seeking repose within six inches of his ivory heel, such

would have been the reverberating crack and din of that bony step, that

their dreams would have been on the crunching teeth of sharks. But once,

the mood was on him too deep for common regardings; and as with heavy,

lumber-like pace he was measuring the ship from taffrail to mainmast,

Stubb, the old second mate, came up from below, with a certain

unassured, deprecating humorousness, hinted that if Captain Ahab was

pleased to walk the planks, then, no one could say nay; but there might

be some way of muffling the noise; hinting something indistinctly and

hesitatingly about a globe of tow, and the insertion into it, of the

ivory heel. Ah! Stubb, thou didst not know Ahab then.

"Am I a cannon-ball, Stubb," said Ahab, "that thou wouldst wad me that

fashion? But go thy ways; I had forgot. Below to thy nightly grave;

where such as ye sleep between shrouds, to use ye to the filling one at

last.--Down, dog, and kennel!"

Starting at the unforseen concluding exclamation of the so suddenly

scornful old man, Stubb was speechless a moment; then said excitedly, "I

am not used to be spoken to that way, sir; I do but less than half like

it, sir."

"Avast! gritted Ahab between his set teeth, and violently moving away,

as if to avoid some passionate temptation.

"No, sir; not yet," said Stubb, emboldened, "I will not tamely be called

a dog, sir."

"Then be called ten times a donkey, and a mule, and an ass, and begone,

or I'll clear the world of thee!"

As he said this, Ahab advanced upon him with such overbearing terrors in

his aspect, that Stubb involuntarily retreated.

"I was never served so before without giving a hard blow for it,"

muttered Stubb, as he found himself descending the cabin-scuttle. "It's

very queer. Stop, Stubb; somehow, now, I don't well know whether to go

back and strike him, or--what's that?--down here on my knees and pray

for him? Yes, that was the thought coming up in me; but it would be the

first time I ever DID pray. It's queer; very queer; and he's queer too;

aye, take him fore and aft, he's about the queerest old man Stubb ever

sailed with. How he flashed at me!--his eyes like powder-pans! is he

mad? Anyway there's something on his mind, as sure as there must be

something on a deck when it cracks. He aint in his bed now, either, more

than three hours out of the twenty-four; and he don't sleep then. Didn't

that Dough-Boy, the steward, tell me that of a morning he always finds

the old man's hammock clothes all rumpled and tumbled, and the sheets

down at the foot, and the coverlid almost tied into knots, and the

pillow a sort of frightful hot, as though a baked brick had been on

it? A hot old man! I guess he's got what some folks ashore call

a conscience; it's a kind of Tic-Dolly-row they say--worse nor a

toothache. Well, well; I don't know what it is, but the Lord keep me

from catching it. He's full of riddles; I wonder what he goes into the

after hold for, every night, as Dough-Boy tells me he suspects; what's

that for, I should like to know? Who's made appointments with him in

the hold? Ain't that queer, now? But there's no telling, it's the old

game--Here goes for a snooze. Damn me, it's worth a fellow's while to be

born into the world, if only to fall right asleep. And now that I think

of it, that's about the first thing babies do, and that's a sort of

queer, too. Damn me, but all things are queer, come to think of 'em. But

that's against my principles. Think not, is my eleventh commandment; and

sleep when you can, is my twelfth--So here goes again. But how's that?

didn't he call me a dog? blazes! he called me ten times a donkey, and

piled a lot of jackasses on top of THAT! He might as well have kicked

me, and done with it. Maybe he DID kick me, and I didn't observe it,

I was so taken all aback with his brow, somehow. It flashed like a

bleached bone. What the devil's the matter with me? I don't stand right

on my legs. Coming afoul of that old man has a sort of turned me wrong

side out. By the Lord, I must have been dreaming, though--How? how?

how?--but the only way's to stash it; so here goes to hammock again;

and in the morning, I'll see how this plaguey juggling thinks over by

daylight."

CHAPTER 30. The Pipe.

When Stubb had departed, Ahab stood for a while leaning over the

bulwarks; and then, as had been usual with him of late, calling a sailor

of the watch, he sent him below for his ivory stool, and also his pipe.

Lighting the pipe at the binnacle lamp and planting the stool on the

weather side of the deck, he sat and smoked.

In old Norse times, the thrones of the sea-loving Danish kings were

fabricated, saith tradition, of the tusks of the narwhale. How could one

look at Ahab then, seated on that tripod of bones, without bethinking

him of the royalty it symbolized? For a Khan of the plank, and a king of

the sea, and a great lord of Leviathans was Ahab.

Some moments passed, during which the thick vapour came from his mouth

in quick and constant puffs, which blew back again into his face. "How

now," he soliloquized at last, withdrawing the tube, "this smoking no

longer soothes. Oh, my pipe! hard must it go with me if thy charm be

gone! Here have I been unconsciously toiling, not pleasuring--aye, and

ignorantly smoking to windward all the while; to windward, and with

such nervous whiffs, as if, like the dying whale, my final jets were the

strongest and fullest of trouble. What business have I with this pipe?

This thing that is meant for sereneness, to send up mild white vapours

among mild white hairs, not among torn iron-grey locks like mine. I'll

smoke no more--"

He tossed the still lighted pipe into the sea. The fire hissed in the

waves; the same instant the ship shot by the bubble the sinking pipe

made. With slouched hat, Ahab lurchingly paced the planks.

CHAPTER 31. Queen Mab.

Next morning Stubb accosted Flask.

"Such a queer dream, King-Post, I never had. You know the old man's

ivory leg, well I dreamed he kicked me with it; and when I tried to kick

back, upon my soul, my little man, I kicked my leg right off! And then,

presto! Ahab seemed a pyramid, and I, like a blazing fool, kept kicking

at it. But what was still more curious, Flask--you know how curious all

dreams are--through all this rage that I was in, I somehow seemed to be

thinking to myself, that after all, it was not much of an insult, that

kick from Ahab. 'Why,' thinks I, 'what's the row? It's not a real leg,

only a false leg.' And there's a mighty difference between a living

thump and a dead thump. That's what makes a blow from the hand, Flask,

fifty times more savage to bear than a blow from a cane. The living

member--that makes the living insult, my little man. And thinks I to

myself all the while, mind, while I was stubbing my silly toes against

that cursed pyramid--so confoundedly contradictory was it all, all

the while, I say, I was thinking to myself, 'what's his leg now, but

a cane--a whalebone cane. Yes,' thinks I, 'it was only a playful

cudgelling--in fact, only a whaleboning that he gave me--not a base

kick. Besides,' thinks I, 'look at it once; why, the end of it--the foot

part--what a small sort of end it is; whereas, if a broad footed farmer

kicked me, THERE'S a devilish broad insult. But this insult is whittled

down to a point only.' But now comes the greatest joke of the

dream, Flask. While I was battering away at the pyramid, a sort of

badger-haired old merman, with a hump on his back, takes me by the

shoulders, and slews me round. 'What are you 'bout?' says he. Slid! man,

but I was frightened. Such a phiz! But, somehow, next moment I was over

the fright. 'What am I about?' says I at last. 'And what business is

that of yours, I should like to know, Mr. Humpback? Do YOU want a kick?'

By the lord, Flask, I had no sooner said that, than he turned round his

stern to me, bent over, and dragging up a lot of seaweed he had for a

clout--what do you think, I saw?--why thunder alive, man, his stern

was stuck full of marlinspikes, with the points out. Says I, on second

thoughts, 'I guess I won't kick you, old fellow.' 'Wise Stubb,' said he,

'wise Stubb;' and kept muttering it all the time, a sort of eating of

his own gums like a chimney hag. Seeing he wasn't going to stop saying

over his 'wise Stubb, wise Stubb,' I thought I might as well fall to

kicking the pyramid again. But I had only just lifted my foot for it,

when he roared out, 'Stop that kicking!' 'Halloa,' says I, 'what's

the matter now, old fellow?' 'Look ye here,' says he; 'let's argue

the insult. Captain Ahab kicked ye, didn't he?' 'Yes, he did,' says

I--'right HERE it was.' 'Very good,' says he--'he used his ivory leg,

didn't he?' 'Yes, he did,' says I. 'Well then,' says he, 'wise Stubb,

what have you to complain of? Didn't he kick with right good will? it

wasn't a common pitch pine leg he kicked with, was it? No, you were

kicked by a great man, and with a beautiful ivory leg, Stubb. It's an

honour; I consider it an honour. Listen, wise Stubb. In old England the

greatest lords think it great glory to be slapped by a queen, and made

garter-knights of; but, be YOUR boast, Stubb, that ye were kicked by

old Ahab, and made a wise man of. Remember what I say; BE kicked by him;

account his kicks honours; and on no account kick back; for you can't

help yourself, wise Stubb. Don't you see that pyramid?' With that, he

all of a sudden seemed somehow, in some queer fashion, to swim off into

the air. I snored; rolled over; and there I was in my hammock! Now, what

do you think of that dream, Flask?"

"I don't know; it seems a sort of foolish to me, tho.'"

"May be; may be. But it's made a wise man of me, Flask. D'ye see Ahab

standing there, sideways looking over the stern? Well, the best thing

you can do, Flask, is to let the old man alone; never speak to him,

whatever he says. Halloa! What's that he shouts? Hark!"

"Mast-head, there! Look sharp, all of ye! There are whales hereabouts!

"If ye see a white one, split your lungs for him!

"What do you think of that now, Flask? ain't there a small drop of

something queer about that, eh? A white whale--did ye mark that, man?

Look ye--there's something special in the wind. Stand by for it, Flask.

Ahab has that that's bloody on his mind. But, mum; he comes this way."

CHAPTER 32. Cetology.

Already we are boldly launched upon the deep; but soon we shall be lost

in its unshored, harbourless immensities. Ere that come to pass; ere the

Pequod's weedy hull rolls side by side with the barnacled hulls of the

leviathan; at the outset it is but well to attend to a matter almost

indispensable to a thorough appreciative understanding of the more

special leviathanic revelations and allusions of all sorts which are to

follow.

It is some systematized exhibition of the whale in his broad genera,

that I would now fain put before you. Yet is it no easy task. The

classification of the constituents of a chaos, nothing less is here

essayed. Listen to what the best and latest authorities have laid down.

"No branch of Zoology is so much involved as that which is entitled

Cetology," says Captain Scoresby, A.D. 1820.

"It is not my intention, were it in my power, to enter into the

inquiry as to the true method of dividing the cetacea into groups and

families.... Utter confusion exists among the historians of this animal"

(sperm whale), says Surgeon Beale, A.D. 1839.

"Unfitness to pursue our research in the unfathomable waters."

"Impenetrable veil covering our knowledge of the cetacea." "A field

strewn with thorns." "All these incomplete indications but serve to

torture us naturalists."

Thus speak of the whale, the great Cuvier, and John Hunter, and Lesson,

those lights of zoology and anatomy. Nevertheless, though of real

knowledge there be little, yet of books there are a plenty; and so in

some small degree, with cetology, or the science of whales. Many are

the men, small and great, old and new, landsmen and seamen, who have at

large or in little, written of the whale. Run over a few:--The Authors

of the Bible; Aristotle; Pliny; Aldrovandi; Sir Thomas Browne; Gesner;

Ray; Linnaeus; Rondeletius; Willoughby; Green; Artedi; Sibbald; Brisson;

Marten; Lacepede; Bonneterre; Desmarest; Baron Cuvier; Frederick Cuvier;

John Hunter; Owen; Scoresby; Beale; Bennett; J. Ross Browne; the

Author of Miriam Coffin; Olmstead; and the Rev. T. Cheever. But to what

ultimate generalizing purpose all these have written, the above cited

extracts will show.

Of the names in this list of whale authors, only those following Owen

ever saw living whales; and but one of them was a real professional

harpooneer and whaleman. I mean Captain Scoresby. On the separate

subject of the Greenland or right-whale, he is the best existing

authority. But Scoresby knew nothing and says nothing of the great

sperm whale, compared with which the Greenland whale is almost unworthy

mentioning. And here be it said, that the Greenland whale is an usurper

upon the throne of the seas. He is not even by any means the largest

of the whales. Yet, owing to the long priority of his claims, and the

profound ignorance which, till some seventy years back, invested the

then fabulous or utterly unknown sperm-whale, and which ignorance to

this present day still reigns in all but some few scientific retreats

and whale-ports; this usurpation has been every way complete. Reference

to nearly all the leviathanic allusions in the great poets of past days,

will satisfy you that the Greenland whale, without one rival, was to

them the monarch of the seas. But the time has at last come for a new

proclamation. This is Charing Cross; hear ye! good people all,--the

Greenland whale is deposed,--the great sperm whale now reigneth!

There are only two books in being which at all pretend to put the living

sperm whale before you, and at the same time, in the remotest degree

succeed in the attempt. Those books are Beale's and Bennett's; both in

their time surgeons to English South-Sea whale-ships, and both exact and

reliable men. The original matter touching the sperm whale to be found

in their volumes is necessarily small; but so far as it goes, it is of

excellent quality, though mostly confined to scientific description. As

yet, however, the sperm whale, scientific or poetic, lives not complete

in any literature. Far above all other hunted whales, his is an

unwritten life.

Now the various species of whales need some sort of popular

comprehensive classification, if only an easy outline one for the

present, hereafter to be filled in all its departments by subsequent

laborers. As no better man advances to take this matter in hand, I

hereupon offer my own poor endeavors. I promise nothing complete;

because any human thing supposed to be complete, must for that very

reason infallibly be faulty. I shall not pretend to a minute anatomical

description of the various species, or--in this place at least--to much

of any description. My object here is simply to project the draught of a

systematization of cetology. I am the architect, not the builder.

But it is a ponderous task; no ordinary letter-sorter in the Post-Office

is equal to it. To grope down into the bottom of the sea after them;

to have one's hands among the unspeakable foundations, ribs, and very

pelvis of the world; this is a fearful thing. What am I that I should

essay to hook the nose of this leviathan! The awful tauntings in Job

might well appal me. Will he (the leviathan) make a covenant with thee?

Behold the hope of him is vain! But I have swam through libraries and

sailed through oceans; I have had to do with whales with these visible

hands; I am in earnest; and I will try. There are some preliminaries to

settle.

First: The uncertain, unsettled condition of this science of Cetology

is in the very vestibule attested by the fact, that in some quarters it

still remains a moot point whether a whale be a fish. In his System of

Nature, A.D. 1776, Linnaeus declares, "I hereby separate the whales from

the fish." But of my own knowledge, I know that down to the year 1850,

sharks and shad, alewives and herring, against Linnaeus's express edict,

were still found dividing the possession of the same seas with the

Leviathan.

The grounds upon which Linnaeus would fain have banished the whales from

the waters, he states as follows: "On account of their warm bilocular

heart, their lungs, their movable eyelids, their hollow ears, penem

intrantem feminam mammis lactantem," and finally, "ex lege naturae jure

meritoque." I submitted all this to my friends Simeon Macey and Charley

Coffin, of Nantucket, both messmates of mine in a certain voyage, and

they united in the opinion that the reasons set forth were altogether

insufficient. Charley profanely hinted they were humbug.

Be it known that, waiving all argument, I take the good old fashioned

ground that the whale is a fish, and call upon holy Jonah to back me.

This fundamental thing settled, the next point is, in what internal

respect does the whale differ from other fish. Above, Linnaeus has given

you those items. But in brief, they are these: lungs and warm blood;

whereas, all other fish are lungless and cold blooded.

Next: how shall we define the whale, by his obvious externals, so as

conspicuously to label him for all time to come? To be short, then, a

whale is A SPOUTING FISH WITH A HORIZONTAL TAIL. There you have

him. However contracted, that definition is the result of expanded

meditation. A walrus spouts much like a whale, but the walrus is not a

fish, because he is amphibious. But the last term of the definition is

still more cogent, as coupled with the first. Almost any one must have

noticed that all the fish familiar to landsmen have not a flat, but a

vertical, or up-and-down tail. Whereas, among spouting fish the tail,

though it may be similarly shaped, invariably assumes a horizontal

position.

By the above definition of what a whale is, I do by no means exclude

from the leviathanic brotherhood any sea creature hitherto identified

with the whale by the best informed Nantucketers; nor, on the other

hand, link with it any fish hitherto authoritatively regarded as alien.\*

Hence, all the smaller, spouting, and horizontal tailed fish must be

included in this ground-plan of Cetology. Now, then, come the grand

divisions of the entire whale host.

\*I am aware that down to the present time, the fish styled Lamatins and

Dugongs (Pig-fish and Sow-fish of the Coffins of Nantucket) are included

by many naturalists among the whales. But as these pig-fish are a noisy,

contemptible set, mostly lurking in the mouths of rivers, and feeding on

wet hay, and especially as they do not spout, I deny their credentials

as whales; and have presented them with their passports to quit the

Kingdom of Cetology.

First: According to magnitude I divide the whales into three primary

BOOKS (subdivisible into CHAPTERS), and these shall comprehend them all,

both small and large.

I. THE FOLIO WHALE; II. the OCTAVO WHALE; III. the DUODECIMO WHALE.

As the type of the FOLIO I present the SPERM WHALE; of the OCTAVO, the

GRAMPUS; of the DUODECIMO, the PORPOISE.

FOLIOS. Among these I here include the following chapters:--I. The SPERM

WHALE; II. the RIGHT WHALE; III. the FIN-BACK WHALE; IV. the HUMP-BACKED

WHALE; V. the RAZOR-BACK WHALE; VI. the SULPHUR-BOTTOM WHALE.

BOOK I. (FOLIO), CHAPTER I. (SPERM WHALE).--This whale, among the

English of old vaguely known as the Trumpa whale, and the Physeter

whale, and the Anvil Headed whale, is the present Cachalot of the

French, and the Pottsfich of the Germans, and the Macrocephalus of the

Long Words. He is, without doubt, the largest inhabitant of the globe;

the most formidable of all whales to encounter; the most majestic in

aspect; and lastly, by far the most valuable in commerce; he being

the only creature from which that valuable substance, spermaceti, is

obtained. All his peculiarities will, in many other places, be enlarged

upon. It is chiefly with his name that I now have to do. Philologically

considered, it is absurd. Some centuries ago, when the Sperm whale was

almost wholly unknown in his own proper individuality, and when his oil

was only accidentally obtained from the stranded fish; in those days

spermaceti, it would seem, was popularly supposed to be derived from a

creature identical with the one then known in England as the Greenland

or Right Whale. It was the idea also, that this same spermaceti was that

quickening humor of the Greenland Whale which the first syllable of

the word literally expresses. In those times, also, spermaceti was

exceedingly scarce, not being used for light, but only as an ointment

and medicament. It was only to be had from the druggists as you nowadays

buy an ounce of rhubarb. When, as I opine, in the course of time, the

true nature of spermaceti became known, its original name was still

retained by the dealers; no doubt to enhance its value by a notion so

strangely significant of its scarcity. And so the appellation must at

last have come to be bestowed upon the whale from which this spermaceti

was really derived.

BOOK I. (FOLIO), CHAPTER II. (RIGHT WHALE).--In one respect this is the

most venerable of the leviathans, being the one first regularly hunted

by man. It yields the article commonly known as whalebone or baleen; and

the oil specially known as "whale oil," an inferior article in commerce.

Among the fishermen, he is indiscriminately designated by all the

following titles: The Whale; the Greenland Whale; the Black Whale;

the Great Whale; the True Whale; the Right Whale. There is a deal of

obscurity concerning the identity of the species thus multitudinously

baptised. What then is the whale, which I include in the second species

of my Folios? It is the Great Mysticetus of the English naturalists; the

Greenland Whale of the English whalemen; the Baliene Ordinaire of the

French whalemen; the Growlands Walfish of the Swedes. It is the whale

which for more than two centuries past has been hunted by the Dutch and

English in the Arctic seas; it is the whale which the American fishermen

have long pursued in the Indian ocean, on the Brazil Banks, on the Nor'

West Coast, and various other parts of the world, designated by them

Right Whale Cruising Grounds.

Some pretend to see a difference between the Greenland whale of the

English and the right whale of the Americans. But they precisely agree

in all their grand features; nor has there yet been presented a single

determinate fact upon which to ground a radical distinction. It is by

endless subdivisions based upon the most inconclusive differences, that

some departments of natural history become so repellingly intricate. The

right whale will be elsewhere treated of at some length, with reference

to elucidating the sperm whale.

BOOK I. (FOLIO), CHAPTER III. (FIN-BACK).--Under this head I reckon

a monster which, by the various names of Fin-Back, Tall-Spout, and

Long-John, has been seen almost in every sea and is commonly the whale

whose distant jet is so often descried by passengers crossing the

Atlantic, in the New York packet-tracks. In the length he attains, and

in his baleen, the Fin-back resembles the right whale, but is of a less

portly girth, and a lighter colour, approaching to olive. His great lips

present a cable-like aspect, formed by the intertwisting, slanting folds

of large wrinkles. His grand distinguishing feature, the fin, from which

he derives his name, is often a conspicuous object. This fin is some

three or four feet long, growing vertically from the hinder part of the

back, of an angular shape, and with a very sharp pointed end. Even if

not the slightest other part of the creature be visible, this isolated

fin will, at times, be seen plainly projecting from the surface. When

the sea is moderately calm, and slightly marked with spherical ripples,

and this gnomon-like fin stands up and casts shadows upon the wrinkled

surface, it may well be supposed that the watery circle surrounding it

somewhat resembles a dial, with its style and wavy hour-lines graved on

it. On that Ahaz-dial the shadow often goes back. The Fin-Back is not

gregarious. He seems a whale-hater, as some men are man-haters. Very

shy; always going solitary; unexpectedly rising to the surface in the

remotest and most sullen waters; his straight and single lofty jet

rising like a tall misanthropic spear upon a barren plain; gifted with

such wondrous power and velocity in swimming, as to defy all present

pursuit from man; this leviathan seems the banished and unconquerable

Cain of his race, bearing for his mark that style upon his back. From

having the baleen in his mouth, the Fin-Back is sometimes included with

the right whale, among a theoretic species denominated WHALEBONE WHALES,

that is, whales with baleen. Of these so called Whalebone whales, there

would seem to be several varieties, most of which, however, are little

known. Broad-nosed whales and beaked whales; pike-headed whales; bunched

whales; under-jawed whales and rostrated whales, are the fishermen's

names for a few sorts.

In connection with this appellative of "Whalebone whales," it is of

great importance to mention, that however such a nomenclature may be

convenient in facilitating allusions to some kind of whales, yet it is

in vain to attempt a clear classification of the Leviathan, founded upon

either his baleen, or hump, or fin, or teeth; notwithstanding that those

marked parts or features very obviously seem better adapted to afford

the basis for a regular system of Cetology than any other detached

bodily distinctions, which the whale, in his kinds, presents. How

then? The baleen, hump, back-fin, and teeth; these are things whose

peculiarities are indiscriminately dispersed among all sorts of whales,

without any regard to what may be the nature of their structure in other

and more essential particulars. Thus, the sperm whale and the humpbacked

whale, each has a hump; but there the similitude ceases. Then, this same

humpbacked whale and the Greenland whale, each of these has baleen;

but there again the similitude ceases. And it is just the same with the

other parts above mentioned. In various sorts of whales, they form such

irregular combinations; or, in the case of any one of them detached,

such an irregular isolation; as utterly to defy all general

methodization formed upon such a basis. On this rock every one of the

whale-naturalists has split.

But it may possibly be conceived that, in the internal parts of the

whale, in his anatomy--there, at least, we shall be able to hit the

right classification. Nay; what thing, for example, is there in the

Greenland whale's anatomy more striking than his baleen? Yet we have

seen that by his baleen it is impossible correctly to classify the

Greenland whale. And if you descend into the bowels of the various

leviathans, why there you will not find distinctions a fiftieth part as

available to the systematizer as those external ones already enumerated.

What then remains? nothing but to take hold of the whales bodily, in

their entire liberal volume, and boldly sort them that way. And this is

the Bibliographical system here adopted; and it is the only one that can

possibly succeed, for it alone is practicable. To proceed.

BOOK I. (FOLIO) CHAPTER IV. (HUMP-BACK).--This whale is often seen on

the northern American coast. He has been frequently captured there, and

towed into harbor. He has a great pack on him like a peddler; or you

might call him the Elephant and Castle whale. At any rate, the popular

name for him does not sufficiently distinguish him, since the sperm

whale also has a hump though a smaller one. His oil is not very

valuable. He has baleen. He is the most gamesome and light-hearted of

all the whales, making more gay foam and white water generally than any

other of them.

BOOK I. (FOLIO), CHAPTER V. (RAZOR-BACK).--Of this whale little is known

but his name. I have seen him at a distance off Cape Horn. Of a retiring

nature, he eludes both hunters and philosophers. Though no coward, he

has never yet shown any part of him but his back, which rises in a long

sharp ridge. Let him go. I know little more of him, nor does anybody

else.

BOOK I. (FOLIO), CHAPTER VI. (SULPHUR-BOTTOM).--Another retiring

gentleman, with a brimstone belly, doubtless got by scraping along the

Tartarian tiles in some of his profounder divings. He is seldom seen;

at least I have never seen him except in the remoter southern seas,

and then always at too great a distance to study his countenance. He is

never chased; he would run away with rope-walks of line. Prodigies are

told of him. Adieu, Sulphur Bottom! I can say nothing more that is true

of ye, nor can the oldest Nantucketer.

Thus ends BOOK I. (FOLIO), and now begins BOOK II. (OCTAVO).

OCTAVOES.\*--These embrace the whales of middling magnitude, among which

present may be numbered:--I., the GRAMPUS; II., the BLACK FISH; III.,

the NARWHALE; IV., the THRASHER; V., the KILLER.

\*Why this book of whales is not denominated the Quarto is very plain.

Because, while the whales of this order, though smaller than those of

the former order, nevertheless retain a proportionate likeness to them

in figure, yet the bookbinder's Quarto volume in its dimensioned form

does not preserve the shape of the Folio volume, but the Octavo volume

does.

BOOK II. (OCTAVO), CHAPTER I. (GRAMPUS).--Though this fish, whose

loud sonorous breathing, or rather blowing, has furnished a proverb

to landsmen, is so well known a denizen of the deep, yet is he not

popularly classed among whales. But possessing all the grand distinctive

features of the leviathan, most naturalists have recognised him for one.

He is of moderate octavo size, varying from fifteen to twenty-five feet

in length, and of corresponding dimensions round the waist. He swims in

herds; he is never regularly hunted, though his oil is considerable in

quantity, and pretty good for light. By some fishermen his approach is

regarded as premonitory of the advance of the great sperm whale.

BOOK II. (OCTAVO), CHAPTER II. (BLACK FISH).--I give the popular

fishermen's names for all these fish, for generally they are the best.

Where any name happens to be vague or inexpressive, I shall say so,

and suggest another. I do so now, touching the Black Fish, so-called,

because blackness is the rule among almost all whales. So, call him the

Hyena Whale, if you please. His voracity is well known, and from the

circumstance that the inner angles of his lips are curved upwards, he

carries an everlasting Mephistophelean grin on his face. This whale

averages some sixteen or eighteen feet in length. He is found in almost

all latitudes. He has a peculiar way of showing his dorsal hooked fin

in swimming, which looks something like a Roman nose. When not more

profitably employed, the sperm whale hunters sometimes capture the Hyena

whale, to keep up the supply of cheap oil for domestic employment--as

some frugal housekeepers, in the absence of company, and quite alone by

themselves, burn unsavory tallow instead of odorous wax. Though their

blubber is very thin, some of these whales will yield you upwards of

thirty gallons of oil.

BOOK II. (OCTAVO), CHAPTER III. (NARWHALE), that is, NOSTRIL

WHALE.--Another instance of a curiously named whale, so named I suppose

from his peculiar horn being originally mistaken for a peaked nose. The

creature is some sixteen feet in length, while its horn averages five

feet, though some exceed ten, and even attain to fifteen feet. Strictly

speaking, this horn is but a lengthened tusk, growing out from the jaw

in a line a little depressed from the horizontal. But it is only

found on the sinister side, which has an ill effect, giving its owner

something analogous to the aspect of a clumsy left-handed man. What

precise purpose this ivory horn or lance answers, it would be hard to

say. It does not seem to be used like the blade of the sword-fish and

bill-fish; though some sailors tell me that the Narwhale employs it for

a rake in turning over the bottom of the sea for food. Charley Coffin

said it was used for an ice-piercer; for the Narwhale, rising to the

surface of the Polar Sea, and finding it sheeted with ice, thrusts his

horn up, and so breaks through. But you cannot prove either of these

surmises to be correct. My own opinion is, that however this one-sided

horn may really be used by the Narwhale--however that may be--it would

certainly be very convenient to him for a folder in reading pamphlets.

The Narwhale I have heard called the Tusked whale, the Horned whale, and

the Unicorn whale. He is certainly a curious example of the Unicornism

to be found in almost every kingdom of animated nature. From certain

cloistered old authors I have gathered that this same sea-unicorn's horn

was in ancient days regarded as the great antidote against poison,

and as such, preparations of it brought immense prices. It was also

distilled to a volatile salts for fainting ladies, the same way that the

horns of the male deer are manufactured into hartshorn. Originally it

was in itself accounted an object of great curiosity. Black Letter tells

me that Sir Martin Frobisher on his return from that voyage, when

Queen Bess did gallantly wave her jewelled hand to him from a window

of Greenwich Palace, as his bold ship sailed down the Thames; "when Sir

Martin returned from that voyage," saith Black Letter, "on bended knees

he presented to her highness a prodigious long horn of the Narwhale,

which for a long period after hung in the castle at Windsor." An Irish

author avers that the Earl of Leicester, on bended knees, did likewise

present to her highness another horn, pertaining to a land beast of the

unicorn nature.

The Narwhale has a very picturesque, leopard-like look, being of a

milk-white ground colour, dotted with round and oblong spots of black.

His oil is very superior, clear and fine; but there is little of it, and

he is seldom hunted. He is mostly found in the circumpolar seas.

BOOK II. (OCTAVO), CHAPTER IV. (KILLER).--Of this whale little is

precisely known to the Nantucketer, and nothing at all to the professed

naturalist. From what I have seen of him at a distance, I should say

that he was about the bigness of a grampus. He is very savage--a sort of

Feegee fish. He sometimes takes the great Folio whales by the lip, and

hangs there like a leech, till the mighty brute is worried to death. The

Killer is never hunted. I never heard what sort of oil he has. Exception

might be taken to the name bestowed upon this whale, on the ground

of its indistinctness. For we are all killers, on land and on sea;

Bonapartes and Sharks included.

BOOK II. (OCTAVO), CHAPTER V. (THRASHER).--This gentleman is famous for

his tail, which he uses for a ferule in thrashing his foes. He mounts

the Folio whale's back, and as he swims, he works his passage by

flogging him; as some schoolmasters get along in the world by a similar

process. Still less is known of the Thrasher than of the Killer. Both

are outlaws, even in the lawless seas.

Thus ends BOOK II. (OCTAVO), and begins BOOK III. (DUODECIMO).

DUODECIMOES.--These include the smaller whales. I. The Huzza Porpoise.

II. The Algerine Porpoise. III. The Mealy-mouthed Porpoise.

To those who have not chanced specially to study the subject, it may

possibly seem strange, that fishes not commonly exceeding four or five

feet should be marshalled among WHALES--a word, which, in the popular

sense, always conveys an idea of hugeness. But the creatures set

down above as Duodecimoes are infallibly whales, by the terms of my

definition of what a whale is--i.e. a spouting fish, with a horizontal

tail.

BOOK III. (DUODECIMO), CHAPTER 1. (HUZZA PORPOISE).--This is the

common porpoise found almost all over the globe. The name is of my own

bestowal; for there are more than one sort of porpoises, and something

must be done to distinguish them. I call him thus, because he always

swims in hilarious shoals, which upon the broad sea keep tossing

themselves to heaven like caps in a Fourth-of-July crowd. Their

appearance is generally hailed with delight by the mariner. Full of fine

spirits, they invariably come from the breezy billows to windward. They

are the lads that always live before the wind. They are accounted a

lucky omen. If you yourself can withstand three cheers at beholding

these vivacious fish, then heaven help ye; the spirit of godly

gamesomeness is not in ye. A well-fed, plump Huzza Porpoise will

yield you one good gallon of good oil. But the fine and delicate fluid

extracted from his jaws is exceedingly valuable. It is in request among

jewellers and watchmakers. Sailors put it on their hones. Porpoise

meat is good eating, you know. It may never have occurred to you that

a porpoise spouts. Indeed, his spout is so small that it is not very

readily discernible. But the next time you have a chance, watch him; and

you will then see the great Sperm whale himself in miniature.

BOOK III. (DUODECIMO), CHAPTER II. (ALGERINE PORPOISE).--A pirate. Very

savage. He is only found, I think, in the Pacific. He is somewhat larger

than the Huzza Porpoise, but much of the same general make. Provoke him,

and he will buckle to a shark. I have lowered for him many times, but

never yet saw him captured.

BOOK III. (DUODECIMO), CHAPTER III. (MEALY-MOUTHED PORPOISE).--The

largest kind of Porpoise; and only found in the Pacific, so far as it is

known. The only English name, by which he has hitherto been designated,

is that of the fishers--Right-Whale Porpoise, from the circumstance that

he is chiefly found in the vicinity of that Folio. In shape, he differs

in some degree from the Huzza Porpoise, being of a less rotund and jolly

girth; indeed, he is of quite a neat and gentleman-like figure. He has

no fins on his back (most other porpoises have), he has a lovely tail,

and sentimental Indian eyes of a hazel hue. But his mealy-mouth spoils

all. Though his entire back down to his side fins is of a deep sable,

yet a boundary line, distinct as the mark in a ship's hull, called

the "bright waist," that line streaks him from stem to stern, with two

separate colours, black above and white below. The white comprises part

of his head, and the whole of his mouth, which makes him look as if he

had just escaped from a felonious visit to a meal-bag. A most mean and

mealy aspect! His oil is much like that of the common porpoise.

Beyond the DUODECIMO, this system does not proceed, inasmuch as

the Porpoise is the smallest of the whales. Above, you have all the

Leviathans of note. But there are a rabble of uncertain, fugitive,

half-fabulous whales, which, as an American whaleman, I know by

reputation, but not personally. I shall enumerate them by their

fore-castle appellations; for possibly such a list may be valuable to

future investigators, who may complete what I have here but begun. If

any of the following whales, shall hereafter be caught and marked, then

he can readily be incorporated into this System, according to his Folio,

Octavo, or Duodecimo magnitude:--The Bottle-Nose Whale; the Junk Whale;

the Pudding-Headed Whale; the Cape Whale; the Leading Whale; the Cannon

Whale; the Scragg Whale; the Coppered Whale; the Elephant Whale; the

Iceberg Whale; the Quog Whale; the Blue Whale; etc. From Icelandic,

Dutch, and old English authorities, there might be quoted other lists of

uncertain whales, blessed with all manner of uncouth names. But I omit

them as altogether obsolete; and can hardly help suspecting them for

mere sounds, full of Leviathanism, but signifying nothing.

Finally: It was stated at the outset, that this system would not be

here, and at once, perfected. You cannot but plainly see that I have

kept my word. But I now leave my cetological System standing thus

unfinished, even as the great Cathedral of Cologne was left, with the

crane still standing upon the top of the uncompleted tower. For small

erections may be finished by their first architects; grand ones, true

ones, ever leave the copestone to posterity. God keep me from ever

completing anything. This whole book is but a draught--nay, but the

draught of a draught. Oh, Time, Strength, Cash, and Patience!

CHAPTER 33. The Specksynder.

Concerning the officers of the whale-craft, this seems as good a place

as any to set down a little domestic peculiarity on ship-board, arising

from the existence of the harpooneer class of officers, a class unknown

of course in any other marine than the whale-fleet.

The large importance attached to the harpooneer's vocation is evinced

by the fact, that originally in the old Dutch Fishery, two centuries

and more ago, the command of a whale ship was not wholly lodged in

the person now called the captain, but was divided between him and an

officer called the Specksynder. Literally this word means Fat-Cutter;

usage, however, in time made it equivalent to Chief Harpooneer. In

those days, the captain's authority was restricted to the navigation

and general management of the vessel; while over the whale-hunting

department and all its concerns, the Specksynder or Chief Harpooneer

reigned supreme. In the British Greenland Fishery, under the corrupted

title of Specksioneer, this old Dutch official is still retained, but

his former dignity is sadly abridged. At present he ranks simply

as senior Harpooneer; and as such, is but one of the captain's more

inferior subalterns. Nevertheless, as upon the good conduct of the

harpooneers the success of a whaling voyage largely depends, and since

in the American Fishery he is not only an important officer in the boat,

but under certain circumstances (night watches on a whaling ground) the

command of the ship's deck is also his; therefore the grand political

maxim of the sea demands, that he should nominally live apart from

the men before the mast, and be in some way distinguished as their

professional superior; though always, by them, familiarly regarded as

their social equal.

Now, the grand distinction drawn between officer and man at sea, is

this--the first lives aft, the last forward. Hence, in whale-ships and

merchantmen alike, the mates have their quarters with the captain; and

so, too, in most of the American whalers the harpooneers are lodged in

the after part of the ship. That is to say, they take their meals in the

captain's cabin, and sleep in a place indirectly communicating with it.

Though the long period of a Southern whaling voyage (by far the longest

of all voyages now or ever made by man), the peculiar perils of it, and

the community of interest prevailing among a company, all of whom, high

or low, depend for their profits, not upon fixed wages, but upon their

common luck, together with their common vigilance, intrepidity, and

hard work; though all these things do in some cases tend to beget a less

rigorous discipline than in merchantmen generally; yet, never mind

how much like an old Mesopotamian family these whalemen may, in some

primitive instances, live together; for all that, the punctilious

externals, at least, of the quarter-deck are seldom materially relaxed,

and in no instance done away. Indeed, many are the Nantucket ships in

which you will see the skipper parading his quarter-deck with an elated

grandeur not surpassed in any military navy; nay, extorting almost

as much outward homage as if he wore the imperial purple, and not the

shabbiest of pilot-cloth.

And though of all men the moody captain of the Pequod was the least

given to that sort of shallowest assumption; and though the only homage

he ever exacted, was implicit, instantaneous obedience; though he

required no man to remove the shoes from his feet ere stepping upon

the quarter-deck; and though there were times when, owing to peculiar

circumstances connected with events hereafter to be detailed, he

addressed them in unusual terms, whether of condescension or IN

TERROREM, or otherwise; yet even Captain Ahab was by no means

unobservant of the paramount forms and usages of the sea.

Nor, perhaps, will it fail to be eventually perceived, that behind those

forms and usages, as it were, he sometimes masked himself; incidentally

making use of them for other and more private ends than they were

legitimately intended to subserve. That certain sultanism of his brain,

which had otherwise in a good degree remained unmanifested; through

those forms that same sultanism became incarnate in an irresistible

dictatorship. For be a man's intellectual superiority what it will,

it can never assume the practical, available supremacy over other men,

without the aid of some sort of external arts and entrenchments, always,

in themselves, more or less paltry and base. This it is, that for ever

keeps God's true princes of the Empire from the world's hustings; and

leaves the highest honours that this air can give, to those men who

become famous more through their infinite inferiority to the choice

hidden handful of the Divine Inert, than through their undoubted

superiority over the dead level of the mass. Such large virtue lurks

in these small things when extreme political superstitions invest them,

that in some royal instances even to idiot imbecility they have imparted

potency. But when, as in the case of Nicholas the Czar, the ringed crown

of geographical empire encircles an imperial brain; then, the plebeian

herds crouch abased before the tremendous centralization. Nor, will the

tragic dramatist who would depict mortal indomitableness in its fullest

sweep and direct swing, ever forget a hint, incidentally so important in

his art, as the one now alluded to.

But Ahab, my Captain, still moves before me in all his Nantucket

grimness and shagginess; and in this episode touching Emperors and

Kings, I must not conceal that I have only to do with a poor old

whale-hunter like him; and, therefore, all outward majestical trappings

and housings are denied me. Oh, Ahab! what shall be grand in thee, it

must needs be plucked at from the skies, and dived for in the deep, and

featured in the unbodied air!

CHAPTER 34. The Cabin-Table.

It is noon; and Dough-Boy, the steward, thrusting his pale loaf-of-bread

face from the cabin-scuttle, announces dinner to his lord and

master; who, sitting in the lee quarter-boat, has just been taking an

observation of the sun; and is now mutely reckoning the latitude on the

smooth, medallion-shaped tablet, reserved for that daily purpose on

the upper part of his ivory leg. From his complete inattention to the

tidings, you would think that moody Ahab had not heard his menial. But

presently, catching hold of the mizen shrouds, he swings himself to

the deck, and in an even, unexhilarated voice, saying, "Dinner, Mr.

Starbuck," disappears into the cabin.

When the last echo of his sultan's step has died away, and Starbuck, the

first Emir, has every reason to suppose that he is seated, then Starbuck

rouses from his quietude, takes a few turns along the planks, and, after

a grave peep into the binnacle, says, with some touch of pleasantness,

"Dinner, Mr. Stubb," and descends the scuttle. The second Emir lounges

about the rigging awhile, and then slightly shaking the main brace, to

see whether it will be all right with that important rope, he likewise

takes up the old burden, and with a rapid "Dinner, Mr. Flask," follows

after his predecessors.

But the third Emir, now seeing himself all alone on the quarter-deck,

seems to feel relieved from some curious restraint; for, tipping all

sorts of knowing winks in all sorts of directions, and kicking off his

shoes, he strikes into a sharp but noiseless squall of a hornpipe right

over the Grand Turk's head; and then, by a dexterous sleight, pitching

his cap up into the mizentop for a shelf, he goes down rollicking so

far at least as he remains visible from the deck, reversing all other

processions, by bringing up the rear with music. But ere stepping into

the cabin doorway below, he pauses, ships a new face altogether, and,

then, independent, hilarious little Flask enters King Ahab's presence,

in the character of Abjectus, or the Slave.

It is not the least among the strange things bred by the intense

artificialness of sea-usages, that while in the open air of the deck

some officers will, upon provocation, bear themselves boldly and

defyingly enough towards their commander; yet, ten to one, let those

very officers the next moment go down to their customary dinner in that

same commander's cabin, and straightway their inoffensive, not to say

deprecatory and humble air towards him, as he sits at the head of

the table; this is marvellous, sometimes most comical. Wherefore this

difference? A problem? Perhaps not. To have been Belshazzar, King of

Babylon; and to have been Belshazzar, not haughtily but courteously,

therein certainly must have been some touch of mundane grandeur. But he

who in the rightly regal and intelligent spirit presides over his own

private dinner-table of invited guests, that man's unchallenged power

and dominion of individual influence for the time; that man's royalty of

state transcends Belshazzar's, for Belshazzar was not the greatest. Who

has but once dined his friends, has tasted what it is to be Caesar. It

is a witchery of social czarship which there is no withstanding. Now,

if to this consideration you superadd the official supremacy of a

ship-master, then, by inference, you will derive the cause of that

peculiarity of sea-life just mentioned.

Over his ivory-inlaid table, Ahab presided like a mute, maned

sea-lion on the white coral beach, surrounded by his warlike but still

deferential cubs. In his own proper turn, each officer waited to be

served. They were as little children before Ahab; and yet, in Ahab,

there seemed not to lurk the smallest social arrogance. With one mind,

their intent eyes all fastened upon the old man's knife, as he carved

the chief dish before him. I do not suppose that for the world they

would have profaned that moment with the slightest observation, even

upon so neutral a topic as the weather. No! And when reaching out his

knife and fork, between which the slice of beef was locked, Ahab thereby

motioned Starbuck's plate towards him, the mate received his meat as

though receiving alms; and cut it tenderly; and a little started

if, perchance, the knife grazed against the plate; and chewed it

noiselessly; and swallowed it, not without circumspection. For, like

the Coronation banquet at Frankfort, where the German Emperor profoundly

dines with the seven Imperial Electors, so these cabin meals were

somehow solemn meals, eaten in awful silence; and yet at table old Ahab

forbade not conversation; only he himself was dumb. What a relief it was

to choking Stubb, when a rat made a sudden racket in the hold below. And

poor little Flask, he was the youngest son, and little boy of this weary

family party. His were the shinbones of the saline beef; his would have

been the drumsticks. For Flask to have presumed to help himself, this

must have seemed to him tantamount to larceny in the first degree. Had

he helped himself at that table, doubtless, never more would he have

been able to hold his head up in this honest world; nevertheless,

strange to say, Ahab never forbade him. And had Flask helped himself,

the chances were Ahab had never so much as noticed it. Least of all, did

Flask presume to help himself to butter. Whether he thought the owners

of the ship denied it to him, on account of its clotting his clear,

sunny complexion; or whether he deemed that, on so long a voyage in such

marketless waters, butter was at a premium, and therefore was not for

him, a subaltern; however it was, Flask, alas! was a butterless man!

Another thing. Flask was the last person down at the dinner, and Flask

is the first man up. Consider! For hereby Flask's dinner was badly

jammed in point of time. Starbuck and Stubb both had the start of him;

and yet they also have the privilege of lounging in the rear. If Stubb

even, who is but a peg higher than Flask, happens to have but a small

appetite, and soon shows symptoms of concluding his repast, then Flask

must bestir himself, he will not get more than three mouthfuls that day;

for it is against holy usage for Stubb to precede Flask to the deck.

Therefore it was that Flask once admitted in private, that ever since he

had arisen to the dignity of an officer, from that moment he had never

known what it was to be otherwise than hungry, more or less. For what

he ate did not so much relieve his hunger, as keep it immortal in him.

Peace and satisfaction, thought Flask, have for ever departed from

my stomach. I am an officer; but, how I wish I could fish a bit of

old-fashioned beef in the forecastle, as I used to when I was before the

mast. There's the fruits of promotion now; there's the vanity of glory:

there's the insanity of life! Besides, if it were so that any mere

sailor of the Pequod had a grudge against Flask in Flask's official

capacity, all that sailor had to do, in order to obtain ample vengeance,

was to go aft at dinner-time, and get a peep at Flask through the cabin

sky-light, sitting silly and dumfoundered before awful Ahab.

Now, Ahab and his three mates formed what may be called the first table

in the Pequod's cabin. After their departure, taking place in inverted

order to their arrival, the canvas cloth was cleared, or rather was

restored to some hurried order by the pallid steward. And then the three

harpooneers were bidden to the feast, they being its residuary legatees.

They made a sort of temporary servants' hall of the high and mighty

cabin.

In strange contrast to the hardly tolerable constraint and nameless

invisible domineerings of the captain's table, was the entire care-free

license and ease, the almost frantic democracy of those inferior fellows

the harpooneers. While their masters, the mates, seemed afraid of the

sound of the hinges of their own jaws, the harpooneers chewed their food

with such a relish that there was a report to it. They dined like lords;

they filled their bellies like Indian ships all day loading with spices.

Such portentous appetites had Queequeg and Tashtego, that to fill out

the vacancies made by the previous repast, often the pale Dough-Boy was

fain to bring on a great baron of salt-junk, seemingly quarried out of

the solid ox. And if he were not lively about it, if he did not go with

a nimble hop-skip-and-jump, then Tashtego had an ungentlemanly way of

accelerating him by darting a fork at his back, harpoon-wise. And once

Daggoo, seized with a sudden humor, assisted Dough-Boy's memory by

snatching him up bodily, and thrusting his head into a great empty

wooden trencher, while Tashtego, knife in hand, began laying out the

circle preliminary to scalping him. He was naturally a very nervous,

shuddering sort of little fellow, this bread-faced steward; the progeny

of a bankrupt baker and a hospital nurse. And what with the standing

spectacle of the black terrific Ahab, and the periodical tumultuous

visitations of these three savages, Dough-Boy's whole life was one

continual lip-quiver. Commonly, after seeing the harpooneers furnished

with all things they demanded, he would escape from their clutches into

his little pantry adjoining, and fearfully peep out at them through the

blinds of its door, till all was over.

It was a sight to see Queequeg seated over against Tashtego, opposing

his filed teeth to the Indian's: crosswise to them, Daggoo seated on the

floor, for a bench would have brought his hearse-plumed head to the low

carlines; at every motion of his colossal limbs, making the low cabin

framework to shake, as when an African elephant goes passenger in a

ship. But for all this, the great negro was wonderfully abstemious,

not to say dainty. It seemed hardly possible that by such comparatively

small mouthfuls he could keep up the vitality diffused through so broad,

baronial, and superb a person. But, doubtless, this noble savage fed

strong and drank deep of the abounding element of air; and through his

dilated nostrils snuffed in the sublime life of the worlds. Not by

beef or by bread, are giants made or nourished. But Queequeg, he had a

mortal, barbaric smack of the lip in eating--an ugly sound enough--so

much so, that the trembling Dough-Boy almost looked to see whether

any marks of teeth lurked in his own lean arms. And when he would hear

Tashtego singing out for him to produce himself, that his bones might be

picked, the simple-witted steward all but shattered the crockery hanging

round him in the pantry, by his sudden fits of the palsy. Nor did the

whetstone which the harpooneers carried in their pockets, for their

lances and other weapons; and with which whetstones, at dinner, they

would ostentatiously sharpen their knives; that grating sound did not at

all tend to tranquillize poor Dough-Boy. How could he forget that in his

Island days, Queequeg, for one, must certainly have been guilty of some

murderous, convivial indiscretions. Alas! Dough-Boy! hard fares the

white waiter who waits upon cannibals. Not a napkin should he carry on

his arm, but a buckler. In good time, though, to his great delight,

the three salt-sea warriors would rise and depart; to his credulous,

fable-mongering ears, all their martial bones jingling in them at every

step, like Moorish scimetars in scabbards.

But, though these barbarians dined in the cabin, and nominally lived

there; still, being anything but sedentary in their habits, they were

scarcely ever in it except at mealtimes, and just before sleeping-time,

when they passed through it to their own peculiar quarters.

In this one matter, Ahab seemed no exception to most American whale

captains, who, as a set, rather incline to the opinion that by rights

the ship's cabin belongs to them; and that it is by courtesy alone that

anybody else is, at any time, permitted there. So that, in real truth,

the mates and harpooneers of the Pequod might more properly be said to

have lived out of the cabin than in it. For when they did enter it, it

was something as a street-door enters a house; turning inwards for

a moment, only to be turned out the next; and, as a permanent thing,

residing in the open air. Nor did they lose much hereby; in the cabin

was no companionship; socially, Ahab was inaccessible. Though nominally

included in the census of Christendom, he was still an alien to it. He

lived in the world, as the last of the Grisly Bears lived in settled

Missouri. And as when Spring and Summer had departed, that wild Logan of

the woods, burying himself in the hollow of a tree, lived out the winter

there, sucking his own paws; so, in his inclement, howling old age,

Ahab's soul, shut up in the caved trunk of his body, there fed upon the

sullen paws of its gloom!

CHAPTER 35. The Mast-Head.

It was during the more pleasant weather, that in due rotation with the

other seamen my first mast-head came round.

In most American whalemen the mast-heads are manned almost

simultaneously with the vessel's leaving her port; even though she may

have fifteen thousand miles, and more, to sail ere reaching her proper

cruising ground. And if, after a three, four, or five years' voyage

she is drawing nigh home with anything empty in her--say, an empty vial

even--then, her mast-heads are kept manned to the last; and not till her

skysail-poles sail in among the spires of the port, does she altogether

relinquish the hope of capturing one whale more.

Now, as the business of standing mast-heads, ashore or afloat, is a very

ancient and interesting one, let us in some measure expatiate here.

I take it, that the earliest standers of mast-heads were the old

Egyptians; because, in all my researches, I find none prior to them.

For though their progenitors, the builders of Babel, must doubtless, by

their tower, have intended to rear the loftiest mast-head in all Asia,

or Africa either; yet (ere the final truck was put to it) as that great

stone mast of theirs may be said to have gone by the board, in the dread

gale of God's wrath; therefore, we cannot give these Babel builders

priority over the Egyptians. And that the Egyptians were a nation of

mast-head standers, is an assertion based upon the general belief among

archaeologists, that the first pyramids were founded for astronomical

purposes: a theory singularly supported by the peculiar stair-like

formation of all four sides of those edifices; whereby, with prodigious

long upliftings of their legs, those old astronomers were wont to mount

to the apex, and sing out for new stars; even as the look-outs of a

modern ship sing out for a sail, or a whale just bearing in sight. In

Saint Stylites, the famous Christian hermit of old times, who built him

a lofty stone pillar in the desert and spent the whole latter portion of

his life on its summit, hoisting his food from the ground with a

tackle; in him we have a remarkable instance of a dauntless

stander-of-mast-heads; who was not to be driven from his place by fogs

or frosts, rain, hail, or sleet; but valiantly facing everything out to

the last, literally died at his post. Of modern standers-of-mast-heads

we have but a lifeless set; mere stone, iron, and bronze men; who,

though well capable of facing out a stiff gale, are still entirely

incompetent to the business of singing out upon discovering any strange

sight. There is Napoleon; who, upon the top of the column of Vendome,

stands with arms folded, some one hundred and fifty feet in the air;

careless, now, who rules the decks below; whether Louis Philippe, Louis

Blanc, or Louis the Devil. Great Washington, too, stands high aloft on

his towering main-mast in Baltimore, and like one of Hercules' pillars,

his column marks that point of human grandeur beyond which few mortals

will go. Admiral Nelson, also, on a capstan of gun-metal, stands his

mast-head in Trafalgar Square; and ever when most obscured by that

London smoke, token is yet given that a hidden hero is there; for

where there is smoke, must be fire. But neither great Washington, nor

Napoleon, nor Nelson, will answer a single hail from below, however

madly invoked to befriend by their counsels the distracted decks

upon which they gaze; however it may be surmised, that their spirits

penetrate through the thick haze of the future, and descry what shoals

and what rocks must be shunned.

It may seem unwarrantable to couple in any respect the mast-head

standers of the land with those of the sea; but that in truth it is

not so, is plainly evinced by an item for which Obed Macy, the sole

historian of Nantucket, stands accountable. The worthy Obed tells us,

that in the early times of the whale fishery, ere ships were regularly

launched in pursuit of the game, the people of that island erected lofty

spars along the sea-coast, to which the look-outs ascended by means

of nailed cleats, something as fowls go upstairs in a hen-house. A few

years ago this same plan was adopted by the Bay whalemen of New Zealand,

who, upon descrying the game, gave notice to the ready-manned boats nigh

the beach. But this custom has now become obsolete; turn we then to the

one proper mast-head, that of a whale-ship at sea. The three mast-heads

are kept manned from sun-rise to sun-set; the seamen taking their

regular turns (as at the helm), and relieving each other every two

hours. In the serene weather of the tropics it is exceedingly pleasant

the mast-head; nay, to a dreamy meditative man it is delightful. There

you stand, a hundred feet above the silent decks, striding along the

deep, as if the masts were gigantic stilts, while beneath you and

between your legs, as it were, swim the hugest monsters of the sea, even

as ships once sailed between the boots of the famous Colossus at old

Rhodes. There you stand, lost in the infinite series of the sea, with

nothing ruffled but the waves. The tranced ship indolently rolls; the

drowsy trade winds blow; everything resolves you into languor. For the

most part, in this tropic whaling life, a sublime uneventfulness invests

you; you hear no news; read no gazettes; extras with startling accounts

of commonplaces never delude you into unnecessary excitements; you hear

of no domestic afflictions; bankrupt securities; fall of stocks; are

never troubled with the thought of what you shall have for dinner--for

all your meals for three years and more are snugly stowed in casks, and

your bill of fare is immutable.

In one of those southern whalesmen, on a long three or four years'

voyage, as often happens, the sum of the various hours you spend at the

mast-head would amount to several entire months. And it is much to be

deplored that the place to which you devote so considerable a portion

of the whole term of your natural life, should be so sadly destitute

of anything approaching to a cosy inhabitiveness, or adapted to breed a

comfortable localness of feeling, such as pertains to a bed, a hammock,

a hearse, a sentry box, a pulpit, a coach, or any other of those small

and snug contrivances in which men temporarily isolate themselves. Your

most usual point of perch is the head of the t' gallant-mast, where you

stand upon two thin parallel sticks (almost peculiar to whalemen) called

the t' gallant cross-trees. Here, tossed about by the sea, the beginner

feels about as cosy as he would standing on a bull's horns. To be sure,

in cold weather you may carry your house aloft with you, in the shape of

a watch-coat; but properly speaking the thickest watch-coat is no more

of a house than the unclad body; for as the soul is glued inside of its

fleshy tabernacle, and cannot freely move about in it, nor even move out

of it, without running great risk of perishing (like an ignorant pilgrim

crossing the snowy Alps in winter); so a watch-coat is not so much of

a house as it is a mere envelope, or additional skin encasing you. You

cannot put a shelf or chest of drawers in your body, and no more can you

make a convenient closet of your watch-coat.

Concerning all this, it is much to be deplored that the mast-heads of a

southern whale ship are unprovided with those enviable little tents

or pulpits, called CROW'S-NESTS, in which the look-outs of a Greenland

whaler are protected from the inclement weather of the frozen seas. In

the fireside narrative of Captain Sleet, entitled "A Voyage among the

Icebergs, in quest of the Greenland Whale, and incidentally for the

re-discovery of the Lost Icelandic Colonies of Old Greenland;" in

this admirable volume, all standers of mast-heads are furnished with

a charmingly circumstantial account of the then recently invented

CROW'S-NEST of the Glacier, which was the name of Captain Sleet's good

craft. He called it the SLEET'S CROW'S-NEST, in honour of himself; he

being the original inventor and patentee, and free from all ridiculous

false delicacy, and holding that if we call our own children after our

own names (we fathers being the original inventors and patentees), so

likewise should we denominate after ourselves any other apparatus we

may beget. In shape, the Sleet's crow's-nest is something like a large

tierce or pipe; it is open above, however, where it is furnished with

a movable side-screen to keep to windward of your head in a hard gale.

Being fixed on the summit of the mast, you ascend into it through a

little trap-hatch in the bottom. On the after side, or side next the

stern of the ship, is a comfortable seat, with a locker underneath for

umbrellas, comforters, and coats. In front is a leather rack, in which

to keep your speaking trumpet, pipe, telescope, and other nautical

conveniences. When Captain Sleet in person stood his mast-head in this

crow's-nest of his, he tells us that he always had a rifle with him

(also fixed in the rack), together with a powder flask and shot, for

the purpose of popping off the stray narwhales, or vagrant sea unicorns

infesting those waters; for you cannot successfully shoot at them from

the deck owing to the resistance of the water, but to shoot down upon

them is a very different thing. Now, it was plainly a labor of love

for Captain Sleet to describe, as he does, all the little detailed

conveniences of his crow's-nest; but though he so enlarges upon many

of these, and though he treats us to a very scientific account of his

experiments in this crow's-nest, with a small compass he kept there for

the purpose of counteracting the errors resulting from what is called

the "local attraction" of all binnacle magnets; an error ascribable to

the horizontal vicinity of the iron in the ship's planks, and in the

Glacier's case, perhaps, to there having been so many broken-down

blacksmiths among her crew; I say, that though the Captain is very

discreet and scientific here, yet, for all his learned "binnacle

deviations," "azimuth compass observations," and "approximate errors,"

he knows very well, Captain Sleet, that he was not so much immersed

in those profound magnetic meditations, as to fail being attracted

occasionally towards that well replenished little case-bottle, so nicely

tucked in on one side of his crow's nest, within easy reach of his hand.

Though, upon the whole, I greatly admire and even love the brave, the

honest, and learned Captain; yet I take it very ill of him that he

should so utterly ignore that case-bottle, seeing what a faithful friend

and comforter it must have been, while with mittened fingers and hooded

head he was studying the mathematics aloft there in that bird's nest

within three or four perches of the pole.

But if we Southern whale-fishers are not so snugly housed aloft as

Captain Sleet and his Greenlandmen were; yet that disadvantage is

greatly counter-balanced by the widely contrasting serenity of those

seductive seas in which we South fishers mostly float. For one, I used

to lounge up the rigging very leisurely, resting in the top to have a

chat with Queequeg, or any one else off duty whom I might find there;

then ascending a little way further, and throwing a lazy leg over the

top-sail yard, take a preliminary view of the watery pastures, and so at

last mount to my ultimate destination.

Let me make a clean breast of it here, and frankly admit that I kept but

sorry guard. With the problem of the universe revolving in me, how

could I--being left completely to myself at such a thought-engendering

altitude--how could I but lightly hold my obligations to observe all

whale-ships' standing orders, "Keep your weather eye open, and sing out

every time."

And let me in this place movingly admonish you, ye ship-owners of

Nantucket! Beware of enlisting in your vigilant fisheries any lad with

lean brow and hollow eye; given to unseasonable meditativeness; and who

offers to ship with the Phaedon instead of Bowditch in his head. Beware

of such an one, I say; your whales must be seen before they can be

killed; and this sunken-eyed young Platonist will tow you ten wakes

round the world, and never make you one pint of sperm the richer. Nor

are these monitions at all unneeded. For nowadays, the whale-fishery

furnishes an asylum for many romantic, melancholy, and absent-minded

young men, disgusted with the carking cares of earth, and seeking

sentiment in tar and blubber. Childe Harold not unfrequently perches

himself upon the mast-head of some luckless disappointed whale-ship, and

in moody phrase ejaculates:--

"Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll! Ten thousand

blubber-hunters sweep over thee in vain."

Very often do the captains of such ships take those absent-minded

young philosophers to task, upbraiding them with not feeling sufficient

"interest" in the voyage; half-hinting that they are so hopelessly lost

to all honourable ambition, as that in their secret souls they would

rather not see whales than otherwise. But all in vain; those young

Platonists have a notion that their vision is imperfect; they are

short-sighted; what use, then, to strain the visual nerve? They have

left their opera-glasses at home.

"Why, thou monkey," said a harpooneer to one of these lads, "we've been

cruising now hard upon three years, and thou hast not raised a whale

yet. Whales are scarce as hen's teeth whenever thou art up here."

Perhaps they were; or perhaps there might have been shoals of them in

the far horizon; but lulled into such an opium-like listlessness of

vacant, unconscious reverie is this absent-minded youth by the blending

cadence of waves with thoughts, that at last he loses his identity;

takes the mystic ocean at his feet for the visible image of that deep,

blue, bottomless soul, pervading mankind and nature; and every

strange, half-seen, gliding, beautiful thing that eludes him; every

dimly-discovered, uprising fin of some undiscernible form, seems to him

the embodiment of those elusive thoughts that only people the soul by

continually flitting through it. In this enchanted mood, thy spirit ebbs

away to whence it came; becomes diffused through time and space; like

Crammer's sprinkled Pantheistic ashes, forming at last a part of every

shore the round globe over.

There is no life in thee, now, except that rocking life imparted by a

gently rolling ship; by her, borrowed from the sea; by the sea, from

the inscrutable tides of God. But while this sleep, this dream is on ye,

move your foot or hand an inch; slip your hold at all; and your identity

comes back in horror. Over Descartian vortices you hover. And perhaps,

at mid-day, in the fairest weather, with one half-throttled shriek you

drop through that transparent air into the summer sea, no more to rise

for ever. Heed it well, ye Pantheists!

CHAPTER 36. The Quarter-Deck.

(ENTER AHAB: THEN, ALL)

It was not a great while after the affair of the pipe, that one

morning shortly after breakfast, Ahab, as was his wont, ascended the

cabin-gangway to the deck. There most sea-captains usually walk at that

hour, as country gentlemen, after the same meal, take a few turns in the

garden.

Soon his steady, ivory stride was heard, as to and fro he paced his old

rounds, upon planks so familiar to his tread, that they were all over

dented, like geological stones, with the peculiar mark of his walk. Did

you fixedly gaze, too, upon that ribbed and dented brow; there also,

you would see still stranger foot-prints--the foot-prints of his one

unsleeping, ever-pacing thought.

But on the occasion in question, those dents looked deeper, even as

his nervous step that morning left a deeper mark. And, so full of his

thought was Ahab, that at every uniform turn that he made, now at the

main-mast and now at the binnacle, you could almost see that thought

turn in him as he turned, and pace in him as he paced; so completely

possessing him, indeed, that it all but seemed the inward mould of every

outer movement.

"D'ye mark him, Flask?" whispered Stubb; "the chick that's in him pecks

the shell. 'Twill soon be out."

The hours wore on;--Ahab now shut up within his cabin; anon, pacing the

deck, with the same intense bigotry of purpose in his aspect.

It drew near the close of day. Suddenly he came to a halt by the

bulwarks, and inserting his bone leg into the auger-hole there, and with

one hand grasping a shroud, he ordered Starbuck to send everybody aft.

"Sir!" said the mate, astonished at an order seldom or never given on

ship-board except in some extraordinary case.

"Send everybody aft," repeated Ahab. "Mast-heads, there! come down!"

When the entire ship's company were assembled, and with curious and not

wholly unapprehensive faces, were eyeing him, for he looked not unlike

the weather horizon when a storm is coming up, Ahab, after rapidly

glancing over the bulwarks, and then darting his eyes among the crew,

started from his standpoint; and as though not a soul were nigh him

resumed his heavy turns upon the deck. With bent head and half-slouched

hat he continued to pace, unmindful of the wondering whispering among

the men; till Stubb cautiously whispered to Flask, that Ahab must have

summoned them there for the purpose of witnessing a pedestrian feat. But

this did not last long. Vehemently pausing, he cried:--

"What do ye do when ye see a whale, men?"

"Sing out for him!" was the impulsive rejoinder from a score of clubbed

voices.

"Good!" cried Ahab, with a wild approval in his tones; observing the

hearty animation into which his unexpected question had so magnetically

thrown them.

"And what do ye next, men?"

"Lower away, and after him!"

"And what tune is it ye pull to, men?"

"A dead whale or a stove boat!"

More and more strangely and fiercely glad and approving, grew the

countenance of the old man at every shout; while the mariners began

to gaze curiously at each other, as if marvelling how it was that they

themselves became so excited at such seemingly purposeless questions.

But, they were all eagerness again, as Ahab, now half-revolving in his

pivot-hole, with one hand reaching high up a shroud, and tightly, almost

convulsively grasping it, addressed them thus:--

"All ye mast-headers have before now heard me give orders about a white

whale. Look ye! d'ye see this Spanish ounce of gold?"--holding up a

broad bright coin to the sun--"it is a sixteen dollar piece, men. D'ye

see it? Mr. Starbuck, hand me yon top-maul."

While the mate was getting the hammer, Ahab, without speaking, was

slowly rubbing the gold piece against the skirts of his jacket, as if

to heighten its lustre, and without using any words was meanwhile

lowly humming to himself, producing a sound so strangely muffled and

inarticulate that it seemed the mechanical humming of the wheels of his

vitality in him.

Receiving the top-maul from Starbuck, he advanced towards the main-mast

with the hammer uplifted in one hand, exhibiting the gold with the

other, and with a high raised voice exclaiming: "Whosoever of ye

raises me a white-headed whale with a wrinkled brow and a crooked jaw;

whosoever of ye raises me that white-headed whale, with three holes

punctured in his starboard fluke--look ye, whosoever of ye raises me

that same white whale, he shall have this gold ounce, my boys!"

"Huzza! huzza!" cried the seamen, as with swinging tarpaulins they

hailed the act of nailing the gold to the mast.

"It's a white whale, I say," resumed Ahab, as he threw down the topmaul:

"a white whale. Skin your eyes for him, men; look sharp for white water;

if ye see but a bubble, sing out."

All this while Tashtego, Daggoo, and Queequeg had looked on with even

more intense interest and surprise than the rest, and at the mention

of the wrinkled brow and crooked jaw they had started as if each was

separately touched by some specific recollection.

"Captain Ahab," said Tashtego, "that white whale must be the same that

some call Moby Dick."

"Moby Dick?" shouted Ahab. "Do ye know the white whale then, Tash?"

"Does he fan-tail a little curious, sir, before he goes down?" said the

Gay-Header deliberately.

"And has he a curious spout, too," said Daggoo, "very bushy, even for a

parmacetty, and mighty quick, Captain Ahab?"

"And he have one, two, three--oh! good many iron in him hide, too,

Captain," cried Queequeg disjointedly, "all twiske-tee be-twisk, like

him--him--" faltering hard for a word, and screwing his hand round and

round as though uncorking a bottle--"like him--him--"

"Corkscrew!" cried Ahab, "aye, Queequeg, the harpoons lie all twisted

and wrenched in him; aye, Daggoo, his spout is a big one, like a whole

shock of wheat, and white as a pile of our Nantucket wool after the

great annual sheep-shearing; aye, Tashtego, and he fan-tails like a

split jib in a squall. Death and devils! men, it is Moby Dick ye have

seen--Moby Dick--Moby Dick!"

"Captain Ahab," said Starbuck, who, with Stubb and Flask, had thus far

been eyeing his superior with increasing surprise, but at last seemed

struck with a thought which somewhat explained all the wonder. "Captain

Ahab, I have heard of Moby Dick--but it was not Moby Dick that took off

thy leg?"

"Who told thee that?" cried Ahab; then pausing, "Aye, Starbuck; aye, my

hearties all round; it was Moby Dick that dismasted me; Moby Dick that

brought me to this dead stump I stand on now. Aye, aye," he shouted with

a terrific, loud, animal sob, like that of a heart-stricken moose;

"Aye, aye! it was that accursed white whale that razeed me; made a poor

pegging lubber of me for ever and a day!" Then tossing both arms, with

measureless imprecations he shouted out: "Aye, aye! and I'll chase him

round Good Hope, and round the Horn, and round the Norway Maelstrom, and

round perdition's flames before I give him up. And this is what ye have

shipped for, men! to chase that white whale on both sides of land, and

over all sides of earth, till he spouts black blood and rolls fin out.

What say ye, men, will ye splice hands on it, now? I think ye do look

brave."

"Aye, aye!" shouted the harpooneers and seamen, running closer to the

excited old man: "A sharp eye for the white whale; a sharp lance for

Moby Dick!"

"God bless ye," he seemed to half sob and half shout. "God bless ye,

men. Steward! go draw the great measure of grog. But what's this long

face about, Mr. Starbuck; wilt thou not chase the white whale? art not

game for Moby Dick?"

"I am game for his crooked jaw, and for the jaws of Death too, Captain

Ahab, if it fairly comes in the way of the business we follow; but I

came here to hunt whales, not my commander's vengeance. How many barrels

will thy vengeance yield thee even if thou gettest it, Captain Ahab? it

will not fetch thee much in our Nantucket market."

"Nantucket market! Hoot! But come closer, Starbuck; thou requirest

a little lower layer. If money's to be the measurer, man, and the

accountants have computed their great counting-house the globe, by

girdling it with guineas, one to every three parts of an inch; then, let

me tell thee, that my vengeance will fetch a great premium HERE!"

"He smites his chest," whispered Stubb, "what's that for? methinks it

rings most vast, but hollow."

"Vengeance on a dumb brute!" cried Starbuck, "that simply smote thee

from blindest instinct! Madness! To be enraged with a dumb thing,

Captain Ahab, seems blasphemous."

"Hark ye yet again--the little lower layer. All visible objects, man,

are but as pasteboard masks. But in each event--in the living act, the

undoubted deed--there, some unknown but still reasoning thing puts forth

the mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask. If man

will strike, strike through the mask! How can the prisoner reach outside

except by thrusting through the wall? To me, the white whale is that

wall, shoved near to me. Sometimes I think there's naught beyond. But

'tis enough. He tasks me; he heaps me; I see in him outrageous strength,

with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable thing is

chiefly what I hate; and be the white whale agent, or be the white whale

principal, I will wreak that hate upon him. Talk not to me of blasphemy,

man; I'd strike the sun if it insulted me. For could the sun do that,

then could I do the other; since there is ever a sort of fair play

herein, jealousy presiding over all creations. But not my master, man,

is even that fair play. Who's over me? Truth hath no confines. Take off

thine eye! more intolerable than fiends' glarings is a doltish

stare! So, so; thou reddenest and palest; my heat has melted thee to

anger-glow. But look ye, Starbuck, what is said in heat, that thing

unsays itself. There are men from whom warm words are small indignity. I

meant not to incense thee. Let it go. Look! see yonder Turkish cheeks of

spotted tawn--living, breathing pictures painted by the sun. The Pagan

leopards--the unrecking and unworshipping things, that live; and seek,

and give no reasons for the torrid life they feel! The crew, man, the

crew! Are they not one and all with Ahab, in this matter of the whale?

See Stubb! he laughs! See yonder Chilian! he snorts to think of it.

Stand up amid the general hurricane, thy one tost sapling cannot,

Starbuck! And what is it? Reckon it. 'Tis but to help strike a fin; no

wondrous feat for Starbuck. What is it more? From this one poor hunt,

then, the best lance out of all Nantucket, surely he will not hang back,

when every foremast-hand has clutched a whetstone? Ah! constrainings

seize thee; I see! the billow lifts thee! Speak, but speak!--Aye, aye!

thy silence, then, THAT voices thee. (ASIDE) Something shot from my

dilated nostrils, he has inhaled it in his lungs. Starbuck now is mine;

cannot oppose me now, without rebellion."

"God keep me!--keep us all!" murmured Starbuck, lowly.

But in his joy at the enchanted, tacit acquiescence of the mate, Ahab

did not hear his foreboding invocation; nor yet the low laugh from the

hold; nor yet the presaging vibrations of the winds in the cordage;

nor yet the hollow flap of the sails against the masts, as for a moment

their hearts sank in. For again Starbuck's downcast eyes lighted up with

the stubbornness of life; the subterranean laugh died away; the winds

blew on; the sails filled out; the ship heaved and rolled as before. Ah,

ye admonitions and warnings! why stay ye not when ye come? But

rather are ye predictions than warnings, ye shadows! Yet not so much

predictions from without, as verifications of the foregoing things

within. For with little external to constrain us, the innermost

necessities in our being, these still drive us on.

"The measure! the measure!" cried Ahab.

Receiving the brimming pewter, and turning to the harpooneers, he

ordered them to produce their weapons. Then ranging them before him near

the capstan, with their harpoons in their hands, while his three mates

stood at his side with their lances, and the rest of the ship's company

formed a circle round the group; he stood for an instant searchingly

eyeing every man of his crew. But those wild eyes met his, as the

bloodshot eyes of the prairie wolves meet the eye of their leader, ere

he rushes on at their head in the trail of the bison; but, alas! only to

fall into the hidden snare of the Indian.

"Drink and pass!" he cried, handing the heavy charged flagon to the

nearest seaman. "The crew alone now drink. Round with it, round! Short

draughts--long swallows, men; 'tis hot as Satan's hoof. So, so; it

goes round excellently. It spiralizes in ye; forks out at the

serpent-snapping eye. Well done; almost drained. That way it went, this

way it comes. Hand it me--here's a hollow! Men, ye seem the years; so

brimming life is gulped and gone. Steward, refill!

"Attend now, my braves. I have mustered ye all round this capstan; and

ye mates, flank me with your lances; and ye harpooneers, stand there

with your irons; and ye, stout mariners, ring me in, that I may in some

sort revive a noble custom of my fisherman fathers before me. O men, you

will yet see that--Ha! boy, come back? bad pennies come not sooner. Hand

it me. Why, now, this pewter had run brimming again, were't not thou St.

Vitus' imp--away, thou ague!

"Advance, ye mates! Cross your lances full before me. Well done! Let

me touch the axis." So saying, with extended arm, he grasped the

three level, radiating lances at their crossed centre; while so doing,

suddenly and nervously twitched them; meanwhile, glancing intently from

Starbuck to Stubb; from Stubb to Flask. It seemed as though, by some

nameless, interior volition, he would fain have shocked into them the

same fiery emotion accumulated within the Leyden jar of his own magnetic

life. The three mates quailed before his strong, sustained, and mystic

aspect. Stubb and Flask looked sideways from him; the honest eye of

Starbuck fell downright.

"In vain!" cried Ahab; "but, maybe, 'tis well. For did ye three but

once take the full-forced shock, then mine own electric thing, THAT had

perhaps expired from out me. Perchance, too, it would have dropped ye

dead. Perchance ye need it not. Down lances! And now, ye mates, I do

appoint ye three cupbearers to my three pagan kinsmen there--yon three

most honourable gentlemen and noblemen, my valiant harpooneers. Disdain

the task? What, when the great Pope washes the feet of beggars, using

his tiara for ewer? Oh, my sweet cardinals! your own condescension, THAT

shall bend ye to it. I do not order ye; ye will it. Cut your seizings

and draw the poles, ye harpooneers!"

Silently obeying the order, the three harpooneers now stood with the

detached iron part of their harpoons, some three feet long, held, barbs

up, before him.

"Stab me not with that keen steel! Cant them; cant them over! know ye

not the goblet end? Turn up the socket! So, so; now, ye cup-bearers,

advance. The irons! take them; hold them while I fill!" Forthwith,

slowly going from one officer to the other, he brimmed the harpoon

sockets with the fiery waters from the pewter.

"Now, three to three, ye stand. Commend the murderous chalices! Bestow

them, ye who are now made parties to this indissoluble league. Ha!

Starbuck! but the deed is done! Yon ratifying sun now waits to sit upon

it. Drink, ye harpooneers! drink and swear, ye men that man the deathful

whaleboat's bow--Death to Moby Dick! God hunt us all, if we do not hunt

Moby Dick to his death!" The long, barbed steel goblets were lifted;

and to cries and maledictions against the white whale, the spirits were

simultaneously quaffed down with a hiss. Starbuck paled, and turned, and

shivered. Once more, and finally, the replenished pewter went the rounds

among the frantic crew; when, waving his free hand to them, they all

dispersed; and Ahab retired within his cabin.

CHAPTER 37. Sunset.

THE CABIN; BY THE STERN WINDOWS; AHAB SITTING ALONE, AND GAZING OUT.

I leave a white and turbid wake; pale waters, paler cheeks, where'er I

sail. The envious billows sidelong swell to whelm my track; let them;

but first I pass.

Yonder, by ever-brimming goblet's rim, the warm waves blush like wine.

The gold brow plumbs the blue. The diver sun--slow dived from noon--goes

down; my soul mounts up! she wearies with her endless hill. Is, then,

the crown too heavy that I wear? this Iron Crown of Lombardy. Yet is

it bright with many a gem; I the wearer, see not its far flashings; but

darkly feel that I wear that, that dazzlingly confounds. 'Tis iron--that

I know--not gold. 'Tis split, too--that I feel; the jagged edge galls

me so, my brain seems to beat against the solid metal; aye, steel skull,

mine; the sort that needs no helmet in the most brain-battering fight!

Dry heat upon my brow? Oh! time was, when as the sunrise nobly spurred

me, so the sunset soothed. No more. This lovely light, it lights not me;

all loveliness is anguish to me, since I can ne'er enjoy. Gifted with

the high perception, I lack the low, enjoying power; damned, most subtly

and most malignantly! damned in the midst of Paradise! Good night--good

night! (WAVING HIS HAND, HE MOVES FROM THE WINDOW.)

'Twas not so hard a task. I thought to find one stubborn, at the least;

but my one cogged circle fits into all their various wheels, and they

revolve. Or, if you will, like so many ant-hills of powder, they all

stand before me; and I their match. Oh, hard! that to fire others, the

match itself must needs be wasting! What I've dared, I've willed; and

what I've willed, I'll do! They think me mad--Starbuck does; but I'm

demoniac, I am madness maddened! That wild madness that's only calm

to comprehend itself! The prophecy was that I should be dismembered;

and--Aye! I lost this leg. I now prophesy that I will dismember my

dismemberer. Now, then, be the prophet and the fulfiller one. That's

more than ye, ye great gods, ever were. I laugh and hoot at ye, ye

cricket-players, ye pugilists, ye deaf Burkes and blinded Bendigoes!

I will not say as schoolboys do to bullies--Take some one of your own

size; don't pommel ME! No, ye've knocked me down, and I am up again; but

YE have run and hidden. Come forth from behind your cotton bags! I have

no long gun to reach ye. Come, Ahab's compliments to ye; come and see

if ye can swerve me. Swerve me? ye cannot swerve me, else ye swerve

yourselves! man has ye there. Swerve me? The path to my fixed purpose is

laid with iron rails, whereon my soul is grooved to run. Over unsounded

gorges, through the rifled hearts of mountains, under torrents' beds,

unerringly I rush! Naught's an obstacle, naught's an angle to the iron

way!

CHAPTER 38. Dusk.

BY THE MAINMAST; STARBUCK LEANING AGAINST IT.

My soul is more than matched; she's overmanned; and by a madman!

Insufferable sting, that sanity should ground arms on such a field! But

he drilled deep down, and blasted all my reason out of me! I think I see

his impious end; but feel that I must help him to it. Will I, nill I,

the ineffable thing has tied me to him; tows me with a cable I have no

knife to cut. Horrible old man! Who's over him, he cries;--aye, he would

be a democrat to all above; look, how he lords it over all below! Oh! I

plainly see my miserable office,--to obey, rebelling; and worse yet,

to hate with touch of pity! For in his eyes I read some lurid woe would

shrivel me up, had I it. Yet is there hope. Time and tide flow wide.

The hated whale has the round watery world to swim in, as the small

gold-fish has its glassy globe. His heaven-insulting purpose, God may

wedge aside. I would up heart, were it not like lead. But my whole

clock's run down; my heart the all-controlling weight, I have no key to

lift again.

[A BURST OF REVELRY FROM THE FORECASTLE.]

Oh, God! to sail with such a heathen crew that have small touch of human

mothers in them! Whelped somewhere by the sharkish sea. The white whale

is their demigorgon. Hark! the infernal orgies! that revelry is forward!

mark the unfaltering silence aft! Methinks it pictures life. Foremost

through the sparkling sea shoots on the gay, embattled, bantering

bow, but only to drag dark Ahab after it, where he broods within his

sternward cabin, builded over the dead water of the wake, and further

on, hunted by its wolfish gurglings. The long howl thrills me through!

Peace! ye revellers, and set the watch! Oh, life! 'tis in an hour like

this, with soul beat down and held to knowledge,--as wild, untutored

things are forced to feed--Oh, life! 'tis now that I do feel the latent

horror in thee! but 'tis not me! that horror's out of me! and with the

soft feeling of the human in me, yet will I try to fight ye, ye grim,

phantom futures! Stand by me, hold me, bind me, O ye blessed influences!

CHAPTER 39. First Night Watch.

Fore-Top.

(STUBB SOLUS, AND MENDING A BRACE.)

Ha! ha! ha! ha! hem! clear my throat!--I've been thinking over it

ever since, and that ha, ha's the final consequence. Why so? Because a

laugh's the wisest, easiest answer to all that's queer; and come what

will, one comfort's always left--that unfailing comfort is, it's all

predestinated. I heard not all his talk with Starbuck; but to my poor

eye Starbuck then looked something as I the other evening felt. Be sure

the old Mogul has fixed him, too. I twigged it, knew it; had had the

gift, might readily have prophesied it--for when I clapped my eye upon

his skull I saw it. Well, Stubb, WISE Stubb--that's my title--well,

Stubb, what of it, Stubb? Here's a carcase. I know not all that may be

coming, but be it what it will, I'll go to it laughing. Such a waggish

leering as lurks in all your horribles! I feel funny. Fa, la! lirra,

skirra! What's my juicy little pear at home doing now? Crying its eyes

out?--Giving a party to the last arrived harpooneers, I dare say, gay as

a frigate's pennant, and so am I--fa, la! lirra, skirra! Oh--

We'll drink to-night with hearts as light, To love, as gay and fleeting

As bubbles that swim, on the beaker's brim, And break on the lips while

meeting.

A brave stave that--who calls? Mr. Starbuck? Aye, aye, sir--(ASIDE) he's

my superior, he has his too, if I'm not mistaken.--Aye, aye, sir, just

through with this job--coming.

CHAPTER 40. Midnight, Forecastle.

HARPOONEERS AND SAILORS.

(FORESAIL RISES AND DISCOVERS THE WATCH STANDING, LOUNGING, LEANING, AND

LYING IN VARIOUS ATTITUDES, ALL SINGING IN CHORUS.)

Farewell and adieu to you, Spanish ladies!

Farewell and adieu to you, ladies of Spain!

Our captain's commanded.--

1ST NANTUCKET SAILOR. Oh, boys, don't be sentimental; it's bad for the

digestion! Take a tonic, follow me! (SINGS, AND ALL FOLLOW)

Our captain stood upon the deck,

A spy-glass in his hand,

A viewing of those gallant whales

That blew at every strand.

Oh, your tubs in your boats, my boys,

And by your braces stand,

And we'll have one of those fine whales,

Hand, boys, over hand!

So, be cheery, my lads! may your hearts never fail!

While the bold harpooner is striking the whale!

MATE'S VOICE FROM THE QUARTER-DECK. Eight bells there, forward!

2ND NANTUCKET SAILOR. Avast the chorus! Eight bells there! d'ye hear,

bell-boy? Strike the bell eight, thou Pip! thou blackling! and let me

call the watch. I've the sort of mouth for that--the hogshead mouth.

So, so, (THRUSTS HIS HEAD DOWN THE SCUTTLE,) Star-bo-l-e-e-n-s, a-h-o-y!

Eight bells there below! Tumble up!

DUTCH SAILOR. Grand snoozing to-night, maty; fat night for that. I

mark this in our old Mogul's wine; it's quite as deadening to some as

filliping to others. We sing; they sleep--aye, lie down there, like

ground-tier butts. At 'em again! There, take this copper-pump, and hail

'em through it. Tell 'em to avast dreaming of their lasses. Tell 'em

it's the resurrection; they must kiss their last, and come to judgment.

That's the way--THAT'S it; thy throat ain't spoiled with eating

Amsterdam butter.

FRENCH SAILOR. Hist, boys! let's have a jig or two before we ride to

anchor in Blanket Bay. What say ye? There comes the other watch. Stand

by all legs! Pip! little Pip! hurrah with your tambourine!

PIP. (SULKY AND SLEEPY) Don't know where it is.

FRENCH SAILOR. Beat thy belly, then, and wag thy ears. Jig it, men,

I say; merry's the word; hurrah! Damn me, won't you dance? Form, now,

Indian-file, and gallop into the double-shuffle? Throw yourselves! Legs!

legs!

ICELAND SAILOR. I don't like your floor, maty; it's too springy to my

taste. I'm used to ice-floors. I'm sorry to throw cold water on the

subject; but excuse me.

MALTESE SAILOR. Me too; where's your girls? Who but a fool would take

his left hand by his right, and say to himself, how d'ye do? Partners! I

must have partners!

SICILIAN SAILOR. Aye; girls and a green!--then I'll hop with ye; yea,

turn grasshopper!

LONG-ISLAND SAILOR. Well, well, ye sulkies, there's plenty more of us.

Hoe corn when you may, say I. All legs go to harvest soon. Ah! here

comes the music; now for it!

AZORE SAILOR. (ASCENDING, AND PITCHING THE TAMBOURINE UP THE SCUTTLE.)

Here you are, Pip; and there's the windlass-bitts; up you mount! Now,

boys! (THE HALF OF THEM DANCE TO THE TAMBOURINE; SOME GO BELOW; SOME

SLEEP OR LIE AMONG THE COILS OF RIGGING. OATHS A-PLENTY.)

AZORE SAILOR. (DANCING) Go it, Pip! Bang it, bell-boy! Rig it, dig it,

stig it, quig it, bell-boy! Make fire-flies; break the jinglers!

PIP. Jinglers, you say?--there goes another, dropped off; I pound it so.

CHINA SAILOR. Rattle thy teeth, then, and pound away; make a pagoda of

thyself.

FRENCH SAILOR. Merry-mad! Hold up thy hoop, Pip, till I jump through it!

Split jibs! tear yourselves!

TASHTEGO. (QUIETLY SMOKING) That's a white man; he calls that fun:

humph! I save my sweat.

OLD MANX SAILOR. I wonder whether those jolly lads bethink them of what

they are dancing over. I'll dance over your grave, I will--that's

the bitterest threat of your night-women, that beat head-winds round

corners. O Christ! to think of the green navies and the green-skulled

crews! Well, well; belike the whole world's a ball, as you scholars have

it; and so 'tis right to make one ballroom of it. Dance on, lads, you're

young; I was once.

3D NANTUCKET SAILOR. Spell oh!--whew! this is worse than pulling after

whales in a calm--give us a whiff, Tash.

(THEY CEASE DANCING, AND GATHER IN CLUSTERS. MEANTIME THE SKY

DARKENS--THE WIND RISES.)

LASCAR SAILOR. By Brahma! boys, it'll be douse sail soon. The sky-born,

high-tide Ganges turned to wind! Thou showest thy black brow, Seeva!

MALTESE SAILOR. (RECLINING AND SHAKING HIS CAP.) It's the waves--the

snow's caps turn to jig it now. They'll shake their tassels soon. Now

would all the waves were women, then I'd go drown, and chassee with them

evermore! There's naught so sweet on earth--heaven may not match

it!--as those swift glances of warm, wild bosoms in the dance, when the

over-arboring arms hide such ripe, bursting grapes.

SICILIAN SAILOR. (RECLINING.) Tell me not of it! Hark ye, lad--fleet

interlacings of the limbs--lithe swayings--coyings--flutterings! lip!

heart! hip! all graze: unceasing touch and go! not taste, observe ye,

else come satiety. Eh, Pagan? (NUDGING.)

TAHITAN SAILOR. (RECLINING ON A MAT.) Hail, holy nakedness of our

dancing girls!--the Heeva-Heeva! Ah! low veiled, high palmed Tahiti! I

still rest me on thy mat, but the soft soil has slid! I saw thee woven

in the wood, my mat! green the first day I brought ye thence; now worn

and wilted quite. Ah me!--not thou nor I can bear the change! How

then, if so be transplanted to yon sky? Hear I the roaring streams from

Pirohitee's peak of spears, when they leap down the crags and drown the

villages?--The blast! the blast! Up, spine, and meet it! (LEAPS TO HIS

FEET.)

PORTUGUESE SAILOR. How the sea rolls swashing 'gainst the side! Stand

by for reefing, hearties! the winds are just crossing swords, pell-mell

they'll go lunging presently.

DANISH SAILOR. Crack, crack, old ship! so long as thou crackest, thou

holdest! Well done! The mate there holds ye to it stiffly. He's no more

afraid than the isle fort at Cattegat, put there to fight the Baltic

with storm-lashed guns, on which the sea-salt cakes!

4TH NANTUCKET SAILOR. He has his orders, mind ye that. I heard old

Ahab tell him he must always kill a squall, something as they burst a

waterspout with a pistol--fire your ship right into it!

ENGLISH SAILOR. Blood! but that old man's a grand old cove! We are the

lads to hunt him up his whale!

ALL. Aye! aye!

OLD MANX SAILOR. How the three pines shake! Pines are the hardest sort

of tree to live when shifted to any other soil, and here there's none

but the crew's cursed clay. Steady, helmsman! steady. This is the sort

of weather when brave hearts snap ashore, and keeled hulls split at sea.

Our captain has his birthmark; look yonder, boys, there's another in the

sky--lurid-like, ye see, all else pitch black.

DAGGOO. What of that? Who's afraid of black's afraid of me! I'm quarried

out of it!

SPANISH SAILOR. (ASIDE.) He wants to bully, ah!--the old grudge makes

me touchy (ADVANCING.) Aye, harpooneer, thy race is the undeniable dark

side of mankind--devilish dark at that. No offence.

DAGGOO (GRIMLY). None.

ST. JAGO'S SAILOR. That Spaniard's mad or drunk. But that can't be, or

else in his one case our old Mogul's fire-waters are somewhat long in

working.

5TH NANTUCKET SAILOR. What's that I saw--lightning? Yes.

SPANISH SAILOR. No; Daggoo showing his teeth.

DAGGOO (SPRINGING). Swallow thine, mannikin! White skin, white liver!

SPANISH SAILOR (MEETING HIM). Knife thee heartily! big frame, small

spirit!

ALL. A row! a row! a row!

TASHTEGO (WITH A WHIFF). A row a'low, and a row aloft--Gods and

men--both brawlers! Humph!

BELFAST SAILOR. A row! arrah a row! The Virgin be blessed, a row! Plunge

in with ye!

ENGLISH SAILOR. Fair play! Snatch the Spaniard's knife! A ring, a ring!

OLD MANX SAILOR. Ready formed. There! the ringed horizon. In that ring

Cain struck Abel. Sweet work, right work! No? Why then, God, mad'st thou

the ring?

MATE'S VOICE FROM THE QUARTER-DECK. Hands by the halyards! in

top-gallant sails! Stand by to reef topsails!

ALL. The squall! the squall! jump, my jollies! (THEY SCATTER.)

PIP (SHRINKING UNDER THE WINDLASS). Jollies? Lord help such jollies!

Crish, crash! there goes the jib-stay! Blang-whang! God! Duck lower,

Pip, here comes the royal yard! It's worse than being in the whirled

woods, the last day of the year! Who'd go climbing after chestnuts now?

But there they go, all cursing, and here I don't. Fine prospects to 'em;

they're on the road to heaven. Hold on hard! Jimmini, what a squall!

But those chaps there are worse yet--they are your white squalls, they.

White squalls? white whale, shirr! shirr! Here have I heard all their

chat just now, and the white whale--shirr! shirr!--but spoken of

once! and only this evening--it makes me jingle all over like my

tambourine--that anaconda of an old man swore 'em in to hunt him! Oh,

thou big white God aloft there somewhere in yon darkness, have mercy on

this small black boy down here; preserve him from all men that have no

bowels to feel fear!

CHAPTER 41. Moby Dick.

I, Ishmael, was one of that crew; my shouts had gone up with the rest;

my oath had been welded with theirs; and stronger I shouted, and more

did I hammer and clinch my oath, because of the dread in my soul. A

wild, mystical, sympathetical feeling was in me; Ahab's quenchless feud

seemed mine. With greedy ears I learned the history of that murderous

monster against whom I and all the others had taken our oaths of

violence and revenge.

For some time past, though at intervals only, the unaccompanied,

secluded White Whale had haunted those uncivilized seas mostly

frequented by the Sperm Whale fishermen. But not all of them knew of his

existence; only a few of them, comparatively, had knowingly seen him;

while the number who as yet had actually and knowingly given battle to

him, was small indeed. For, owing to the large number of whale-cruisers;

the disorderly way they were sprinkled over the entire watery

circumference, many of them adventurously pushing their quest along

solitary latitudes, so as seldom or never for a whole twelvemonth or

more on a stretch, to encounter a single news-telling sail of any sort;

the inordinate length of each separate voyage; the irregularity of the

times of sailing from home; all these, with other circumstances, direct

and indirect, long obstructed the spread through the whole world-wide

whaling-fleet of the special individualizing tidings concerning Moby

Dick. It was hardly to be doubted, that several vessels reported to have

encountered, at such or such a time, or on such or such a meridian,

a Sperm Whale of uncommon magnitude and malignity, which whale, after

doing great mischief to his assailants, had completely escaped them; to

some minds it was not an unfair presumption, I say, that the whale in

question must have been no other than Moby Dick. Yet as of late the

Sperm Whale fishery had been marked by various and not unfrequent

instances of great ferocity, cunning, and malice in the monster

attacked; therefore it was, that those who by accident ignorantly gave

battle to Moby Dick; such hunters, perhaps, for the most part, were

content to ascribe the peculiar terror he bred, more, as it were, to

the perils of the Sperm Whale fishery at large, than to the individual

cause. In that way, mostly, the disastrous encounter between Ahab and

the whale had hitherto been popularly regarded.

And as for those who, previously hearing of the White Whale, by chance

caught sight of him; in the beginning of the thing they had every one of

them, almost, as boldly and fearlessly lowered for him, as for any other

whale of that species. But at length, such calamities did ensue in these

assaults--not restricted to sprained wrists and ankles, broken limbs, or

devouring amputations--but fatal to the last degree of fatality; those

repeated disastrous repulses, all accumulating and piling their terrors

upon Moby Dick; those things had gone far to shake the fortitude of many

brave hunters, to whom the story of the White Whale had eventually come.

Nor did wild rumors of all sorts fail to exaggerate, and still the more

horrify the true histories of these deadly encounters. For not only do

fabulous rumors naturally grow out of the very body of all surprising

terrible events,--as the smitten tree gives birth to its fungi; but, in

maritime life, far more than in that of terra firma, wild rumors abound,

wherever there is any adequate reality for them to cling to. And as the

sea surpasses the land in this matter, so the whale fishery surpasses

every other sort of maritime life, in the wonderfulness and fearfulness

of the rumors which sometimes circulate there. For not only are whalemen

as a body unexempt from that ignorance and superstitiousness hereditary

to all sailors; but of all sailors, they are by all odds the most

directly brought into contact with whatever is appallingly astonishing

in the sea; face to face they not only eye its greatest marvels, but,

hand to jaw, give battle to them. Alone, in such remotest waters, that

though you sailed a thousand miles, and passed a thousand shores, you

would not come to any chiseled hearth-stone, or aught hospitable beneath

that part of the sun; in such latitudes and longitudes, pursuing too

such a calling as he does, the whaleman is wrapped by influences all

tending to make his fancy pregnant with many a mighty birth.

No wonder, then, that ever gathering volume from the mere transit over

the widest watery spaces, the outblown rumors of the White Whale did

in the end incorporate with themselves all manner of morbid hints,

and half-formed foetal suggestions of supernatural agencies, which

eventually invested Moby Dick with new terrors unborrowed from anything

that visibly appears. So that in many cases such a panic did he finally

strike, that few who by those rumors, at least, had heard of the White

Whale, few of those hunters were willing to encounter the perils of his

jaw.

But there were still other and more vital practical influences at work.

Not even at the present day has the original prestige of the Sperm

Whale, as fearfully distinguished from all other species of the

leviathan, died out of the minds of the whalemen as a body. There are

those this day among them, who, though intelligent and courageous

enough in offering battle to the Greenland or Right whale, would

perhaps--either from professional inexperience, or incompetency, or

timidity, decline a contest with the Sperm Whale; at any rate, there are

plenty of whalemen, especially among those whaling nations not sailing

under the American flag, who have never hostilely encountered the Sperm

Whale, but whose sole knowledge of the leviathan is restricted to

the ignoble monster primitively pursued in the North; seated on their

hatches, these men will hearken with a childish fireside interest

and awe, to the wild, strange tales of Southern whaling. Nor is the

pre-eminent tremendousness of the great Sperm Whale anywhere more

feelingly comprehended, than on board of those prows which stem him.

And as if the now tested reality of his might had in former

legendary times thrown its shadow before it; we find some book

naturalists--Olassen and Povelson--declaring the Sperm Whale not only to

be a consternation to every other creature in the sea, but also to be so

incredibly ferocious as continually to be athirst for human blood. Nor

even down to so late a time as Cuvier's, were these or almost similar

impressions effaced. For in his Natural History, the Baron himself

affirms that at sight of the Sperm Whale, all fish (sharks included) are

"struck with the most lively terrors," and "often in the precipitancy of

their flight dash themselves against the rocks with such violence as to

cause instantaneous death." And however the general experiences in the

fishery may amend such reports as these; yet in their full terribleness,

even to the bloodthirsty item of Povelson, the superstitious belief in

them is, in some vicissitudes of their vocation, revived in the minds of

the hunters.

So that overawed by the rumors and portents concerning him, not a few of

the fishermen recalled, in reference to Moby Dick, the earlier days

of the Sperm Whale fishery, when it was oftentimes hard to induce long

practised Right whalemen to embark in the perils of this new and daring

warfare; such men protesting that although other leviathans might be

hopefully pursued, yet to chase and point lance at such an apparition

as the Sperm Whale was not for mortal man. That to attempt it, would

be inevitably to be torn into a quick eternity. On this head, there are

some remarkable documents that may be consulted.

Nevertheless, some there were, who even in the face of these things

were ready to give chase to Moby Dick; and a still greater number who,

chancing only to hear of him distantly and vaguely, without the

specific details of any certain calamity, and without superstitious

accompaniments, were sufficiently hardy not to flee from the battle if

offered.

One of the wild suggestions referred to, as at last coming to be linked

with the White Whale in the minds of the superstitiously inclined,

was the unearthly conceit that Moby Dick was ubiquitous; that he had

actually been encountered in opposite latitudes at one and the same

instant of time.

Nor, credulous as such minds must have been, was this conceit altogether

without some faint show of superstitious probability. For as the secrets

of the currents in the seas have never yet been divulged, even to

the most erudite research; so the hidden ways of the Sperm Whale

when beneath the surface remain, in great part, unaccountable to his

pursuers; and from time to time have originated the most curious and

contradictory speculations regarding them, especially concerning the

mystic modes whereby, after sounding to a great depth, he transports

himself with such vast swiftness to the most widely distant points.

It is a thing well known to both American and English whale-ships, and

as well a thing placed upon authoritative record years ago by Scoresby,

that some whales have been captured far north in the Pacific, in whose

bodies have been found the barbs of harpoons darted in the Greenland

seas. Nor is it to be gainsaid, that in some of these instances it has

been declared that the interval of time between the two assaults could

not have exceeded very many days. Hence, by inference, it has been

believed by some whalemen, that the Nor' West Passage, so long a problem

to man, was never a problem to the whale. So that here, in the real

living experience of living men, the prodigies related in old times of

the inland Strello mountain in Portugal (near whose top there was said

to be a lake in which the wrecks of ships floated up to the surface);

and that still more wonderful story of the Arethusa fountain near

Syracuse (whose waters were believed to have come from the Holy Land

by an underground passage); these fabulous narrations are almost fully

equalled by the realities of the whalemen.

Forced into familiarity, then, with such prodigies as these; and knowing

that after repeated, intrepid assaults, the White Whale had escaped

alive; it cannot be much matter of surprise that some whalemen should

go still further in their superstitions; declaring Moby Dick not only

ubiquitous, but immortal (for immortality is but ubiquity in time); that

though groves of spears should be planted in his flanks, he would still

swim away unharmed; or if indeed he should ever be made to spout thick

blood, such a sight would be but a ghastly deception; for again in

unensanguined billows hundreds of leagues away, his unsullied jet would

once more be seen.

But even stripped of these supernatural surmisings, there was enough in

the earthly make and incontestable character of the monster to strike

the imagination with unwonted power. For, it was not so much his

uncommon bulk that so much distinguished him from other sperm whales,

but, as was elsewhere thrown out--a peculiar snow-white wrinkled

forehead, and a high, pyramidical white hump. These were his prominent

features; the tokens whereby, even in the limitless, uncharted seas, he

revealed his identity, at a long distance, to those who knew him.

The rest of his body was so streaked, and spotted, and marbled with

the same shrouded hue, that, in the end, he had gained his distinctive

appellation of the White Whale; a name, indeed, literally justified by

his vivid aspect, when seen gliding at high noon through a dark blue

sea, leaving a milky-way wake of creamy foam, all spangled with golden

gleamings.

Nor was it his unwonted magnitude, nor his remarkable hue, nor yet his

deformed lower jaw, that so much invested the whale with natural terror,

as that unexampled, intelligent malignity which, according to specific

accounts, he had over and over again evinced in his assaults. More than

all, his treacherous retreats struck more of dismay than perhaps aught

else. For, when swimming before his exulting pursuers, with every

apparent symptom of alarm, he had several times been known to turn

round suddenly, and, bearing down upon them, either stave their boats to

splinters, or drive them back in consternation to their ship.

Already several fatalities had attended his chase. But though similar

disasters, however little bruited ashore, were by no means unusual

in the fishery; yet, in most instances, such seemed the White Whale's

infernal aforethought of ferocity, that every dismembering or death

that he caused, was not wholly regarded as having been inflicted by an

unintelligent agent.

Judge, then, to what pitches of inflamed, distracted fury the minds of

his more desperate hunters were impelled, when amid the chips of chewed

boats, and the sinking limbs of torn comrades, they swam out of the

white curds of the whale's direful wrath into the serene, exasperating

sunlight, that smiled on, as if at a birth or a bridal.

His three boats stove around him, and oars and men both whirling in the

eddies; one captain, seizing the line-knife from his broken prow, had

dashed at the whale, as an Arkansas duellist at his foe, blindly seeking

with a six inch blade to reach the fathom-deep life of the whale.

That captain was Ahab. And then it was, that suddenly sweeping his

sickle-shaped lower jaw beneath him, Moby Dick had reaped away Ahab's

leg, as a mower a blade of grass in the field. No turbaned Turk, no

hired Venetian or Malay, could have smote him with more seeming malice.

Small reason was there to doubt, then, that ever since that almost fatal

encounter, Ahab had cherished a wild vindictiveness against the whale,

all the more fell for that in his frantic morbidness he at last came

to identify with him, not only all his bodily woes, but all his

intellectual and spiritual exasperations. The White Whale swam before

him as the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies which

some deep men feel eating in them, till they are left living on with

half a heart and half a lung. That intangible malignity which has been

from the beginning; to whose dominion even the modern Christians ascribe

one-half of the worlds; which the ancient Ophites of the east reverenced

in their statue devil;--Ahab did not fall down and worship it like them;

but deliriously transferring its idea to the abhorred white whale, he

pitted himself, all mutilated, against it. All that most maddens and

torments; all that stirs up the lees of things; all truth with malice

in it; all that cracks the sinews and cakes the brain; all the subtle

demonisms of life and thought; all evil, to crazy Ahab, were visibly

personified, and made practically assailable in Moby Dick. He piled upon

the whale's white hump the sum of all the general rage and hate felt

by his whole race from Adam down; and then, as if his chest had been a

mortar, he burst his hot heart's shell upon it.

It is not probable that this monomania in him took its instant rise at

the precise time of his bodily dismemberment. Then, in darting at the

monster, knife in hand, he had but given loose to a sudden, passionate,

corporal animosity; and when he received the stroke that tore him, he

probably but felt the agonizing bodily laceration, but nothing more.

Yet, when by this collision forced to turn towards home, and for long

months of days and weeks, Ahab and anguish lay stretched together in one

hammock, rounding in mid winter that dreary, howling Patagonian Cape;

then it was, that his torn body and gashed soul bled into one another;

and so interfusing, made him mad. That it was only then, on the homeward

voyage, after the encounter, that the final monomania seized him, seems

all but certain from the fact that, at intervals during the passage,

he was a raving lunatic; and, though unlimbed of a leg, yet such vital

strength yet lurked in his Egyptian chest, and was moreover intensified

by his delirium, that his mates were forced to lace him fast, even

there, as he sailed, raving in his hammock. In a strait-jacket, he swung

to the mad rockings of the gales. And, when running into more sufferable

latitudes, the ship, with mild stun'sails spread, floated across the

tranquil tropics, and, to all appearances, the old man's delirium seemed

left behind him with the Cape Horn swells, and he came forth from his

dark den into the blessed light and air; even then, when he bore that

firm, collected front, however pale, and issued his calm orders once

again; and his mates thanked God the direful madness was now gone; even

then, Ahab, in his hidden self, raved on. Human madness is oftentimes a

cunning and most feline thing. When you think it fled, it may have but

become transfigured into some still subtler form. Ahab's full lunacy

subsided not, but deepeningly contracted; like the unabated Hudson,

when that noble Northman flows narrowly, but unfathomably through the

Highland gorge. But, as in his narrow-flowing monomania, not one jot of

Ahab's broad madness had been left behind; so in that broad madness, not

one jot of his great natural intellect had perished. That before living

agent, now became the living instrument. If such a furious trope may

stand, his special lunacy stormed his general sanity, and carried it,

and turned all its concentred cannon upon its own mad mark; so that far

from having lost his strength, Ahab, to that one end, did now possess a

thousand fold more potency than ever he had sanely brought to bear upon

any one reasonable object.

This is much; yet Ahab's larger, darker, deeper part remains unhinted.

But vain to popularize profundities, and all truth is profound. Winding

far down from within the very heart of this spiked Hotel de Cluny where

we here stand--however grand and wonderful, now quit it;--and take your

way, ye nobler, sadder souls, to those vast Roman halls of Thermes;

where far beneath the fantastic towers of man's upper earth, his root

of grandeur, his whole awful essence sits in bearded state; an antique

buried beneath antiquities, and throned on torsoes! So with a broken

throne, the great gods mock that captive king; so like a Caryatid, he

patient sits, upholding on his frozen brow the piled entablatures of

ages. Wind ye down there, ye prouder, sadder souls! question that proud,

sad king! A family likeness! aye, he did beget ye, ye young exiled

royalties; and from your grim sire only will the old State-secret come.

Now, in his heart, Ahab had some glimpse of this, namely: all my means

are sane, my motive and my object mad. Yet without power to kill, or

change, or shun the fact; he likewise knew that to mankind he did long

dissemble; in some sort, did still. But that thing of his dissembling

was only subject to his perceptibility, not to his will determinate.

Nevertheless, so well did he succeed in that dissembling, that when

with ivory leg he stepped ashore at last, no Nantucketer thought him

otherwise than but naturally grieved, and that to the quick, with the

terrible casualty which had overtaken him.

The report of his undeniable delirium at sea was likewise popularly

ascribed to a kindred cause. And so too, all the added moodiness which

always afterwards, to the very day of sailing in the Pequod on the

present voyage, sat brooding on his brow. Nor is it so very unlikely,

that far from distrusting his fitness for another whaling voyage, on

account of such dark symptoms, the calculating people of that prudent

isle were inclined to harbor the conceit, that for those very reasons he

was all the better qualified and set on edge, for a pursuit so full

of rage and wildness as the bloody hunt of whales. Gnawed within and

scorched without, with the infixed, unrelenting fangs of some incurable

idea; such an one, could he be found, would seem the very man to dart

his iron and lift his lance against the most appalling of all brutes.

Or, if for any reason thought to be corporeally incapacitated for that,

yet such an one would seem superlatively competent to cheer and howl on

his underlings to the attack. But be all this as it may, certain it is,

that with the mad secret of his unabated rage bolted up and keyed in

him, Ahab had purposely sailed upon the present voyage with the one only

and all-engrossing object of hunting the White Whale. Had any one of his

old acquaintances on shore but half dreamed of what was lurking in him

then, how soon would their aghast and righteous souls have wrenched the

ship from such a fiendish man! They were bent on profitable cruises, the

profit to be counted down in dollars from the mint. He was intent on an

audacious, immitigable, and supernatural revenge.

Here, then, was this grey-headed, ungodly old man, chasing with curses a

Job's whale round the world, at the head of a crew, too, chiefly made

up of mongrel renegades, and castaways, and cannibals--morally enfeebled

also, by the incompetence of mere unaided virtue or right-mindedness in

Starbuck, the invunerable jollity of indifference and recklessness in

Stubb, and the pervading mediocrity in Flask. Such a crew, so officered,

seemed specially picked and packed by some infernal fatality to help him

to his monomaniac revenge. How it was that they so aboundingly responded

to the old man's ire--by what evil magic their souls were possessed,

that at times his hate seemed almost theirs; the White Whale as much

their insufferable foe as his; how all this came to be--what the White

Whale was to them, or how to their unconscious understandings, also, in

some dim, unsuspected way, he might have seemed the gliding great demon

of the seas of life,--all this to explain, would be to dive deeper than

Ishmael can go. The subterranean miner that works in us all, how can one

tell whither leads his shaft by the ever shifting, muffled sound of his

pick? Who does not feel the irresistible arm drag? What skiff in tow

of a seventy-four can stand still? For one, I gave myself up to the

abandonment of the time and the place; but while yet all a-rush to

encounter the whale, could see naught in that brute but the deadliest

ill.

CHAPTER 42. The Whiteness of The Whale.

What the white whale was to Ahab, has been hinted; what, at times, he

was to me, as yet remains unsaid.

Aside from those more obvious considerations touching Moby Dick, which

could not but occasionally awaken in any man's soul some alarm, there

was another thought, or rather vague, nameless horror concerning him,

which at times by its intensity completely overpowered all the rest; and

yet so mystical and well nigh ineffable was it, that I almost despair of

putting it in a comprehensible form. It was the whiteness of the whale

that above all things appalled me. But how can I hope to explain myself

here; and yet, in some dim, random way, explain myself I must, else all

these chapters might be naught.

Though in many natural objects, whiteness refiningly enhances beauty, as

if imparting some special virtue of its own, as in marbles, japonicas,

and pearls; and though various nations have in some way recognised a

certain royal preeminence in this hue; even the barbaric, grand old

kings of Pegu placing the title "Lord of the White Elephants" above all

their other magniloquent ascriptions of dominion; and the modern kings

of Siam unfurling the same snow-white quadruped in the royal standard;

and the Hanoverian flag bearing the one figure of a snow-white charger;

and the great Austrian Empire, Caesarian, heir to overlording Rome,

having for the imperial colour the same imperial hue; and though this

pre-eminence in it applies to the human race itself, giving the white

man ideal mastership over every dusky tribe; and though, besides, all

this, whiteness has been even made significant of gladness, for among

the Romans a white stone marked a joyful day; and though in other mortal

sympathies and symbolizings, this same hue is made the emblem of many

touching, noble things--the innocence of brides, the benignity of age;

though among the Red Men of America the giving of the white belt

of wampum was the deepest pledge of honour; though in many climes,

whiteness typifies the majesty of Justice in the ermine of the Judge,

and contributes to the daily state of kings and queens drawn by

milk-white steeds; though even in the higher mysteries of the most

august religions it has been made the symbol of the divine spotlessness

and power; by the Persian fire worshippers, the white forked flame being

held the holiest on the altar; and in the Greek mythologies, Great Jove

himself being made incarnate in a snow-white bull; and though to the

noble Iroquois, the midwinter sacrifice of the sacred White Dog was

by far the holiest festival of their theology, that spotless, faithful

creature being held the purest envoy they could send to the Great Spirit

with the annual tidings of their own fidelity; and though directly from

the Latin word for white, all Christian priests derive the name of

one part of their sacred vesture, the alb or tunic, worn beneath the

cassock; and though among the holy pomps of the Romish faith, white is

specially employed in the celebration of the Passion of our Lord; though

in the Vision of St. John, white robes are given to the redeemed, and

the four-and-twenty elders stand clothed in white before the great-white

throne, and the Holy One that sitteth there white like wool; yet for all

these accumulated associations, with whatever is sweet, and honourable,

and sublime, there yet lurks an elusive something in the innermost idea

of this hue, which strikes more of panic to the soul than that redness

which affrights in blood.

This elusive quality it is, which causes the thought of whiteness, when

divorced from more kindly associations, and coupled with any object

terrible in itself, to heighten that terror to the furthest bounds.

Witness the white bear of the poles, and the white shark of the tropics;

what but their smooth, flaky whiteness makes them the transcendent

horrors they are? That ghastly whiteness it is which imparts such an

abhorrent mildness, even more loathsome than terrific, to the dumb

gloating of their aspect. So that not the fierce-fanged tiger in his

heraldic coat can so stagger courage as the white-shrouded bear or

shark.\*

\*With reference to the Polar bear, it may possibly be urged by him

who would fain go still deeper into this matter, that it is not

the whiteness, separately regarded, which heightens the intolerable

hideousness of that brute; for, analysed, that heightened hideousness,

it might be said, only rises from the circumstance, that the

irresponsible ferociousness of the creature stands invested in the

fleece of celestial innocence and love; and hence, by bringing together

two such opposite emotions in our minds, the Polar bear frightens us

with so unnatural a contrast. But even assuming all this to be true;

yet, were it not for the whiteness, you would not have that intensified

terror.

As for the white shark, the white gliding ghostliness of repose in that

creature, when beheld in his ordinary moods, strangely tallies with the

same quality in the Polar quadruped. This peculiarity is most vividly

hit by the French in the name they bestow upon that fish. The Romish

mass for the dead begins with "Requiem eternam" (eternal rest), whence

REQUIEM denominating the mass itself, and any other funeral music. Now,

in allusion to the white, silent stillness of death in this shark, and

the mild deadliness of his habits, the French call him REQUIN.

Bethink thee of the albatross, whence come those clouds of spiritual

wonderment and pale dread, in which that white phantom sails in all

imaginations? Not Coleridge first threw that spell; but God's great,

unflattering laureate, Nature.\*

\*I remember the first albatross I ever saw. It was during a prolonged

gale, in waters hard upon the Antarctic seas. From my forenoon watch

below, I ascended to the overclouded deck; and there, dashed upon the

main hatches, I saw a regal, feathery thing of unspotted whiteness, and

with a hooked, Roman bill sublime. At intervals, it arched forth

its vast archangel wings, as if to embrace some holy ark. Wondrous

flutterings and throbbings shook it. Though bodily unharmed, it uttered

cries, as some king's ghost in supernatural distress. Through its

inexpressible, strange eyes, methought I peeped to secrets which took

hold of God. As Abraham before the angels, I bowed myself; the white

thing was so white, its wings so wide, and in those for ever exiled

waters, I had lost the miserable warping memories of traditions and of

towns. Long I gazed at that prodigy of plumage. I cannot tell, can only

hint, the things that darted through me then. But at last I awoke; and

turning, asked a sailor what bird was this. A goney, he replied. Goney!

never had heard that name before; is it conceivable that this glorious

thing is utterly unknown to men ashore! never! But some time after, I

learned that goney was some seaman's name for albatross. So that by no

possibility could Coleridge's wild Rhyme have had aught to do with those

mystical impressions which were mine, when I saw that bird upon our

deck. For neither had I then read the Rhyme, nor knew the bird to be

an albatross. Yet, in saying this, I do but indirectly burnish a little

brighter the noble merit of the poem and the poet.

I assert, then, that in the wondrous bodily whiteness of the bird

chiefly lurks the secret of the spell; a truth the more evinced in this,

that by a solecism of terms there are birds called grey albatrosses;

and these I have frequently seen, but never with such emotions as when I

beheld the Antarctic fowl.

But how had the mystic thing been caught? Whisper it not, and I will

tell; with a treacherous hook and line, as the fowl floated on the sea.

At last the Captain made a postman of it; tying a lettered, leathern

tally round its neck, with the ship's time and place; and then letting

it escape. But I doubt not, that leathern tally, meant for man, was

taken off in Heaven, when the white fowl flew to join the wing-folding,

the invoking, and adoring cherubim!

Most famous in our Western annals and Indian traditions is that of

the White Steed of the Prairies; a magnificent milk-white charger,

large-eyed, small-headed, bluff-chested, and with the dignity of a

thousand monarchs in his lofty, overscorning carriage. He was the

elected Xerxes of vast herds of wild horses, whose pastures in those

days were only fenced by the Rocky Mountains and the Alleghanies. At

their flaming head he westward trooped it like that chosen star which

every evening leads on the hosts of light. The flashing cascade of his

mane, the curving comet of his tail, invested him with housings more

resplendent than gold and silver-beaters could have furnished him. A

most imperial and archangelical apparition of that unfallen, western

world, which to the eyes of the old trappers and hunters revived the

glories of those primeval times when Adam walked majestic as a god,

bluff-browed and fearless as this mighty steed. Whether marching amid

his aides and marshals in the van of countless cohorts that endlessly

streamed it over the plains, like an Ohio; or whether with his

circumambient subjects browsing all around at the horizon, the White

Steed gallopingly reviewed them with warm nostrils reddening through his

cool milkiness; in whatever aspect he presented himself, always to the

bravest Indians he was the object of trembling reverence and awe. Nor

can it be questioned from what stands on legendary record of this noble

horse, that it was his spiritual whiteness chiefly, which so clothed him

with divineness; and that this divineness had that in it which, though

commanding worship, at the same time enforced a certain nameless terror.

But there are other instances where this whiteness loses all that

accessory and strange glory which invests it in the White Steed and

Albatross.

What is it that in the Albino man so peculiarly repels and often shocks

the eye, as that sometimes he is loathed by his own kith and kin! It

is that whiteness which invests him, a thing expressed by the name

he bears. The Albino is as well made as other men--has no substantive

deformity--and yet this mere aspect of all-pervading whiteness makes him

more strangely hideous than the ugliest abortion. Why should this be so?

Nor, in quite other aspects, does Nature in her least palpable but

not the less malicious agencies, fail to enlist among her forces

this crowning attribute of the terrible. From its snowy aspect, the

gauntleted ghost of the Southern Seas has been denominated the White

Squall. Nor, in some historic instances, has the art of human malice

omitted so potent an auxiliary. How wildly it heightens the effect of

that passage in Froissart, when, masked in the snowy symbol of their

faction, the desperate White Hoods of Ghent murder their bailiff in the

market-place!

Nor, in some things, does the common, hereditary experience of all

mankind fail to bear witness to the supernaturalism of this hue. It

cannot well be doubted, that the one visible quality in the aspect of

the dead which most appals the gazer, is the marble pallor lingering

there; as if indeed that pallor were as much like the badge of

consternation in the other world, as of mortal trepidation here. And

from that pallor of the dead, we borrow the expressive hue of the shroud

in which we wrap them. Nor even in our superstitions do we fail to

throw the same snowy mantle round our phantoms; all ghosts rising in a

milk-white fog--Yea, while these terrors seize us, let us add, that even

the king of terrors, when personified by the evangelist, rides on his

pallid horse.

Therefore, in his other moods, symbolize whatever grand or gracious

thing he will by whiteness, no man can deny that in its profoundest

idealized significance it calls up a peculiar apparition to the soul.

But though without dissent this point be fixed, how is mortal man to

account for it? To analyse it, would seem impossible. Can we, then,

by the citation of some of those instances wherein this thing of

whiteness--though for the time either wholly or in great part stripped

of all direct associations calculated to impart to it aught fearful,

but nevertheless, is found to exert over us the same sorcery, however

modified;--can we thus hope to light upon some chance clue to conduct us

to the hidden cause we seek?

Let us try. But in a matter like this, subtlety appeals to subtlety,

and without imagination no man can follow another into these halls. And

though, doubtless, some at least of the imaginative impressions about

to be presented may have been shared by most men, yet few perhaps were

entirely conscious of them at the time, and therefore may not be able to

recall them now.

Why to the man of untutored ideality, who happens to be but loosely

acquainted with the peculiar character of the day, does the bare mention

of Whitsuntide marshal in the fancy such long, dreary, speechless

processions of slow-pacing pilgrims, down-cast and hooded with

new-fallen snow? Or, to the unread, unsophisticated Protestant of the

Middle American States, why does the passing mention of a White Friar or

a White Nun, evoke such an eyeless statue in the soul?

Or what is there apart from the traditions of dungeoned warriors and

kings (which will not wholly account for it) that makes the White

Tower of London tell so much more strongly on the imagination of

an untravelled American, than those other storied structures, its

neighbors--the Byward Tower, or even the Bloody? And those sublimer

towers, the White Mountains of New Hampshire, whence, in peculiar moods,

comes that gigantic ghostliness over the soul at the bare mention of

that name, while the thought of Virginia's Blue Ridge is full of a soft,

dewy, distant dreaminess? Or why, irrespective of all latitudes and

longitudes, does the name of the White Sea exert such a spectralness

over the fancy, while that of the Yellow Sea lulls us with mortal

thoughts of long lacquered mild afternoons on the waves, followed by

the gaudiest and yet sleepiest of sunsets? Or, to choose a wholly

unsubstantial instance, purely addressed to the fancy, why, in reading

the old fairy tales of Central Europe, does "the tall pale man" of the

Hartz forests, whose changeless pallor unrustlingly glides through the

green of the groves--why is this phantom more terrible than all the

whooping imps of the Blocksburg?

Nor is it, altogether, the remembrance of her cathedral-toppling

earthquakes; nor the stampedoes of her frantic seas; nor the

tearlessness of arid skies that never rain; nor the sight of her wide

field of leaning spires, wrenched cope-stones, and crosses all adroop

(like canted yards of anchored fleets); and her suburban avenues of

house-walls lying over upon each other, as a tossed pack of cards;--it

is not these things alone which make tearless Lima, the strangest,

saddest city thou can'st see. For Lima has taken the white veil; and

there is a higher horror in this whiteness of her woe. Old as Pizarro,

this whiteness keeps her ruins for ever new; admits not the cheerful

greenness of complete decay; spreads over her broken ramparts the rigid

pallor of an apoplexy that fixes its own distortions.

I know that, to the common apprehension, this phenomenon of whiteness

is not confessed to be the prime agent in exaggerating the terror of

objects otherwise terrible; nor to the unimaginative mind is there aught

of terror in those appearances whose awfulness to another mind almost

solely consists in this one phenomenon, especially when exhibited under

any form at all approaching to muteness or universality. What I mean

by these two statements may perhaps be respectively elucidated by the

following examples.

First: The mariner, when drawing nigh the coasts of foreign lands, if by

night he hear the roar of breakers, starts to vigilance, and feels just

enough of trepidation to sharpen all his faculties; but under precisely

similar circumstances, let him be called from his hammock to view his

ship sailing through a midnight sea of milky whiteness--as if from

encircling headlands shoals of combed white bears were swimming round

him, then he feels a silent, superstitious dread; the shrouded phantom

of the whitened waters is horrible to him as a real ghost; in vain the

lead assures him he is still off soundings; heart and helm they both go

down; he never rests till blue water is under him again. Yet where is

the mariner who will tell thee, "Sir, it was not so much the fear of

striking hidden rocks, as the fear of that hideous whiteness that so

stirred me?"

Second: To the native Indian of Peru, the continual sight of the

snowhowdahed Andes conveys naught of dread, except, perhaps, in the

mere fancying of the eternal frosted desolateness reigning at such vast

altitudes, and the natural conceit of what a fearfulness it would be

to lose oneself in such inhuman solitudes. Much the same is it with the

backwoodsman of the West, who with comparative indifference views an

unbounded prairie sheeted with driven snow, no shadow of tree or twig

to break the fixed trance of whiteness. Not so the sailor, beholding the

scenery of the Antarctic seas; where at times, by some infernal trick

of legerdemain in the powers of frost and air, he, shivering and half

shipwrecked, instead of rainbows speaking hope and solace to his misery,

views what seems a boundless churchyard grinning upon him with its lean

ice monuments and splintered crosses.

But thou sayest, methinks that white-lead chapter about whiteness is but

a white flag hung out from a craven soul; thou surrenderest to a hypo,

Ishmael.

Tell me, why this strong young colt, foaled in some peaceful valley of

Vermont, far removed from all beasts of prey--why is it that upon the

sunniest day, if you but shake a fresh buffalo robe behind him, so that

he cannot even see it, but only smells its wild animal muskiness--why

will he start, snort, and with bursting eyes paw the ground in phrensies

of affright? There is no remembrance in him of any gorings of wild

creatures in his green northern home, so that the strange muskiness he

smells cannot recall to him anything associated with the experience of

former perils; for what knows he, this New England colt, of the black

bisons of distant Oregon?

No; but here thou beholdest even in a dumb brute, the instinct of the

knowledge of the demonism in the world. Though thousands of miles from

Oregon, still when he smells that savage musk, the rending, goring bison

herds are as present as to the deserted wild foal of the prairies, which

this instant they may be trampling into dust.

Thus, then, the muffled rollings of a milky sea; the bleak rustlings

of the festooned frosts of mountains; the desolate shiftings of the

windrowed snows of prairies; all these, to Ishmael, are as the shaking

of that buffalo robe to the frightened colt!

Though neither knows where lie the nameless things of which the mystic

sign gives forth such hints; yet with me, as with the colt, somewhere

those things must exist. Though in many of its aspects this visible

world seems formed in love, the invisible spheres were formed in fright.

But not yet have we solved the incantation of this whiteness, and

learned why it appeals with such power to the soul; and more strange

and far more portentous--why, as we have seen, it is at once the

most meaning symbol of spiritual things, nay, the very veil of the

Christian's Deity; and yet should be as it is, the intensifying agent in

things the most appalling to mankind.

Is it that by its indefiniteness it shadows forth the heartless voids

and immensities of the universe, and thus stabs us from behind with the

thought of annihilation, when beholding the white depths of the milky

way? Or is it, that as in essence whiteness is not so much a colour as

the visible absence of colour; and at the same time the concrete of all

colours; is it for these reasons that there is such a dumb blankness,

full of meaning, in a wide landscape of snows--a colourless, all-colour

of atheism from which we shrink? And when we consider that other theory

of the natural philosophers, that all other earthly hues--every stately

or lovely emblazoning--the sweet tinges of sunset skies and woods; yea,

and the gilded velvets of butterflies, and the butterfly cheeks of

young girls; all these are but subtile deceits, not actually inherent

in substances, but only laid on from without; so that all deified Nature

absolutely paints like the harlot, whose allurements cover nothing but

the charnel-house within; and when we proceed further, and consider that

the mystical cosmetic which produces every one of her hues, the great

principle of light, for ever remains white or colourless in itself, and

if operating without medium upon matter, would touch all objects, even

tulips and roses, with its own blank tinge--pondering all this, the

palsied universe lies before us a leper; and like wilful travellers in

Lapland, who refuse to wear coloured and colouring glasses upon their

eyes, so the wretched infidel gazes himself blind at the monumental

white shroud that wraps all the prospect around him. And of all these

things the Albino whale was the symbol. Wonder ye then at the fiery

hunt?

CHAPTER 43. Hark!

"HIST! Did you hear that noise, Cabaco?"

It was the middle-watch; a fair moonlight; the seamen were standing in a

cordon, extending from one of the fresh-water butts in the waist, to the

scuttle-butt near the taffrail. In this manner, they passed the buckets

to fill the scuttle-butt. Standing, for the most part, on the hallowed

precincts of the quarter-deck, they were careful not to speak or rustle

their feet. From hand to hand, the buckets went in the deepest silence,

only broken by the occasional flap of a sail, and the steady hum of the

unceasingly advancing keel.

It was in the midst of this repose, that Archy, one of the cordon, whose

post was near the after-hatches, whispered to his neighbor, a Cholo, the

words above.

"Hist! did you hear that noise, Cabaco?"

"Take the bucket, will ye, Archy? what noise d'ye mean?"

"There it is again--under the hatches--don't you hear it--a cough--it

sounded like a cough."

"Cough be damned! Pass along that return bucket."

"There again--there it is!--it sounds like two or three sleepers turning

over, now!"

"Caramba! have done, shipmate, will ye? It's the three soaked biscuits

ye eat for supper turning over inside of ye--nothing else. Look to the

bucket!"

"Say what ye will, shipmate; I've sharp ears."

"Aye, you are the chap, ain't ye, that heard the hum of the old

Quakeress's knitting-needles fifty miles at sea from Nantucket; you're

the chap."

"Grin away; we'll see what turns up. Hark ye, Cabaco, there is somebody

down in the after-hold that has not yet been seen on deck; and I suspect

our old Mogul knows something of it too. I heard Stubb tell Flask, one

morning watch, that there was something of that sort in the wind."

"Tish! the bucket!"

CHAPTER 44. The Chart.

Had you followed Captain Ahab down into his cabin after the squall that

took place on the night succeeding that wild ratification of his purpose

with his crew, you would have seen him go to a locker in the transom,

and bringing out a large wrinkled roll of yellowish sea charts, spread

them before him on his screwed-down table. Then seating himself before

it, you would have seen him intently study the various lines and

shadings which there met his eye; and with slow but steady pencil trace

additional courses over spaces that before were blank. At intervals, he

would refer to piles of old log-books beside him, wherein were set down

the seasons and places in which, on various former voyages of various

ships, sperm whales had been captured or seen.

While thus employed, the heavy pewter lamp suspended in chains over his

head, continually rocked with the motion of the ship, and for ever threw

shifting gleams and shadows of lines upon his wrinkled brow, till it

almost seemed that while he himself was marking out lines and courses

on the wrinkled charts, some invisible pencil was also tracing lines and

courses upon the deeply marked chart of his forehead.

But it was not this night in particular that, in the solitude of his

cabin, Ahab thus pondered over his charts. Almost every night they were

brought out; almost every night some pencil marks were effaced, and

others were substituted. For with the charts of all four oceans before

him, Ahab was threading a maze of currents and eddies, with a view to

the more certain accomplishment of that monomaniac thought of his soul.

Now, to any one not fully acquainted with the ways of the leviathans,

it might seem an absurdly hopeless task thus to seek out one solitary

creature in the unhooped oceans of this planet. But not so did it

seem to Ahab, who knew the sets of all tides and currents; and thereby

calculating the driftings of the sperm whale's food; and, also, calling

to mind the regular, ascertained seasons for hunting him in particular

latitudes; could arrive at reasonable surmises, almost approaching to

certainties, concerning the timeliest day to be upon this or that ground

in search of his prey.

So assured, indeed, is the fact concerning the periodicalness of the

sperm whale's resorting to given waters, that many hunters believe that,

could he be closely observed and studied throughout the world; were the

logs for one voyage of the entire whale fleet carefully collated,

then the migrations of the sperm whale would be found to correspond in

invariability to those of the herring-shoals or the flights of swallows.

On this hint, attempts have been made to construct elaborate migratory

charts of the sperm whale.\*

\*Since the above was written, the statement is happily borne

out by an official circular, issued by Lieutenant Maury, of

the National Observatory, Washington, April 16th, 1851. By

that circular, it appears that precisely such a chart is in

course of completion; and portions of it are presented in

the circular. "This chart divides the ocean into districts

of five degrees of latitude by five degrees of longitude;

perpendicularly through each of which districts are twelve

columns for the twelve months; and horizontally through each

of which districts are three lines; one to show the number

of days that have been spent in each month in every

district, and the two others to show the number of days in

which whales, sperm or right, have been seen."

Besides, when making a passage from one feeding-ground to another, the

sperm whales, guided by some infallible instinct--say, rather, secret

intelligence from the Deity--mostly swim in VEINS, as they are called;

continuing their way along a given ocean-line with such undeviating

exactitude, that no ship ever sailed her course, by any chart, with

one tithe of such marvellous precision. Though, in these cases, the

direction taken by any one whale be straight as a surveyor's parallel,

and though the line of advance be strictly confined to its own

unavoidable, straight wake, yet the arbitrary VEIN in which at these

times he is said to swim, generally embraces some few miles in width

(more or less, as the vein is presumed to expand or contract); but

never exceeds the visual sweep from the whale-ship's mast-heads,

when circumspectly gliding along this magic zone. The sum is, that at

particular seasons within that breadth and along that path, migrating

whales may with great confidence be looked for.

And hence not only at substantiated times, upon well known separate

feeding-grounds, could Ahab hope to encounter his prey; but in crossing

the widest expanses of water between those grounds he could, by his

art, so place and time himself on his way, as even then not to be wholly

without prospect of a meeting.

There was a circumstance which at first sight seemed to entangle his

delirious but still methodical scheme. But not so in the reality,

perhaps. Though the gregarious sperm whales have their regular seasons

for particular grounds, yet in general you cannot conclude that the

herds which haunted such and such a latitude or longitude this year,

say, will turn out to be identically the same with those that were found

there the preceding season; though there are peculiar and unquestionable

instances where the contrary of this has proved true. In general, the

same remark, only within a less wide limit, applies to the solitaries

and hermits among the matured, aged sperm whales. So that though Moby

Dick had in a former year been seen, for example, on what is called the

Seychelle ground in the Indian ocean, or Volcano Bay on the Japanese

Coast; yet it did not follow, that were the Pequod to visit either of

those spots at any subsequent corresponding season, she would infallibly

encounter him there. So, too, with some other feeding grounds, where

he had at times revealed himself. But all these seemed only his casual

stopping-places and ocean-inns, so to speak, not his places of prolonged

abode. And where Ahab's chances of accomplishing his object have

hitherto been spoken of, allusion has only been made to whatever

way-side, antecedent, extra prospects were his, ere a particular

set time or place were attained, when all possibilities would become

probabilities, and, as Ahab fondly thought, every possibility the next

thing to a certainty. That particular set time and place were conjoined

in the one technical phrase--the Season-on-the-Line. For there and then,

for several consecutive years, Moby Dick had been periodically descried,

lingering in those waters for awhile, as the sun, in its annual round,

loiters for a predicted interval in any one sign of the Zodiac. There

it was, too, that most of the deadly encounters with the white whale had

taken place; there the waves were storied with his deeds; there also was

that tragic spot where the monomaniac old man had found the awful motive

to his vengeance. But in the cautious comprehensiveness and unloitering

vigilance with which Ahab threw his brooding soul into this unfaltering

hunt, he would not permit himself to rest all his hopes upon the one

crowning fact above mentioned, however flattering it might be to those

hopes; nor in the sleeplessness of his vow could he so tranquillize his

unquiet heart as to postpone all intervening quest.

Now, the Pequod had sailed from Nantucket at the very beginning of the

Season-on-the-Line. No possible endeavor then could enable her commander

to make the great passage southwards, double Cape Horn, and then running

down sixty degrees of latitude arrive in the equatorial Pacific in time

to cruise there. Therefore, he must wait for the next ensuing season.

Yet the premature hour of the Pequod's sailing had, perhaps, been

correctly selected by Ahab, with a view to this very complexion of

things. Because, an interval of three hundred and sixty-five days

and nights was before him; an interval which, instead of impatiently

enduring ashore, he would spend in a miscellaneous hunt; if by chance

the White Whale, spending his vacation in seas far remote from his

periodical feeding-grounds, should turn up his wrinkled brow off the

Persian Gulf, or in the Bengal Bay, or China Seas, or in any other

waters haunted by his race. So that Monsoons, Pampas, Nor'-Westers,

Harmattans, Trades; any wind but the Levanter and Simoon, might

blow Moby Dick into the devious zig-zag world-circle of the Pequod's

circumnavigating wake.

But granting all this; yet, regarded discreetly and coolly, seems it not

but a mad idea, this; that in the broad boundless ocean, one solitary

whale, even if encountered, should be thought capable of individual

recognition from his hunter, even as a white-bearded Mufti in the

thronged thoroughfares of Constantinople? Yes. For the peculiar

snow-white brow of Moby Dick, and his snow-white hump, could not but

be unmistakable. And have I not tallied the whale, Ahab would mutter

to himself, as after poring over his charts till long after midnight he

would throw himself back in reveries--tallied him, and shall he escape?

His broad fins are bored, and scalloped out like a lost sheep's ear! And

here, his mad mind would run on in a breathless race; till a weariness

and faintness of pondering came over him; and in the open air of the

deck he would seek to recover his strength. Ah, God! what trances

of torments does that man endure who is consumed with one unachieved

revengeful desire. He sleeps with clenched hands; and wakes with his own

bloody nails in his palms.

Often, when forced from his hammock by exhausting and intolerably vivid

dreams of the night, which, resuming his own intense thoughts through

the day, carried them on amid a clashing of phrensies, and whirled them

round and round and round in his blazing brain, till the very throbbing

of his life-spot became insufferable anguish; and when, as was sometimes

the case, these spiritual throes in him heaved his being up from its

base, and a chasm seemed opening in him, from which forked flames and

lightnings shot up, and accursed fiends beckoned him to leap down among

them; when this hell in himself yawned beneath him, a wild cry would be

heard through the ship; and with glaring eyes Ahab would burst from his

state room, as though escaping from a bed that was on fire. Yet these,

perhaps, instead of being the unsuppressable symptoms of some latent

weakness, or fright at his own resolve, were but the plainest tokens

of its intensity. For, at such times, crazy Ahab, the scheming,

unappeasedly steadfast hunter of the white whale; this Ahab that had

gone to his hammock, was not the agent that so caused him to burst from

it in horror again. The latter was the eternal, living principle or

soul in him; and in sleep, being for the time dissociated from the

characterizing mind, which at other times employed it for its outer

vehicle or agent, it spontaneously sought escape from the scorching

contiguity of the frantic thing, of which, for the time, it was no

longer an integral. But as the mind does not exist unless leagued with

the soul, therefore it must have been that, in Ahab's case, yielding up

all his thoughts and fancies to his one supreme purpose; that purpose,

by its own sheer inveteracy of will, forced itself against gods and

devils into a kind of self-assumed, independent being of its own. Nay,

could grimly live and burn, while the common vitality to which it was

conjoined, fled horror-stricken from the unbidden and unfathered birth.

Therefore, the tormented spirit that glared out of bodily eyes, when

what seemed Ahab rushed from his room, was for the time but a vacated

thing, a formless somnambulistic being, a ray of living light, to be

sure, but without an object to colour, and therefore a blankness in

itself. God help thee, old man, thy thoughts have created a creature

in thee; and he whose intense thinking thus makes him a Prometheus; a

vulture feeds upon that heart for ever; that vulture the very creature

he creates.

CHAPTER 45. The Affidavit.

So far as what there may be of a narrative in this book; and, indeed, as

indirectly touching one or two very interesting and curious particulars

in the habits of sperm whales, the foregoing chapter, in its earlier

part, is as important a one as will be found in this volume; but the

leading matter of it requires to be still further and more familiarly

enlarged upon, in order to be adequately understood, and moreover to

take away any incredulity which a profound ignorance of the entire

subject may induce in some minds, as to the natural verity of the main

points of this affair.

I care not to perform this part of my task methodically; but shall

be content to produce the desired impression by separate citations of

items, practically or reliably known to me as a whaleman; and from these

citations, I take it--the conclusion aimed at will naturally follow of

itself.

First: I have personally known three instances where a whale, after

receiving a harpoon, has effected a complete escape; and, after an

interval (in one instance of three years), has been again struck by

the same hand, and slain; when the two irons, both marked by the same

private cypher, have been taken from the body. In the instance where

three years intervened between the flinging of the two harpoons; and I

think it may have been something more than that; the man who darted

them happening, in the interval, to go in a trading ship on a voyage to

Africa, went ashore there, joined a discovery party, and penetrated far

into the interior, where he travelled for a period of nearly two years,

often endangered by serpents, savages, tigers, poisonous miasmas,

with all the other common perils incident to wandering in the heart of

unknown regions. Meanwhile, the whale he had struck must also have

been on its travels; no doubt it had thrice circumnavigated the globe,

brushing with its flanks all the coasts of Africa; but to no purpose.

This man and this whale again came together, and the one vanquished the

other. I say I, myself, have known three instances similar to this; that

is in two of them I saw the whales struck; and, upon the second attack,

saw the two irons with the respective marks cut in them, afterwards

taken from the dead fish. In the three-year instance, it so fell out

that I was in the boat both times, first and last, and the last time

distinctly recognised a peculiar sort of huge mole under the whale's

eye, which I had observed there three years previous. I say three years,

but I am pretty sure it was more than that. Here are three instances,

then, which I personally know the truth of; but I have heard of many

other instances from persons whose veracity in the matter there is no

good ground to impeach.

Secondly: It is well known in the Sperm Whale Fishery, however ignorant

the world ashore may be of it, that there have been several memorable

historical instances where a particular whale in the ocean has been at

distant times and places popularly cognisable. Why such a whale became

thus marked was not altogether and originally owing to his bodily

peculiarities as distinguished from other whales; for however peculiar

in that respect any chance whale may be, they soon put an end to his

peculiarities by killing him, and boiling him down into a peculiarly

valuable oil. No: the reason was this: that from the fatal experiences

of the fishery there hung a terrible prestige of perilousness about

such a whale as there did about Rinaldo Rinaldini, insomuch that

most fishermen were content to recognise him by merely touching their

tarpaulins when he would be discovered lounging by them on the sea,

without seeking to cultivate a more intimate acquaintance. Like some

poor devils ashore that happen to know an irascible great man, they

make distant unobtrusive salutations to him in the street, lest if they

pursued the acquaintance further, they might receive a summary thump for

their presumption.

But not only did each of these famous whales enjoy great individual

celebrity--Nay, you may call it an ocean-wide renown; not only was he

famous in life and now is immortal in forecastle stories after death,

but he was admitted into all the rights, privileges, and distinctions of

a name; had as much a name indeed as Cambyses or Caesar. Was it not so,

O Timor Tom! thou famed leviathan, scarred like an iceberg, who so long

did'st lurk in the Oriental straits of that name, whose spout was oft

seen from the palmy beach of Ombay? Was it not so, O New Zealand Jack!

thou terror of all cruisers that crossed their wakes in the vicinity of

the Tattoo Land? Was it not so, O Morquan! King of Japan, whose lofty

jet they say at times assumed the semblance of a snow-white cross

against the sky? Was it not so, O Don Miguel! thou Chilian whale, marked

like an old tortoise with mystic hieroglyphics upon the back! In plain

prose, here are four whales as well known to the students of Cetacean

History as Marius or Sylla to the classic scholar.

But this is not all. New Zealand Tom and Don Miguel, after at various

times creating great havoc among the boats of different vessels, were

finally gone in quest of, systematically hunted out, chased and killed

by valiant whaling captains, who heaved up their anchors with

that express object as much in view, as in setting out through the

Narragansett Woods, Captain Butler of old had it in his mind to capture

that notorious murderous savage Annawon, the headmost warrior of the

Indian King Philip.

I do not know where I can find a better place than just here, to make

mention of one or two other things, which to me seem important, as in

printed form establishing in all respects the reasonableness of the

whole story of the White Whale, more especially the catastrophe. For

this is one of those disheartening instances where truth requires full

as much bolstering as error. So ignorant are most landsmen of some of

the plainest and most palpable wonders of the world, that without

some hints touching the plain facts, historical and otherwise, of the

fishery, they might scout at Moby Dick as a monstrous fable, or still

worse and more detestable, a hideous and intolerable allegory.

First: Though most men have some vague flitting ideas of the general

perils of the grand fishery, yet they have nothing like a fixed, vivid

conception of those perils, and the frequency with which they recur.

One reason perhaps is, that not one in fifty of the actual disasters and

deaths by casualties in the fishery, ever finds a public record at home,

however transient and immediately forgotten that record. Do you suppose

that that poor fellow there, who this moment perhaps caught by the

whale-line off the coast of New Guinea, is being carried down to the

bottom of the sea by the sounding leviathan--do you suppose that that

poor fellow's name will appear in the newspaper obituary you will read

to-morrow at your breakfast? No: because the mails are very irregular

between here and New Guinea. In fact, did you ever hear what might be

called regular news direct or indirect from New Guinea? Yet I tell you

that upon one particular voyage which I made to the Pacific, among many

others we spoke thirty different ships, every one of which had had a

death by a whale, some of them more than one, and three that had each

lost a boat's crew. For God's sake, be economical with your lamps and

candles! not a gallon you burn, but at least one drop of man's blood was

spilled for it.

Secondly: People ashore have indeed some indefinite idea that a whale is

an enormous creature of enormous power; but I have ever found that when

narrating to them some specific example of this two-fold enormousness,

they have significantly complimented me upon my facetiousness; when, I

declare upon my soul, I had no more idea of being facetious than Moses,

when he wrote the history of the plagues of Egypt.

But fortunately the special point I here seek can be established upon

testimony entirely independent of my own. That point is this: The Sperm

Whale is in some cases sufficiently powerful, knowing, and judiciously

malicious, as with direct aforethought to stave in, utterly destroy, and

sink a large ship; and what is more, the Sperm Whale HAS done it.

First: In the year 1820 the ship Essex, Captain Pollard, of Nantucket,

was cruising in the Pacific Ocean. One day she saw spouts, lowered her

boats, and gave chase to a shoal of sperm whales. Ere long, several of

the whales were wounded; when, suddenly, a very large whale escaping

from the boats, issued from the shoal, and bore directly down upon the

ship. Dashing his forehead against her hull, he so stove her in, that in

less than "ten minutes" she settled down and fell over. Not a surviving

plank of her has been seen since. After the severest exposure, part of

the crew reached the land in their boats. Being returned home at last,

Captain Pollard once more sailed for the Pacific in command of another

ship, but the gods shipwrecked him again upon unknown rocks and

breakers; for the second time his ship was utterly lost, and forthwith

forswearing the sea, he has never tempted it since. At this day Captain

Pollard is a resident of Nantucket. I have seen Owen Chace, who was

chief mate of the Essex at the time of the tragedy; I have read his

plain and faithful narrative; I have conversed with his son; and all

this within a few miles of the scene of the catastrophe.\*

\*The following are extracts from Chace's narrative: "Every fact seemed

to warrant me in concluding that it was anything but chance which

directed his operations; he made two several attacks upon the ship, at

a short interval between them, both of which, according to their

direction, were calculated to do us the most injury, by being made

ahead, and thereby combining the speed of the two objects for the shock;

to effect which, the exact manoeuvres which he made were necessary. His

aspect was most horrible, and such as indicated resentment and fury. He

came directly from the shoal which we had just before entered, and in

which we had struck three of his companions, as if fired with revenge

for their sufferings." Again: "At all events, the whole circumstances

taken together, all happening before my own eyes, and producing, at the

time, impressions in my mind of decided, calculating mischief, on the

part of the whale (many of which impressions I cannot now recall),

induce me to be satisfied that I am correct in my opinion."

Here are his reflections some time after quitting the ship, during

a black night in an open boat, when almost despairing of reaching any

hospitable shore. "The dark ocean and swelling waters were nothing; the

fears of being swallowed up by some dreadful tempest, or dashed

upon hidden rocks, with all the other ordinary subjects of fearful

contemplation, seemed scarcely entitled to a moment's thought; the

dismal looking wreck, and THE HORRID ASPECT AND REVENGE OF THE WHALE,

wholly engrossed my reflections, until day again made its appearance."

In another place--p. 45,--he speaks of "THE MYSTERIOUS AND MORTAL ATTACK

OF THE ANIMAL."

Secondly: The ship Union, also of Nantucket, was in the year 1807

totally lost off the Azores by a similar onset, but the authentic

particulars of this catastrophe I have never chanced to encounter,

though from the whale hunters I have now and then heard casual allusions

to it.

Thirdly: Some eighteen or twenty years ago Commodore J---, then

commanding an American sloop-of-war of the first class, happened to be

dining with a party of whaling captains, on board a Nantucket ship in

the harbor of Oahu, Sandwich Islands. Conversation turning upon whales,

the Commodore was pleased to be sceptical touching the amazing strength

ascribed to them by the professional gentlemen present. He peremptorily

denied for example, that any whale could so smite his stout sloop-of-war

as to cause her to leak so much as a thimbleful. Very good; but there

is more coming. Some weeks after, the Commodore set sail in this

impregnable craft for Valparaiso. But he was stopped on the way by a

portly sperm whale, that begged a few moments' confidential business

with him. That business consisted in fetching the Commodore's craft such

a thwack, that with all his pumps going he made straight for the nearest

port to heave down and repair. I am not superstitious, but I consider

the Commodore's interview with that whale as providential. Was not Saul

of Tarsus converted from unbelief by a similar fright? I tell you, the

sperm whale will stand no nonsense.

I will now refer you to Langsdorff's Voyages for a little circumstance

in point, peculiarly interesting to the writer hereof. Langsdorff, you

must know by the way, was attached to the Russian Admiral Krusenstern's

famous Discovery Expedition in the beginning of the present century.

Captain Langsdorff thus begins his seventeenth chapter:

"By the thirteenth of May our ship was ready to sail, and the next day

we were out in the open sea, on our way to Ochotsh. The weather was very

clear and fine, but so intolerably cold that we were obliged to keep on

our fur clothing. For some days we had very little wind; it was not

till the nineteenth that a brisk gale from the northwest sprang up. An

uncommon large whale, the body of which was larger than the ship itself,

lay almost at the surface of the water, but was not perceived by any

one on board till the moment when the ship, which was in full sail,

was almost upon him, so that it was impossible to prevent its striking

against him. We were thus placed in the most imminent danger, as this

gigantic creature, setting up its back, raised the ship three feet at

least out of the water. The masts reeled, and the sails fell altogether,

while we who were below all sprang instantly upon the deck, concluding

that we had struck upon some rock; instead of this we saw the monster

sailing off with the utmost gravity and solemnity. Captain D'Wolf

applied immediately to the pumps to examine whether or not the vessel

had received any damage from the shock, but we found that very happily

it had escaped entirely uninjured."

Now, the Captain D'Wolf here alluded to as commanding the ship in

question, is a New Englander, who, after a long life of unusual

adventures as a sea-captain, this day resides in the village of

Dorchester near Boston. I have the honour of being a nephew of his. I

have particularly questioned him concerning this passage in Langsdorff.

He substantiates every word. The ship, however, was by no means a large

one: a Russian craft built on the Siberian coast, and purchased by my

uncle after bartering away the vessel in which he sailed from home.

In that up and down manly book of old-fashioned adventure, so full, too,

of honest wonders--the voyage of Lionel Wafer, one of ancient Dampier's

old chums--I found a little matter set down so like that just quoted

from Langsdorff, that I cannot forbear inserting it here for a

corroborative example, if such be needed.

Lionel, it seems, was on his way to "John Ferdinando," as he calls

the modern Juan Fernandes. "In our way thither," he says, "about four

o'clock in the morning, when we were about one hundred and fifty leagues

from the Main of America, our ship felt a terrible shock, which put our

men in such consternation that they could hardly tell where they were

or what to think; but every one began to prepare for death. And, indeed,

the shock was so sudden and violent, that we took it for granted the

ship had struck against a rock; but when the amazement was a little

over, we cast the lead, and sounded, but found no ground..... The

suddenness of the shock made the guns leap in their carriages, and

several of the men were shaken out of their hammocks. Captain Davis, who

lay with his head on a gun, was thrown out of his cabin!" Lionel then

goes on to impute the shock to an earthquake, and seems to substantiate

the imputation by stating that a great earthquake, somewhere about

that time, did actually do great mischief along the Spanish land. But

I should not much wonder if, in the darkness of that early hour of the

morning, the shock was after all caused by an unseen whale vertically

bumping the hull from beneath.

I might proceed with several more examples, one way or another known to

me, of the great power and malice at times of the sperm whale. In more

than one instance, he has been known, not only to chase the assailing

boats back to their ships, but to pursue the ship itself, and long

withstand all the lances hurled at him from its decks. The English ship

Pusie Hall can tell a story on that head; and, as for his strength,

let me say, that there have been examples where the lines attached to a

running sperm whale have, in a calm, been transferred to the ship, and

secured there; the whale towing her great hull through the water, as a

horse walks off with a cart. Again, it is very often observed that, if

the sperm whale, once struck, is allowed time to rally, he then acts,

not so often with blind rage, as with wilful, deliberate designs of

destruction to his pursuers; nor is it without conveying some eloquent

indication of his character, that upon being attacked he will frequently

open his mouth, and retain it in that dread expansion for several

consecutive minutes. But I must be content with only one more and a

concluding illustration; a remarkable and most significant one, by which

you will not fail to see, that not only is the most marvellous event in

this book corroborated by plain facts of the present day, but that these

marvels (like all marvels) are mere repetitions of the ages; so that for

the millionth time we say amen with Solomon--Verily there is nothing new

under the sun.

In the sixth Christian century lived Procopius, a Christian magistrate

of Constantinople, in the days when Justinian was Emperor and Belisarius

general. As many know, he wrote the history of his own times, a work

every way of uncommon value. By the best authorities, he has always been

considered a most trustworthy and unexaggerating historian, except in

some one or two particulars, not at all affecting the matter presently

to be mentioned.

Now, in this history of his, Procopius mentions that, during the term

of his prefecture at Constantinople, a great sea-monster was captured

in the neighboring Propontis, or Sea of Marmora, after having destroyed

vessels at intervals in those waters for a period of more than fifty

years. A fact thus set down in substantial history cannot easily be

gainsaid. Nor is there any reason it should be. Of what precise species

this sea-monster was, is not mentioned. But as he destroyed ships, as

well as for other reasons, he must have been a whale; and I am strongly

inclined to think a sperm whale. And I will tell you why. For a long

time I fancied that the sperm whale had been always unknown in the

Mediterranean and the deep waters connecting with it. Even now I am

certain that those seas are not, and perhaps never can be, in the

present constitution of things, a place for his habitual gregarious

resort. But further investigations have recently proved to me, that in

modern times there have been isolated instances of the presence of the

sperm whale in the Mediterranean. I am told, on good authority, that

on the Barbary coast, a Commodore Davis of the British navy found

the skeleton of a sperm whale. Now, as a vessel of war readily passes

through the Dardanelles, hence a sperm whale could, by the same route,

pass out of the Mediterranean into the Propontis.

In the Propontis, as far as I can learn, none of that peculiar substance

called BRIT is to be found, the aliment of the right whale. But I have

every reason to believe that the food of the sperm whale--squid or

cuttle-fish--lurks at the bottom of that sea, because large creatures,

but by no means the largest of that sort, have been found at its

surface. If, then, you properly put these statements together, and

reason upon them a bit, you will clearly perceive that, according to all

human reasoning, Procopius's sea-monster, that for half a century stove

the ships of a Roman Emperor, must in all probability have been a sperm

whale.

CHAPTER 46. Surmises.

Though, consumed with the hot fire of his purpose, Ahab in all his

thoughts and actions ever had in view the ultimate capture of Moby Dick;

though he seemed ready to sacrifice all mortal interests to that one

passion; nevertheless it may have been that he was by nature and long

habituation far too wedded to a fiery whaleman's ways, altogether to

abandon the collateral prosecution of the voyage. Or at least if

this were otherwise, there were not wanting other motives much more

influential with him. It would be refining too much, perhaps, even

considering his monomania, to hint that his vindictiveness towards the

White Whale might have possibly extended itself in some degree to all

sperm whales, and that the more monsters he slew by so much the more he

multiplied the chances that each subsequently encountered whale would

prove to be the hated one he hunted. But if such an hypothesis be indeed

exceptionable, there were still additional considerations which, though

not so strictly according with the wildness of his ruling passion, yet

were by no means incapable of swaying him.

To accomplish his object Ahab must use tools; and of all tools used in

the shadow of the moon, men are most apt to get out of order. He knew,

for example, that however magnetic his ascendency in some respects was

over Starbuck, yet that ascendency did not cover the complete spiritual

man any more than mere corporeal superiority involves intellectual

mastership; for to the purely spiritual, the intellectual but stand in a

sort of corporeal relation. Starbuck's body and Starbuck's coerced will

were Ahab's, so long as Ahab kept his magnet at Starbuck's brain; still

he knew that for all this the chief mate, in his soul, abhorred his

captain's quest, and could he, would joyfully disintegrate himself from

it, or even frustrate it. It might be that a long interval would elapse

ere the White Whale was seen. During that long interval Starbuck

would ever be apt to fall into open relapses of rebellion against his

captain's leadership, unless some ordinary, prudential, circumstantial

influences were brought to bear upon him. Not only that, but the subtle

insanity of Ahab respecting Moby Dick was noways more significantly

manifested than in his superlative sense and shrewdness in foreseeing

that, for the present, the hunt should in some way be stripped of that

strange imaginative impiousness which naturally invested it; that

the full terror of the voyage must be kept withdrawn into the obscure

background (for few men's courage is proof against protracted meditation

unrelieved by action); that when they stood their long night watches,

his officers and men must have some nearer things to think of than Moby

Dick. For however eagerly and impetuously the savage crew had hailed the

announcement of his quest; yet all sailors of all sorts are more or less

capricious and unreliable--they live in the varying outer weather, and

they inhale its fickleness--and when retained for any object remote and

blank in the pursuit, however promissory of life and passion in the

end, it is above all things requisite that temporary interests and

employments should intervene and hold them healthily suspended for the

final dash.

Nor was Ahab unmindful of another thing. In times of strong emotion

mankind disdain all base considerations; but such times are evanescent.

The permanent constitutional condition of the manufactured man, thought

Ahab, is sordidness. Granting that the White Whale fully incites the

hearts of this my savage crew, and playing round their savageness even

breeds a certain generous knight-errantism in them, still, while for the

love of it they give chase to Moby Dick, they must also have food

for their more common, daily appetites. For even the high lifted and

chivalric Crusaders of old times were not content to traverse two

thousand miles of land to fight for their holy sepulchre, without

committing burglaries, picking pockets, and gaining other pious

perquisites by the way. Had they been strictly held to their one final

and romantic object--that final and romantic object, too many would have

turned from in disgust. I will not strip these men, thought Ahab, of all

hopes of cash--aye, cash. They may scorn cash now; but let some months

go by, and no perspective promise of it to them, and then this same

quiescent cash all at once mutinying in them, this same cash would soon

cashier Ahab.

Nor was there wanting still another precautionary motive more related

to Ahab personally. Having impulsively, it is probable, and perhaps

somewhat prematurely revealed the prime but private purpose of the

Pequod's voyage, Ahab was now entirely conscious that, in so doing,

he had indirectly laid himself open to the unanswerable charge of

usurpation; and with perfect impunity, both moral and legal, his crew

if so disposed, and to that end competent, could refuse all further

obedience to him, and even violently wrest from him the command. From

even the barely hinted imputation of usurpation, and the possible

consequences of such a suppressed impression gaining ground, Ahab must

of course have been most anxious to protect himself. That protection

could only consist in his own predominating brain and heart and hand,

backed by a heedful, closely calculating attention to every minute

atmospheric influence which it was possible for his crew to be subjected

to.

For all these reasons then, and others perhaps too analytic to be

verbally developed here, Ahab plainly saw that he must still in a good

degree continue true to the natural, nominal purpose of the Pequod's

voyage; observe all customary usages; and not only that, but force

himself to evince all his well known passionate interest in the general

pursuit of his profession.

Be all this as it may, his voice was now often heard hailing the three

mast-heads and admonishing them to keep a bright look-out, and not omit

reporting even a porpoise. This vigilance was not long without reward.

CHAPTER 47. The Mat-Maker.

It was a cloudy, sultry afternoon; the seamen were lazily lounging

about the decks, or vacantly gazing over into the lead-coloured waters.

Queequeg and I were mildly employed weaving what is called a sword-mat,

for an additional lashing to our boat. So still and subdued and yet

somehow preluding was all the scene, and such an incantation of reverie

lurked in the air, that each silent sailor seemed resolved into his own

invisible self.

I was the attendant or page of Queequeg, while busy at the mat. As I

kept passing and repassing the filling or woof of marline between

the long yarns of the warp, using my own hand for the shuttle, and as

Queequeg, standing sideways, ever and anon slid his heavy oaken sword

between the threads, and idly looking off upon the water, carelessly and

unthinkingly drove home every yarn: I say so strange a dreaminess did

there then reign all over the ship and all over the sea, only broken by

the intermitting dull sound of the sword, that it seemed as if this were

the Loom of Time, and I myself were a shuttle mechanically weaving

and weaving away at the Fates. There lay the fixed threads of the warp

subject to but one single, ever returning, unchanging vibration, and

that vibration merely enough to admit of the crosswise interblending

of other threads with its own. This warp seemed necessity; and here,

thought I, with my own hand I ply my own shuttle and weave my own

destiny into these unalterable threads. Meantime, Queequeg's impulsive,

indifferent sword, sometimes hitting the woof slantingly, or crookedly,

or strongly, or weakly, as the case might be; and by this difference

in the concluding blow producing a corresponding contrast in the final

aspect of the completed fabric; this savage's sword, thought I,

which thus finally shapes and fashions both warp and woof; this

easy, indifferent sword must be chance--aye, chance, free will, and

necessity--nowise incompatible--all interweavingly working together.

The straight warp of necessity, not to be swerved from its ultimate

course--its every alternating vibration, indeed, only tending to that;

free will still free to ply her shuttle between given threads; and

chance, though restrained in its play within the right lines of

necessity, and sideways in its motions directed by free will, though

thus prescribed to by both, chance by turns rules either, and has the

last featuring blow at events.

Thus we were weaving and weaving away when I started at a sound so

strange, long drawn, and musically wild and unearthly, that the ball

of free will dropped from my hand, and I stood gazing up at the clouds

whence that voice dropped like a wing. High aloft in the cross-trees was

that mad Gay-Header, Tashtego. His body was reaching eagerly forward,

his hand stretched out like a wand, and at brief sudden intervals he

continued his cries. To be sure the same sound was that very moment

perhaps being heard all over the seas, from hundreds of whalemen's

look-outs perched as high in the air; but from few of those lungs could

that accustomed old cry have derived such a marvellous cadence as from

Tashtego the Indian's.

As he stood hovering over you half suspended in air, so wildly and

eagerly peering towards the horizon, you would have thought him some

prophet or seer beholding the shadows of Fate, and by those wild cries

announcing their coming.

"There she blows! there! there! there! she blows! she blows!"

"Where-away?"

"On the lee-beam, about two miles off! a school of them!"

Instantly all was commotion.

The Sperm Whale blows as a clock ticks, with the same undeviating and

reliable uniformity. And thereby whalemen distinguish this fish from

other tribes of his genus.

"There go flukes!" was now the cry from Tashtego; and the whales

disappeared.

"Quick, steward!" cried Ahab. "Time! time!"

Dough-Boy hurried below, glanced at the watch, and reported the exact

minute to Ahab.

The ship was now kept away from the wind, and she went gently rolling

before it. Tashtego reporting that the whales had gone down heading to

leeward, we confidently looked to see them again directly in advance of

our bows. For that singular craft at times evinced by the Sperm Whale

when, sounding with his head in one direction, he nevertheless, while

concealed beneath the surface, mills round, and swiftly swims off in the

opposite quarter--this deceitfulness of his could not now be in action;

for there was no reason to suppose that the fish seen by Tashtego had

been in any way alarmed, or indeed knew at all of our vicinity. One of

the men selected for shipkeepers--that is, those not appointed to the

boats, by this time relieved the Indian at the main-mast head. The

sailors at the fore and mizzen had come down; the line tubs were fixed

in their places; the cranes were thrust out; the mainyard was backed,

and the three boats swung over the sea like three samphire baskets over

high cliffs. Outside of the bulwarks their eager crews with one hand

clung to the rail, while one foot was expectantly poised on the gunwale.

So look the long line of man-of-war's men about to throw themselves on

board an enemy's ship.

But at this critical instant a sudden exclamation was heard that took

every eye from the whale. With a start all glared at dark Ahab, who was

surrounded by five dusky phantoms that seemed fresh formed out of air.

CHAPTER 48. The First Lowering.

The phantoms, for so they then seemed, were flitting on the other side

of the deck, and, with a noiseless celerity, were casting loose the

tackles and bands of the boat which swung there. This boat had always

been deemed one of the spare boats, though technically called the

captain's, on account of its hanging from the starboard quarter. The

figure that now stood by its bows was tall and swart, with one white

tooth evilly protruding from its steel-like lips. A rumpled Chinese

jacket of black cotton funereally invested him, with wide black trowsers

of the same dark stuff. But strangely crowning this ebonness was a

glistening white plaited turban, the living hair braided and coiled

round and round upon his head. Less swart in aspect, the companions of

this figure were of that vivid, tiger-yellow complexion peculiar to

some of the aboriginal natives of the Manillas;--a race notorious for

a certain diabolism of subtilty, and by some honest white mariners

supposed to be the paid spies and secret confidential agents on the

water of the devil, their lord, whose counting-room they suppose to be

elsewhere.

While yet the wondering ship's company were gazing upon these strangers,

Ahab cried out to the white-turbaned old man at their head, "All ready

there, Fedallah?"

"Ready," was the half-hissed reply.

"Lower away then; d'ye hear?" shouting across the deck. "Lower away

there, I say."

Such was the thunder of his voice, that spite of their amazement the men

sprang over the rail; the sheaves whirled round in the blocks; with a

wallow, the three boats dropped into the sea; while, with a dexterous,

off-handed daring, unknown in any other vocation, the sailors,

goat-like, leaped down the rolling ship's side into the tossed boats

below.

Hardly had they pulled out from under the ship's lee, when a fourth

keel, coming from the windward side, pulled round under the stern, and

showed the five strangers rowing Ahab, who, standing erect in the stern,

loudly hailed Starbuck, Stubb, and Flask, to spread themselves widely,

so as to cover a large expanse of water. But with all their eyes again

riveted upon the swart Fedallah and his crew, the inmates of the other

boats obeyed not the command.

"Captain Ahab?--" said Starbuck.

"Spread yourselves," cried Ahab; "give way, all four boats. Thou, Flask,

pull out more to leeward!"

"Aye, aye, sir," cheerily cried little King-Post, sweeping round

his great steering oar. "Lay back!" addressing his crew.

"There!--there!--there again! There she blows right ahead, boys!--lay

back!"

"Never heed yonder yellow boys, Archy."

"Oh, I don't mind'em, sir," said Archy; "I knew it all before now.

Didn't I hear 'em in the hold? And didn't I tell Cabaco here of it? What

say ye, Cabaco? They are stowaways, Mr. Flask."

"Pull, pull, my fine hearts-alive; pull, my children; pull, my little

ones," drawlingly and soothingly sighed Stubb to his crew, some of whom

still showed signs of uneasiness. "Why don't you break your backbones,

my boys? What is it you stare at? Those chaps in yonder boat? Tut! They

are only five more hands come to help us--never mind from where--the

more the merrier. Pull, then, do pull; never mind the brimstone--devils

are good fellows enough. So, so; there you are now; that's the stroke

for a thousand pounds; that's the stroke to sweep the stakes! Hurrah

for the gold cup of sperm oil, my heroes! Three cheers, men--all hearts

alive! Easy, easy; don't be in a hurry--don't be in a hurry. Why don't

you snap your oars, you rascals? Bite something, you dogs! So, so, so,

then:--softly, softly! That's it--that's it! long and strong. Give way

there, give way! The devil fetch ye, ye ragamuffin rapscallions; ye are

all asleep. Stop snoring, ye sleepers, and pull. Pull, will ye? pull,

can't ye? pull, won't ye? Why in the name of gudgeons and ginger-cakes

don't ye pull?--pull and break something! pull, and start your eyes out!

Here!" whipping out the sharp knife from his girdle; "every mother's son

of ye draw his knife, and pull with the blade between his teeth. That's

it--that's it. Now ye do something; that looks like it, my steel-bits.

Start her--start her, my silver-spoons! Start her, marling-spikes!"

Stubb's exordium to his crew is given here at large, because he had

rather a peculiar way of talking to them in general, and especially in

inculcating the religion of rowing. But you must not suppose from this

specimen of his sermonizings that he ever flew into downright passions

with his congregation. Not at all; and therein consisted his chief

peculiarity. He would say the most terrific things to his crew, in a

tone so strangely compounded of fun and fury, and the fury seemed so

calculated merely as a spice to the fun, that no oarsman could hear such

queer invocations without pulling for dear life, and yet pulling for

the mere joke of the thing. Besides he all the time looked so easy and

indolent himself, so loungingly managed his steering-oar, and so broadly

gaped--open-mouthed at times--that the mere sight of such a yawning

commander, by sheer force of contrast, acted like a charm upon the crew.

Then again, Stubb was one of those odd sort of humorists, whose jollity

is sometimes so curiously ambiguous, as to put all inferiors on their

guard in the matter of obeying them.

In obedience to a sign from Ahab, Starbuck was now pulling obliquely

across Stubb's bow; and when for a minute or so the two boats were

pretty near to each other, Stubb hailed the mate.

"Mr. Starbuck! larboard boat there, ahoy! a word with ye, sir, if ye

please!"

"Halloa!" returned Starbuck, turning round not a single inch as he

spoke; still earnestly but whisperingly urging his crew; his face set

like a flint from Stubb's.

"What think ye of those yellow boys, sir!

"Smuggled on board, somehow, before the ship sailed. (Strong, strong,

boys!)" in a whisper to his crew, then speaking out loud again: "A sad

business, Mr. Stubb! (seethe her, seethe her, my lads!) but never mind,

Mr. Stubb, all for the best. Let all your crew pull strong, come what

will. (Spring, my men, spring!) There's hogsheads of sperm ahead, Mr.

Stubb, and that's what ye came for. (Pull, my boys!) Sperm, sperm's the

play! This at least is duty; duty and profit hand in hand."

"Aye, aye, I thought as much," soliloquized Stubb, when the boats

diverged, "as soon as I clapt eye on 'em, I thought so. Aye, and that's

what he went into the after hold for, so often, as Dough-Boy long

suspected. They were hidden down there. The White Whale's at the bottom

of it. Well, well, so be it! Can't be helped! All right! Give way, men!

It ain't the White Whale to-day! Give way!"

Now the advent of these outlandish strangers at such a critical instant

as the lowering of the boats from the deck, this had not unreasonably

awakened a sort of superstitious amazement in some of the ship's

company; but Archy's fancied discovery having some time previous got

abroad among them, though indeed not credited then, this had in some

small measure prepared them for the event. It took off the extreme edge

of their wonder; and so what with all this and Stubb's confident way

of accounting for their appearance, they were for the time freed from

superstitious surmisings; though the affair still left abundant room for

all manner of wild conjectures as to dark Ahab's precise agency in the

matter from the beginning. For me, I silently recalled the mysterious

shadows I had seen creeping on board the Pequod during the dim Nantucket

dawn, as well as the enigmatical hintings of the unaccountable Elijah.

Meantime, Ahab, out of hearing of his officers, having sided the

furthest to windward, was still ranging ahead of the other boats; a

circumstance bespeaking how potent a crew was pulling him. Those tiger

yellow creatures of his seemed all steel and whalebone; like five

trip-hammers they rose and fell with regular strokes of strength, which

periodically started the boat along the water like a horizontal burst

boiler out of a Mississippi steamer. As for Fedallah, who was seen

pulling the harpooneer oar, he had thrown aside his black jacket, and

displayed his naked chest with the whole part of his body above the

gunwale, clearly cut against the alternating depressions of the watery

horizon; while at the other end of the boat Ahab, with one arm, like a

fencer's, thrown half backward into the air, as if to counterbalance any

tendency to trip; Ahab was seen steadily managing his steering oar as in

a thousand boat lowerings ere the White Whale had torn him. All at once

the outstretched arm gave a peculiar motion and then remained fixed,

while the boat's five oars were seen simultaneously peaked. Boat and

crew sat motionless on the sea. Instantly the three spread boats in the

rear paused on their way. The whales had irregularly settled bodily

down into the blue, thus giving no distantly discernible token of the

movement, though from his closer vicinity Ahab had observed it.

"Every man look out along his oars!" cried Starbuck. "Thou, Queequeg,

stand up!"

Nimbly springing up on the triangular raised box in the bow, the savage

stood erect there, and with intensely eager eyes gazed off towards the

spot where the chase had last been descried. Likewise upon the extreme

stern of the boat where it was also triangularly platformed level with

the gunwale, Starbuck himself was seen coolly and adroitly balancing

himself to the jerking tossings of his chip of a craft, and silently

eyeing the vast blue eye of the sea.

Not very far distant Flask's boat was also lying breathlessly still; its

commander recklessly standing upon the top of the loggerhead, a stout

sort of post rooted in the keel, and rising some two feet above the

level of the stern platform. It is used for catching turns with the

whale line. Its top is not more spacious than the palm of a man's hand,

and standing upon such a base as that, Flask seemed perched at the

mast-head of some ship which had sunk to all but her trucks. But little

King-Post was small and short, and at the same time little King-Post was

full of a large and tall ambition, so that this loggerhead stand-point

of his did by no means satisfy King-Post.

"I can't see three seas off; tip us up an oar there, and let me on to

that."

Upon this, Daggoo, with either hand upon the gunwale to steady his

way, swiftly slid aft, and then erecting himself volunteered his lofty

shoulders for a pedestal.

"Good a mast-head as any, sir. Will you mount?"

"That I will, and thank ye very much, my fine fellow; only I wish you

fifty feet taller."

Whereupon planting his feet firmly against two opposite planks of the

boat, the gigantic negro, stooping a little, presented his flat palm to

Flask's foot, and then putting Flask's hand on his hearse-plumed head

and bidding him spring as he himself should toss, with one dexterous

fling landed the little man high and dry on his shoulders. And here was

Flask now standing, Daggoo with one lifted arm furnishing him with a

breastband to lean against and steady himself by.

At any time it is a strange sight to the tyro to see with what wondrous

habitude of unconscious skill the whaleman will maintain an erect

posture in his boat, even when pitched about by the most riotously

perverse and cross-running seas. Still more strange to see him giddily

perched upon the loggerhead itself, under such circumstances. But the

sight of little Flask mounted upon gigantic Daggoo was yet more curious;

for sustaining himself with a cool, indifferent, easy, unthought of,

barbaric majesty, the noble negro to every roll of the sea harmoniously

rolled his fine form. On his broad back, flaxen-haired Flask seemed

a snow-flake. The bearer looked nobler than the rider. Though truly

vivacious, tumultuous, ostentatious little Flask would now and then

stamp with impatience; but not one added heave did he thereby give to

the negro's lordly chest. So have I seen Passion and Vanity stamping the

living magnanimous earth, but the earth did not alter her tides and her

seasons for that.

Meanwhile Stubb, the third mate, betrayed no such far-gazing

solicitudes. The whales might have made one of their regular soundings,

not a temporary dive from mere fright; and if that were the case,

Stubb, as his wont in such cases, it seems, was resolved to solace the

languishing interval with his pipe. He withdrew it from his hatband,

where he always wore it aslant like a feather. He loaded it, and rammed

home the loading with his thumb-end; but hardly had he ignited his match

across the rough sandpaper of his hand, when Tashtego, his harpooneer,

whose eyes had been setting to windward like two fixed stars, suddenly

dropped like light from his erect attitude to his seat, crying out in a

quick phrensy of hurry, "Down, down all, and give way!--there they are!"

To a landsman, no whale, nor any sign of a herring, would have been

visible at that moment; nothing but a troubled bit of greenish white

water, and thin scattered puffs of vapour hovering over it, and

suffusingly blowing off to leeward, like the confused scud from white

rolling billows. The air around suddenly vibrated and tingled, as it

were, like the air over intensely heated plates of iron. Beneath this

atmospheric waving and curling, and partially beneath a thin layer of

water, also, the whales were swimming. Seen in advance of all the other

indications, the puffs of vapour they spouted, seemed their forerunning

couriers and detached flying outriders.

All four boats were now in keen pursuit of that one spot of troubled

water and air. But it bade fair to outstrip them; it flew on and on,

as a mass of interblending bubbles borne down a rapid stream from the

hills.

"Pull, pull, my good boys," said Starbuck, in the lowest possible but

intensest concentrated whisper to his men; while the sharp fixed glance

from his eyes darted straight ahead of the bow, almost seemed as two

visible needles in two unerring binnacle compasses. He did not say much

to his crew, though, nor did his crew say anything to him. Only the

silence of the boat was at intervals startlingly pierced by one of his

peculiar whispers, now harsh with command, now soft with entreaty.

How different the loud little King-Post. "Sing out and say something,

my hearties. Roar and pull, my thunderbolts! Beach me, beach me on their

black backs, boys; only do that for me, and I'll sign over to you my

Martha's Vineyard plantation, boys; including wife and children, boys.

Lay me on--lay me on! O Lord, Lord! but I shall go stark, staring mad!

See! see that white water!" And so shouting, he pulled his hat from his

head, and stamped up and down on it; then picking it up, flirted it far

off upon the sea; and finally fell to rearing and plunging in the boat's

stern like a crazed colt from the prairie.

"Look at that chap now," philosophically drawled Stubb, who, with his

unlighted short pipe, mechanically retained between his teeth, at a

short distance, followed after--"He's got fits, that Flask has. Fits?

yes, give him fits--that's the very word--pitch fits into 'em. Merrily,

merrily, hearts-alive. Pudding for supper, you know;--merry's the word.

Pull, babes--pull, sucklings--pull, all. But what the devil are you

hurrying about? Softly, softly, and steadily, my men. Only pull, and

keep pulling; nothing more. Crack all your backbones, and bite your

knives in two--that's all. Take it easy--why don't ye take it easy, I

say, and burst all your livers and lungs!"

But what it was that inscrutable Ahab said to that tiger-yellow crew of

his--these were words best omitted here; for you live under the blessed

light of the evangelical land. Only the infidel sharks in the audacious

seas may give ear to such words, when, with tornado brow, and eyes of

red murder, and foam-glued lips, Ahab leaped after his prey.

Meanwhile, all the boats tore on. The repeated specific allusions of

Flask to "that whale," as he called the fictitious monster which

he declared to be incessantly tantalizing his boat's bow with its

tail--these allusions of his were at times so vivid and life-like, that

they would cause some one or two of his men to snatch a fearful look

over the shoulder. But this was against all rule; for the oarsmen

must put out their eyes, and ram a skewer through their necks; usage

pronouncing that they must have no organs but ears, and no limbs but

arms, in these critical moments.

It was a sight full of quick wonder and awe! The vast swells of the

omnipotent sea; the surging, hollow roar they made, as they rolled along

the eight gunwales, like gigantic bowls in a boundless bowling-green;

the brief suspended agony of the boat, as it would tip for an instant on

the knife-like edge of the sharper waves, that almost seemed threatening

to cut it in two; the sudden profound dip into the watery glens and

hollows; the keen spurrings and goadings to gain the top of the opposite

hill; the headlong, sled-like slide down its other side;--all these,

with the cries of the headsmen and harpooneers, and the shuddering gasps

of the oarsmen, with the wondrous sight of the ivory Pequod bearing

down upon her boats with outstretched sails, like a wild hen after her

screaming brood;--all this was thrilling.

Not the raw recruit, marching from the bosom of his wife into the fever

heat of his first battle; not the dead man's ghost encountering the

first unknown phantom in the other world;--neither of these can feel

stranger and stronger emotions than that man does, who for the first

time finds himself pulling into the charmed, churned circle of the

hunted sperm whale.

The dancing white water made by the chase was now becoming more and more

visible, owing to the increasing darkness of the dun cloud-shadows

flung upon the sea. The jets of vapour no longer blended, but tilted

everywhere to right and left; the whales seemed separating their wakes.

The boats were pulled more apart; Starbuck giving chase to three whales

running dead to leeward. Our sail was now set, and, with the still

rising wind, we rushed along; the boat going with such madness through

the water, that the lee oars could scarcely be worked rapidly enough to

escape being torn from the row-locks.

Soon we were running through a suffusing wide veil of mist; neither ship

nor boat to be seen.

"Give way, men," whispered Starbuck, drawing still further aft the sheet

of his sail; "there is time to kill a fish yet before the squall comes.

There's white water again!--close to! Spring!"

Soon after, two cries in quick succession on each side of us denoted

that the other boats had got fast; but hardly were they overheard, when

with a lightning-like hurtling whisper Starbuck said: "Stand up!" and

Queequeg, harpoon in hand, sprang to his feet.

Though not one of the oarsmen was then facing the life and death peril

so close to them ahead, yet with their eyes on the intense countenance

of the mate in the stern of the boat, they knew that the imminent

instant had come; they heard, too, an enormous wallowing sound as of

fifty elephants stirring in their litter. Meanwhile the boat was still

booming through the mist, the waves curling and hissing around us like

the erected crests of enraged serpents.

"That's his hump. THERE, THERE, give it to him!" whispered Starbuck.

A short rushing sound leaped out of the boat; it was the darted iron of

Queequeg. Then all in one welded commotion came an invisible push from

astern, while forward the boat seemed striking on a ledge; the sail

collapsed and exploded; a gush of scalding vapour shot up near by;

something rolled and tumbled like an earthquake beneath us. The whole

crew were half suffocated as they were tossed helter-skelter into the

white curdling cream of the squall. Squall, whale, and harpoon had all

blended together; and the whale, merely grazed by the iron, escaped.

Though completely swamped, the boat was nearly unharmed. Swimming round

it we picked up the floating oars, and lashing them across the gunwale,

tumbled back to our places. There we sat up to our knees in the sea, the

water covering every rib and plank, so that to our downward gazing eyes

the suspended craft seemed a coral boat grown up to us from the bottom

of the ocean.

The wind increased to a howl; the waves dashed their bucklers together;

the whole squall roared, forked, and crackled around us like a white

fire upon the prairie, in which, unconsumed, we were burning; immortal

in these jaws of death! In vain we hailed the other boats; as well roar

to the live coals down the chimney of a flaming furnace as hail those

boats in that storm. Meanwhile the driving scud, rack, and mist, grew

darker with the shadows of night; no sign of the ship could be seen.

The rising sea forbade all attempts to bale out the boat. The oars were

useless as propellers, performing now the office of life-preservers.

So, cutting the lashing of the waterproof match keg, after many failures

Starbuck contrived to ignite the lamp in the lantern; then stretching

it on a waif pole, handed it to Queequeg as the standard-bearer of this

forlorn hope. There, then, he sat, holding up that imbecile candle in

the heart of that almighty forlornness. There, then, he sat, the sign

and symbol of a man without faith, hopelessly holding up hope in the

midst of despair.

Wet, drenched through, and shivering cold, despairing of ship or boat,

we lifted up our eyes as the dawn came on. The mist still spread over

the sea, the empty lantern lay crushed in the bottom of the boat.

Suddenly Queequeg started to his feet, hollowing his hand to his ear.

We all heard a faint creaking, as of ropes and yards hitherto muffled by

the storm. The sound came nearer and nearer; the thick mists were dimly

parted by a huge, vague form. Affrighted, we all sprang into the sea as

the ship at last loomed into view, bearing right down upon us within a

distance of not much more than its length.

Floating on the waves we saw the abandoned boat, as for one instant it

tossed and gaped beneath the ship's bows like a chip at the base of a

cataract; and then the vast hull rolled over it, and it was seen no

more till it came up weltering astern. Again we swam for it, were dashed

against it by the seas, and were at last taken up and safely landed on

board. Ere the squall came close to, the other boats had cut loose from

their fish and returned to the ship in good time. The ship had given us

up, but was still cruising, if haply it might light upon some token of

our perishing,--an oar or a lance pole.

CHAPTER 49. The Hyena.

There are certain queer times and occasions in this strange mixed affair

we call life when a man takes this whole universe for a vast practical

joke, though the wit thereof he but dimly discerns, and more than

suspects that the joke is at nobody's expense but his own. However,

nothing dispirits, and nothing seems worth while disputing. He bolts

down all events, all creeds, and beliefs, and persuasions, all hard

things visible and invisible, never mind how knobby; as an ostrich of

potent digestion gobbles down bullets and gun flints. And as for small

difficulties and worryings, prospects of sudden disaster, peril of

life and limb; all these, and death itself, seem to him only sly,

good-natured hits, and jolly punches in the side bestowed by the unseen

and unaccountable old joker. That odd sort of wayward mood I am speaking

of, comes over a man only in some time of extreme tribulation; it comes

in the very midst of his earnestness, so that what just before might

have seemed to him a thing most momentous, now seems but a part of the

general joke. There is nothing like the perils of whaling to breed this

free and easy sort of genial, desperado philosophy; and with it I now

regarded this whole voyage of the Pequod, and the great White Whale its

object.

"Queequeg," said I, when they had dragged me, the last man, to the deck,

and I was still shaking myself in my jacket to fling off the water;

"Queequeg, my fine friend, does this sort of thing often happen?"

Without much emotion, though soaked through just like me, he gave me to

understand that such things did often happen.

"Mr. Stubb," said I, turning to that worthy, who, buttoned up in his

oil-jacket, was now calmly smoking his pipe in the rain; "Mr. Stubb, I

think I have heard you say that of all whalemen you ever met, our chief

mate, Mr. Starbuck, is by far the most careful and prudent. I suppose

then, that going plump on a flying whale with your sail set in a foggy

squall is the height of a whaleman's discretion?"

"Certain. I've lowered for whales from a leaking ship in a gale off Cape

Horn."

"Mr. Flask," said I, turning to little King-Post, who was standing close

by; "you are experienced in these things, and I am not. Will you tell

me whether it is an unalterable law in this fishery, Mr. Flask, for an

oarsman to break his own back pulling himself back-foremost into death's

jaws?"

"Can't you twist that smaller?" said Flask. "Yes, that's the law.

I should like to see a boat's crew backing water up to a whale face

foremost. Ha, ha! the whale would give them squint for squint, mind

that!"

Here then, from three impartial witnesses, I had a deliberate statement

of the entire case. Considering, therefore, that squalls and capsizings

in the water and consequent bivouacks on the deep, were matters

of common occurrence in this kind of life; considering that at the

superlatively critical instant of going on to the whale I must resign my

life into the hands of him who steered the boat--oftentimes a fellow who

at that very moment is in his impetuousness upon the point of scuttling

the craft with his own frantic stampings; considering that the

particular disaster to our own particular boat was chiefly to be imputed

to Starbuck's driving on to his whale almost in the teeth of a squall,

and considering that Starbuck, notwithstanding, was famous for his

great heedfulness in the fishery; considering that I belonged to this

uncommonly prudent Starbuck's boat; and finally considering in what a

devil's chase I was implicated, touching the White Whale: taking all

things together, I say, I thought I might as well go below and make a

rough draft of my will. "Queequeg," said I, "come along, you shall be my

lawyer, executor, and legatee."

It may seem strange that of all men sailors should be tinkering at their

last wills and testaments, but there are no people in the world more

fond of that diversion. This was the fourth time in my nautical life

that I had done the same thing. After the ceremony was concluded upon

the present occasion, I felt all the easier; a stone was rolled away

from my heart. Besides, all the days I should now live would be as good

as the days that Lazarus lived after his resurrection; a supplementary

clean gain of so many months or weeks as the case might be. I survived

myself; my death and burial were locked up in my chest. I looked

round me tranquilly and contentedly, like a quiet ghost with a clean

conscience sitting inside the bars of a snug family vault.

Now then, thought I, unconsciously rolling up the sleeves of my frock,

here goes for a cool, collected dive at death and destruction, and the

devil fetch the hindmost.

CHAPTER 50. Ahab's Boat and Crew. Fedallah.

"Who would have thought it, Flask!" cried Stubb; "if I had but one leg

you would not catch me in a boat, unless maybe to stop the plug-hole

with my timber toe. Oh! he's a wonderful old man!"

"I don't think it so strange, after all, on that account," said Flask.

"If his leg were off at the hip, now, it would be a different thing.

That would disable him; but he has one knee, and good part of the other

left, you know."

"I don't know that, my little man; I never yet saw him kneel."

Among whale-wise people it has often been argued whether, considering

the paramount importance of his life to the success of the voyage, it is

right for a whaling captain to jeopardize that life in the active perils

of the chase. So Tamerlane's soldiers often argued with tears in their

eyes, whether that invaluable life of his ought to be carried into the

thickest of the fight.

But with Ahab the question assumed a modified aspect. Considering

that with two legs man is but a hobbling wight in all times of danger;

considering that the pursuit of whales is always under great and

extraordinary difficulties; that every individual moment, indeed, then

comprises a peril; under these circumstances is it wise for any

maimed man to enter a whale-boat in the hunt? As a general thing, the

joint-owners of the Pequod must have plainly thought not.

Ahab well knew that although his friends at home would think little of

his entering a boat in certain comparatively harmless vicissitudes of

the chase, for the sake of being near the scene of action and giving

his orders in person, yet for Captain Ahab to have a boat actually

apportioned to him as a regular headsman in the hunt--above all for

Captain Ahab to be supplied with five extra men, as that same boat's

crew, he well knew that such generous conceits never entered the heads

of the owners of the Pequod. Therefore he had not solicited a boat's

crew from them, nor had he in any way hinted his desires on that head.

Nevertheless he had taken private measures of his own touching all

that matter. Until Cabaco's published discovery, the sailors had little

foreseen it, though to be sure when, after being a little while out

of port, all hands had concluded the customary business of fitting the

whaleboats for service; when some time after this Ahab was now and then

found bestirring himself in the matter of making thole-pins with his

own hands for what was thought to be one of the spare boats, and even

solicitously cutting the small wooden skewers, which when the line is

running out are pinned over the groove in the bow: when all this was

observed in him, and particularly his solicitude in having an extra

coat of sheathing in the bottom of the boat, as if to make it better

withstand the pointed pressure of his ivory limb; and also the anxiety

he evinced in exactly shaping the thigh board, or clumsy cleat, as it is

sometimes called, the horizontal piece in the boat's bow for bracing the

knee against in darting or stabbing at the whale; when it was observed

how often he stood up in that boat with his solitary knee fixed in the

semi-circular depression in the cleat, and with the carpenter's chisel

gouged out a little here and straightened it a little there; all these

things, I say, had awakened much interest and curiosity at the time. But

almost everybody supposed that this particular preparative heedfulness

in Ahab must only be with a view to the ultimate chase of Moby Dick;

for he had already revealed his intention to hunt that mortal monster

in person. But such a supposition did by no means involve the remotest

suspicion as to any boat's crew being assigned to that boat.

Now, with the subordinate phantoms, what wonder remained soon waned

away; for in a whaler wonders soon wane. Besides, now and then such

unaccountable odds and ends of strange nations come up from the unknown

nooks and ash-holes of the earth to man these floating outlaws of

whalers; and the ships themselves often pick up such queer castaway

creatures found tossing about the open sea on planks, bits of wreck,

oars, whaleboats, canoes, blown-off Japanese junks, and what not; that

Beelzebub himself might climb up the side and step down into the cabin

to chat with the captain, and it would not create any unsubduable

excitement in the forecastle.

But be all this as it may, certain it is that while the subordinate

phantoms soon found their place among the crew, though still as it were

somehow distinct from them, yet that hair-turbaned Fedallah remained

a muffled mystery to the last. Whence he came in a mannerly world like

this, by what sort of unaccountable tie he soon evinced himself to be

linked with Ahab's peculiar fortunes; nay, so far as to have some sort

of a half-hinted influence; Heaven knows, but it might have been even

authority over him; all this none knew. But one cannot sustain

an indifferent air concerning Fedallah. He was such a creature as

civilized, domestic people in the temperate zone only see in their

dreams, and that but dimly; but the like of whom now and then glide

among the unchanging Asiatic communities, especially the Oriental isles

to the east of the continent--those insulated, immemorial, unalterable

countries, which even in these modern days still preserve much of the

ghostly aboriginalness of earth's primal generations, when the memory of

the first man was a distinct recollection, and all men his descendants,

unknowing whence he came, eyed each other as real phantoms, and asked of

the sun and the moon why they were created and to what end; when though,

according to Genesis, the angels indeed consorted with the daughters of

men, the devils also, add the uncanonical Rabbins, indulged in mundane

amours.

CHAPTER 51. The Spirit-Spout.

Days, weeks passed, and under easy sail, the ivory Pequod had slowly

swept across four several cruising-grounds; that off the Azores; off the

Cape de Verdes; on the Plate (so called), being off the mouth of the

Rio de la Plata; and the Carrol Ground, an unstaked, watery locality,

southerly from St. Helena.

It was while gliding through these latter waters that one serene and

moonlight night, when all the waves rolled by like scrolls of silver;

and, by their soft, suffusing seethings, made what seemed a silvery

silence, not a solitude; on such a silent night a silvery jet was seen

far in advance of the white bubbles at the bow. Lit up by the moon, it

looked celestial; seemed some plumed and glittering god uprising from

the sea. Fedallah first descried this jet. For of these moonlight

nights, it was his wont to mount to the main-mast head, and stand a

look-out there, with the same precision as if it had been day. And yet,

though herds of whales were seen by night, not one whaleman in a hundred

would venture a lowering for them. You may think with what emotions,

then, the seamen beheld this old Oriental perched aloft at such unusual

hours; his turban and the moon, companions in one sky. But when, after

spending his uniform interval there for several successive nights

without uttering a single sound; when, after all this silence, his

unearthly voice was heard announcing that silvery, moon-lit jet, every

reclining mariner started to his feet as if some winged spirit had

lighted in the rigging, and hailed the mortal crew. "There she blows!"

Had the trump of judgment blown, they could not have quivered more; yet

still they felt no terror; rather pleasure. For though it was a most

unwonted hour, yet so impressive was the cry, and so deliriously

exciting, that almost every soul on board instinctively desired a

lowering.

Walking the deck with quick, side-lunging strides, Ahab commanded the

t'gallant sails and royals to be set, and every stunsail spread. The

best man in the ship must take the helm. Then, with every mast-head

manned, the piled-up craft rolled down before the wind. The strange,

upheaving, lifting tendency of the taffrail breeze filling the hollows

of so many sails, made the buoyant, hovering deck to feel like air

beneath the feet; while still she rushed along, as if two antagonistic

influences were struggling in her--one to mount direct to heaven, the

other to drive yawingly to some horizontal goal. And had you watched

Ahab's face that night, you would have thought that in him also two

different things were warring. While his one live leg made lively echoes

along the deck, every stroke of his dead limb sounded like a coffin-tap.

On life and death this old man walked. But though the ship so swiftly

sped, and though from every eye, like arrows, the eager glances shot,

yet the silvery jet was no more seen that night. Every sailor swore he

saw it once, but not a second time.

This midnight-spout had almost grown a forgotten thing, when, some days

after, lo! at the same silent hour, it was again announced: again it

was descried by all; but upon making sail to overtake it, once more it

disappeared as if it had never been. And so it served us night after

night, till no one heeded it but to wonder at it. Mysteriously

jetted into the clear moonlight, or starlight, as the case might be;

disappearing again for one whole day, or two days, or three; and somehow

seeming at every distinct repetition to be advancing still further and

further in our van, this solitary jet seemed for ever alluring us on.

Nor with the immemorial superstition of their race, and in accordance

with the preternaturalness, as it seemed, which in many things invested

the Pequod, were there wanting some of the seamen who swore that

whenever and wherever descried; at however remote times, or in however

far apart latitudes and longitudes, that unnearable spout was cast

by one self-same whale; and that whale, Moby Dick. For a time, there

reigned, too, a sense of peculiar dread at this flitting apparition,

as if it were treacherously beckoning us on and on, in order that the

monster might turn round upon us, and rend us at last in the remotest

and most savage seas.

These temporary apprehensions, so vague but so awful, derived a wondrous

potency from the contrasting serenity of the weather, in which, beneath

all its blue blandness, some thought there lurked a devilish charm, as

for days and days we voyaged along, through seas so wearily, lonesomely

mild, that all space, in repugnance to our vengeful errand, seemed

vacating itself of life before our urn-like prow.

But, at last, when turning to the eastward, the Cape winds began howling

around us, and we rose and fell upon the long, troubled seas that are

there; when the ivory-tusked Pequod sharply bowed to the blast, and

gored the dark waves in her madness, till, like showers of silver chips,

the foam-flakes flew over her bulwarks; then all this desolate vacuity

of life went away, but gave place to sights more dismal than before.

Close to our bows, strange forms in the water darted hither and thither

before us; while thick in our rear flew the inscrutable sea-ravens. And

every morning, perched on our stays, rows of these birds were seen; and

spite of our hootings, for a long time obstinately clung to the hemp,

as though they deemed our ship some drifting, uninhabited craft; a thing

appointed to desolation, and therefore fit roosting-place for their

homeless selves. And heaved and heaved, still unrestingly heaved the

black sea, as if its vast tides were a conscience; and the great mundane

soul were in anguish and remorse for the long sin and suffering it had

bred.

Cape of Good Hope, do they call ye? Rather Cape Tormentoto, as called

of yore; for long allured by the perfidious silences that before had

attended us, we found ourselves launched into this tormented sea,

where guilty beings transformed into those fowls and these fish, seemed

condemned to swim on everlastingly without any haven in store, or beat

that black air without any horizon. But calm, snow-white, and unvarying;

still directing its fountain of feathers to the sky; still beckoning us

on from before, the solitary jet would at times be descried.

During all this blackness of the elements, Ahab, though assuming for the

time the almost continual command of the drenched and dangerous deck,

manifested the gloomiest reserve; and more seldom than ever addressed

his mates. In tempestuous times like these, after everything above and

aloft has been secured, nothing more can be done but passively to await

the issue of the gale. Then Captain and crew become practical fatalists.

So, with his ivory leg inserted into its accustomed hole, and with one

hand firmly grasping a shroud, Ahab for hours and hours would stand

gazing dead to windward, while an occasional squall of sleet or snow

would all but congeal his very eyelashes together. Meantime, the crew

driven from the forward part of the ship by the perilous seas that

burstingly broke over its bows, stood in a line along the bulwarks in

the waist; and the better to guard against the leaping waves, each man

had slipped himself into a sort of bowline secured to the rail, in which

he swung as in a loosened belt. Few or no words were spoken; and the

silent ship, as if manned by painted sailors in wax, day after day tore

on through all the swift madness and gladness of the demoniac waves.

By night the same muteness of humanity before the shrieks of the

ocean prevailed; still in silence the men swung in the bowlines; still

wordless Ahab stood up to the blast. Even when wearied nature seemed

demanding repose he would not seek that repose in his hammock. Never

could Starbuck forget the old man's aspect, when one night going down

into the cabin to mark how the barometer stood, he saw him with

closed eyes sitting straight in his floor-screwed chair; the rain

and half-melted sleet of the storm from which he had some time before

emerged, still slowly dripping from the unremoved hat and coat. On the

table beside him lay unrolled one of those charts of tides and currents

which have previously been spoken of. His lantern swung from his tightly

clenched hand. Though the body was erect, the head was thrown back so

that the closed eyes were pointed towards the needle of the tell-tale

that swung from a beam in the ceiling.\*

\*The cabin-compass is called the tell-tale, because without going to the

compass at the helm, the Captain, while below, can inform himself of the

course of the ship.

Terrible old man! thought Starbuck with a shudder, sleeping in this

gale, still thou steadfastly eyest thy purpose.

CHAPTER 52. The Albatross.

South-eastward from the Cape, off the distant Crozetts, a good cruising

ground for Right Whalemen, a sail loomed ahead, the Goney (Albatross)

by name. As she slowly drew nigh, from my lofty perch at the

fore-mast-head, I had a good view of that sight so remarkable to a tyro

in the far ocean fisheries--a whaler at sea, and long absent from home.

As if the waves had been fullers, this craft was bleached like the

skeleton of a stranded walrus. All down her sides, this spectral

appearance was traced with long channels of reddened rust, while all her

spars and her rigging were like the thick branches of trees furred over

with hoar-frost. Only her lower sails were set. A wild sight it was to

see her long-bearded look-outs at those three mast-heads. They seemed

clad in the skins of beasts, so torn and bepatched the raiment that had

survived nearly four years of cruising. Standing in iron hoops nailed to

the mast, they swayed and swung over a fathomless sea; and though, when

the ship slowly glided close under our stern, we six men in the air

came so nigh to each other that we might almost have leaped from the

mast-heads of one ship to those of the other; yet, those forlorn-looking

fishermen, mildly eyeing us as they passed, said not one word to our own

look-outs, while the quarter-deck hail was being heard from below.

"Ship ahoy! Have ye seen the White Whale?"

But as the strange captain, leaning over the pallid bulwarks, was in the

act of putting his trumpet to his mouth, it somehow fell from his hand

into the sea; and the wind now rising amain, he in vain strove to make

himself heard without it. Meantime his ship was still increasing the

distance between. While in various silent ways the seamen of the Pequod

were evincing their observance of this ominous incident at the first

mere mention of the White Whale's name to another ship, Ahab for a

moment paused; it almost seemed as though he would have lowered a boat

to board the stranger, had not the threatening wind forbade. But taking

advantage of his windward position, he again seized his trumpet, and

knowing by her aspect that the stranger vessel was a Nantucketer and

shortly bound home, he loudly hailed--"Ahoy there! This is the Pequod,

bound round the world! Tell them to address all future letters to the

Pacific ocean! and this time three years, if I am not at home, tell them

to address them to--"

At that moment the two wakes were fairly crossed, and instantly, then,

in accordance with their singular ways, shoals of small harmless fish,

that for some days before had been placidly swimming by our side, darted

away with what seemed shuddering fins, and ranged themselves fore and

aft with the stranger's flanks. Though in the course of his continual

voyagings Ahab must often before have noticed a similar sight, yet, to

any monomaniac man, the veriest trifles capriciously carry meanings.

"Swim away from me, do ye?" murmured Ahab, gazing over into the water.

There seemed but little in the words, but the tone conveyed more of deep

helpless sadness than the insane old man had ever before evinced. But

turning to the steersman, who thus far had been holding the ship in the

wind to diminish her headway, he cried out in his old lion voice,--"Up

helm! Keep her off round the world!"

Round the world! There is much in that sound to inspire proud feelings;

but whereto does all that circumnavigation conduct? Only through

numberless perils to the very point whence we started, where those that

we left behind secure, were all the time before us.

Were this world an endless plain, and by sailing eastward we could for

ever reach new distances, and discover sights more sweet and strange

than any Cyclades or Islands of King Solomon, then there were promise

in the voyage. But in pursuit of those far mysteries we dream of, or in

tormented chase of that demon phantom that, some time or other, swims

before all human hearts; while chasing such over this round globe, they

either lead us on in barren mazes or midway leave us whelmed.

CHAPTER 53. The Gam.

The ostensible reason why Ahab did not go on board of the whaler we had

spoken was this: the wind and sea betokened storms. But even had

this not been the case, he would not after all, perhaps, have boarded

her--judging by his subsequent conduct on similar occasions--if so it

had been that, by the process of hailing, he had obtained a negative

answer to the question he put. For, as it eventually turned out, he

cared not to consort, even for five minutes, with any stranger captain,

except he could contribute some of that information he so absorbingly

sought. But all this might remain inadequately estimated, were not

something said here of the peculiar usages of whaling-vessels when

meeting each other in foreign seas, and especially on a common

cruising-ground.

If two strangers crossing the Pine Barrens in New York State, or the

equally desolate Salisbury Plain in England; if casually encountering

each other in such inhospitable wilds, these twain, for the life of

them, cannot well avoid a mutual salutation; and stopping for a moment

to interchange the news; and, perhaps, sitting down for a while

and resting in concert: then, how much more natural that upon the

illimitable Pine Barrens and Salisbury Plains of the sea, two whaling

vessels descrying each other at the ends of the earth--off lone

Fanning's Island, or the far away King's Mills; how much more natural,

I say, that under such circumstances these ships should not only

interchange hails, but come into still closer, more friendly and

sociable contact. And especially would this seem to be a matter of

course, in the case of vessels owned in one seaport, and whose captains,

officers, and not a few of the men are personally known to each other;

and consequently, have all sorts of dear domestic things to talk about.

For the long absent ship, the outward-bounder, perhaps, has letters on

board; at any rate, she will be sure to let her have some papers of a

date a year or two later than the last one on her blurred and thumb-worn

files. And in return for that courtesy, the outward-bound ship would

receive the latest whaling intelligence from the cruising-ground to

which she may be destined, a thing of the utmost importance to her. And

in degree, all this will hold true concerning whaling vessels crossing

each other's track on the cruising-ground itself, even though they

are equally long absent from home. For one of them may have received a

transfer of letters from some third, and now far remote vessel; and

some of those letters may be for the people of the ship she now meets.

Besides, they would exchange the whaling news, and have an agreeable

chat. For not only would they meet with all the sympathies of sailors,

but likewise with all the peculiar congenialities arising from a common

pursuit and mutually shared privations and perils.

Nor would difference of country make any very essential difference;

that is, so long as both parties speak one language, as is the case

with Americans and English. Though, to be sure, from the small number of

English whalers, such meetings do not very often occur, and when they

do occur there is too apt to be a sort of shyness between them; for your

Englishman is rather reserved, and your Yankee, he does not fancy that

sort of thing in anybody but himself. Besides, the English whalers

sometimes affect a kind of metropolitan superiority over the American

whalers; regarding the long, lean Nantucketer, with his nondescript

provincialisms, as a sort of sea-peasant. But where this superiority

in the English whalemen does really consist, it would be hard to say,

seeing that the Yankees in one day, collectively, kill more whales than

all the English, collectively, in ten years. But this is a harmless

little foible in the English whale-hunters, which the Nantucketer does

not take much to heart; probably, because he knows that he has a few

foibles himself.

So, then, we see that of all ships separately sailing the sea, the

whalers have most reason to be sociable--and they are so. Whereas, some

merchant ships crossing each other's wake in the mid-Atlantic, will

oftentimes pass on without so much as a single word of recognition,

mutually cutting each other on the high seas, like a brace of dandies in

Broadway; and all the time indulging, perhaps, in finical criticism upon

each other's rig. As for Men-of-War, when they chance to meet at sea,

they first go through such a string of silly bowings and scrapings, such

a ducking of ensigns, that there does not seem to be much right-down

hearty good-will and brotherly love about it at all. As touching

Slave-ships meeting, why, they are in such a prodigious hurry, they run

away from each other as soon as possible. And as for Pirates, when they

chance to cross each other's cross-bones, the first hail is--"How many

skulls?"--the same way that whalers hail--"How many barrels?" And that

question once answered, pirates straightway steer apart, for they are

infernal villains on both sides, and don't like to see overmuch of each

other's villanous likenesses.

But look at the godly, honest, unostentatious, hospitable, sociable,

free-and-easy whaler! What does the whaler do when she meets another

whaler in any sort of decent weather? She has a "GAM," a thing so

utterly unknown to all other ships that they never heard of the name

even; and if by chance they should hear of it, they only grin at it, and

repeat gamesome stuff about "spouters" and "blubber-boilers," and such

like pretty exclamations. Why it is that all Merchant-seamen, and also

all Pirates and Man-of-War's men, and Slave-ship sailors, cherish such

a scornful feeling towards Whale-ships; this is a question it would be

hard to answer. Because, in the case of pirates, say, I should like to

know whether that profession of theirs has any peculiar glory about

it. It sometimes ends in uncommon elevation, indeed; but only at the

gallows. And besides, when a man is elevated in that odd fashion, he has

no proper foundation for his superior altitude. Hence, I conclude,

that in boasting himself to be high lifted above a whaleman, in that

assertion the pirate has no solid basis to stand on.

But what is a GAM? You might wear out your index-finger running up and

down the columns of dictionaries, and never find the word. Dr. Johnson

never attained to that erudition; Noah Webster's ark does not hold it.

Nevertheless, this same expressive word has now for many years been in

constant use among some fifteen thousand true born Yankees. Certainly,

it needs a definition, and should be incorporated into the Lexicon. With

that view, let me learnedly define it.

GAM. NOUN--A SOCIAL MEETING OF TWO (OR MORE) WHALESHIPS, GENERALLY ON A

CRUISING-GROUND; WHEN, AFTER EXCHANGING HAILS, THEY EXCHANGE VISITS BY

BOATS' CREWS; THE TWO CAPTAINS REMAINING, FOR THE TIME, ON BOARD OF ONE

SHIP, AND THE TWO CHIEF MATES ON THE OTHER.

There is another little item about Gamming which must not be forgotten

here. All professions have their own little peculiarities of detail; so

has the whale fishery. In a pirate, man-of-war, or slave ship, when

the captain is rowed anywhere in his boat, he always sits in the stern

sheets on a comfortable, sometimes cushioned seat there, and often

steers himself with a pretty little milliner's tiller decorated with

gay cords and ribbons. But the whale-boat has no seat astern, no sofa of

that sort whatever, and no tiller at all. High times indeed, if whaling

captains were wheeled about the water on castors like gouty old aldermen

in patent chairs. And as for a tiller, the whale-boat never admits of

any such effeminacy; and therefore as in gamming a complete boat's crew

must leave the ship, and hence as the boat steerer or harpooneer is of

the number, that subordinate is the steersman upon the occasion, and

the captain, having no place to sit in, is pulled off to his visit

all standing like a pine tree. And often you will notice that being

conscious of the eyes of the whole visible world resting on him from

the sides of the two ships, this standing captain is all alive to the

importance of sustaining his dignity by maintaining his legs. Nor is

this any very easy matter; for in his rear is the immense projecting

steering oar hitting him now and then in the small of his back, the

after-oar reciprocating by rapping his knees in front. He is thus

completely wedged before and behind, and can only expand himself

sideways by settling down on his stretched legs; but a sudden, violent

pitch of the boat will often go far to topple him, because length of

foundation is nothing without corresponding breadth. Merely make a

spread angle of two poles, and you cannot stand them up. Then, again,

it would never do in plain sight of the world's riveted eyes, it would

never do, I say, for this straddling captain to be seen steadying

himself the slightest particle by catching hold of anything with

his hands; indeed, as token of his entire, buoyant self-command, he

generally carries his hands in his trowsers' pockets; but perhaps being

generally very large, heavy hands, he carries them there for ballast.

Nevertheless there have occurred instances, well authenticated ones too,

where the captain has been known for an uncommonly critical moment or

two, in a sudden squall say--to seize hold of the nearest oarsman's

hair, and hold on there like grim death.

CHAPTER 54. The Town-Ho's Story.

(AS TOLD AT THE GOLDEN INN)

The Cape of Good Hope, and all the watery region round about there, is

much like some noted four corners of a great highway, where you meet

more travellers than in any other part.

It was not very long after speaking the Goney that another

homeward-bound whaleman, the Town-Ho,\* was encountered. She was manned

almost wholly by Polynesians. In the short gam that ensued she gave

us strong news of Moby Dick. To some the general interest in the White

Whale was now wildly heightened by a circumstance of the Town-Ho's

story, which seemed obscurely to involve with the whale a certain

wondrous, inverted visitation of one of those so called judgments of God

which at times are said to overtake some men. This latter circumstance,

with its own particular accompaniments, forming what may be called the

secret part of the tragedy about to be narrated, never reached the ears

of Captain Ahab or his mates. For that secret part of the story was

unknown to the captain of the Town-Ho himself. It was the private

property of three confederate white seamen of that ship, one of whom, it

seems, communicated it to Tashtego with Romish injunctions of secrecy,

but the following night Tashtego rambled in his sleep, and revealed

so much of it in that way, that when he was wakened he could not well

withhold the rest. Nevertheless, so potent an influence did this thing

have on those seamen in the Pequod who came to the full knowledge of

it, and by such a strange delicacy, to call it so, were they governed in

this matter, that they kept the secret among themselves so that it never

transpired abaft the Pequod's main-mast. Interweaving in its proper

place this darker thread with the story as publicly narrated on the

ship, the whole of this strange affair I now proceed to put on lasting

record.

\*The ancient whale-cry upon first sighting a whale from the mast-head,

still used by whalemen in hunting the famous Gallipagos terrapin.

For my humor's sake, I shall preserve the style in which I once narrated

it at Lima, to a lounging circle of my Spanish friends, one saint's eve,

smoking upon the thick-gilt tiled piazza of the Golden Inn. Of those

fine cavaliers, the young Dons, Pedro and Sebastian, were on the closer

terms with me; and hence the interluding questions they occasionally

put, and which are duly answered at the time.

"Some two years prior to my first learning the events which I am about

rehearsing to you, gentlemen, the Town-Ho, Sperm Whaler of Nantucket,

was cruising in your Pacific here, not very many days' sail eastward

from the eaves of this good Golden Inn. She was somewhere to the

northward of the Line. One morning upon handling the pumps, according to

daily usage, it was observed that she made more water in her hold than

common. They supposed a sword-fish had stabbed her, gentlemen. But the

captain, having some unusual reason for believing that rare good luck

awaited him in those latitudes; and therefore being very averse to quit

them, and the leak not being then considered at all dangerous, though,

indeed, they could not find it after searching the hold as low down

as was possible in rather heavy weather, the ship still continued her

cruisings, the mariners working at the pumps at wide and easy intervals;

but no good luck came; more days went by, and not only was the leak yet

undiscovered, but it sensibly increased. So much so, that now taking

some alarm, the captain, making all sail, stood away for the nearest

harbor among the islands, there to have his hull hove out and repaired.

"Though no small passage was before her, yet, if the commonest chance

favoured, he did not at all fear that his ship would founder by the way,

because his pumps were of the best, and being periodically relieved at

them, those six-and-thirty men of his could easily keep the ship free;

never mind if the leak should double on her. In truth, well nigh the

whole of this passage being attended by very prosperous breezes, the

Town-Ho had all but certainly arrived in perfect safety at her port

without the occurrence of the least fatality, had it not been for the

brutal overbearing of Radney, the mate, a Vineyarder, and the bitterly

provoked vengeance of Steelkilt, a Lakeman and desperado from Buffalo.

"'Lakeman!--Buffalo! Pray, what is a Lakeman, and where is Buffalo?'

said Don Sebastian, rising in his swinging mat of grass.

"On the eastern shore of our Lake Erie, Don; but--I crave your

courtesy--may be, you shall soon hear further of all that. Now,

gentlemen, in square-sail brigs and three-masted ships, well-nigh as

large and stout as any that ever sailed out of your old Callao to far

Manilla; this Lakeman, in the land-locked heart of our America, had yet

been nurtured by all those agrarian freebooting impressions popularly

connected with the open ocean. For in their interflowing aggregate,

those grand fresh-water seas of ours,--Erie, and Ontario, and Huron, and

Superior, and Michigan,--possess an ocean-like expansiveness, with many

of the ocean's noblest traits; with many of its rimmed varieties of

races and of climes. They contain round archipelagoes of romantic isles,

even as the Polynesian waters do; in large part, are shored by two great

contrasting nations, as the Atlantic is; they furnish long maritime

approaches to our numerous territorial colonies from the East, dotted

all round their banks; here and there are frowned upon by batteries,

and by the goat-like craggy guns of lofty Mackinaw; they have heard the

fleet thunderings of naval victories; at intervals, they yield their

beaches to wild barbarians, whose red painted faces flash from out

their peltry wigwams; for leagues and leagues are flanked by ancient

and unentered forests, where the gaunt pines stand like serried lines

of kings in Gothic genealogies; those same woods harboring wild Afric

beasts of prey, and silken creatures whose exported furs give robes

to Tartar Emperors; they mirror the paved capitals of Buffalo and

Cleveland, as well as Winnebago villages; they float alike the

full-rigged merchant ship, the armed cruiser of the State, the steamer,

and the beech canoe; they are swept by Borean and dismasting blasts as

direful as any that lash the salted wave; they know what shipwrecks are,

for out of sight of land, however inland, they have drowned full many

a midnight ship with all its shrieking crew. Thus, gentlemen, though

an inlander, Steelkilt was wild-ocean born, and wild-ocean nurtured;

as much of an audacious mariner as any. And for Radney, though in his

infancy he may have laid him down on the lone Nantucket beach, to nurse

at his maternal sea; though in after life he had long followed our

austere Atlantic and your contemplative Pacific; yet was he quite as

vengeful and full of social quarrel as the backwoods seaman, fresh

from the latitudes of buck-horn handled bowie-knives. Yet was this

Nantucketer a man with some good-hearted traits; and this Lakeman, a

mariner, who though a sort of devil indeed, might yet by inflexible

firmness, only tempered by that common decency of human recognition

which is the meanest slave's right; thus treated, this Steelkilt had

long been retained harmless and docile. At all events, he had proved

so thus far; but Radney was doomed and made mad, and Steelkilt--but,

gentlemen, you shall hear.

"It was not more than a day or two at the furthest after pointing

her prow for her island haven, that the Town-Ho's leak seemed again

increasing, but only so as to require an hour or more at the pumps

every day. You must know that in a settled and civilized ocean like our

Atlantic, for example, some skippers think little of pumping their whole

way across it; though of a still, sleepy night, should the officer of

the deck happen to forget his duty in that respect, the probability

would be that he and his shipmates would never again remember it, on

account of all hands gently subsiding to the bottom. Nor in the

solitary and savage seas far from you to the westward, gentlemen, is it

altogether unusual for ships to keep clanging at their pump-handles in

full chorus even for a voyage of considerable length; that is, if it lie

along a tolerably accessible coast, or if any other reasonable retreat

is afforded them. It is only when a leaky vessel is in some very out of

the way part of those waters, some really landless latitude, that her

captain begins to feel a little anxious.

"Much this way had it been with the Town-Ho; so when her leak was found

gaining once more, there was in truth some small concern manifested by

several of her company; especially by Radney the mate. He commanded

the upper sails to be well hoisted, sheeted home anew, and every way

expanded to the breeze. Now this Radney, I suppose, was as little of a

coward, and as little inclined to any sort of nervous apprehensiveness

touching his own person as any fearless, unthinking creature on land or

on sea that you can conveniently imagine, gentlemen. Therefore when

he betrayed this solicitude about the safety of the ship, some of the

seamen declared that it was only on account of his being a part owner in

her. So when they were working that evening at the pumps, there was on

this head no small gamesomeness slily going on among them, as they stood

with their feet continually overflowed by the rippling clear water;

clear as any mountain spring, gentlemen--that bubbling from the pumps

ran across the deck, and poured itself out in steady spouts at the lee

scupper-holes.

"Now, as you well know, it is not seldom the case in this conventional

world of ours--watery or otherwise; that when a person placed in command

over his fellow-men finds one of them to be very significantly his

superior in general pride of manhood, straightway against that man he

conceives an unconquerable dislike and bitterness; and if he have a

chance he will pull down and pulverize that subaltern's tower, and

make a little heap of dust of it. Be this conceit of mine as it may,

gentlemen, at all events Steelkilt was a tall and noble animal with a

head like a Roman, and a flowing golden beard like the tasseled housings

of your last viceroy's snorting charger; and a brain, and a heart, and

a soul in him, gentlemen, which had made Steelkilt Charlemagne, had he

been born son to Charlemagne's father. But Radney, the mate, was ugly

as a mule; yet as hardy, as stubborn, as malicious. He did not love

Steelkilt, and Steelkilt knew it.

"Espying the mate drawing near as he was toiling at the pump with the

rest, the Lakeman affected not to notice him, but unawed, went on with

his gay banterings.

"'Aye, aye, my merry lads, it's a lively leak this; hold a cannikin, one

of ye, and let's have a taste. By the Lord, it's worth bottling! I tell

ye what, men, old Rad's investment must go for it! he had best cut away

his part of the hull and tow it home. The fact is, boys, that sword-fish

only began the job; he's come back again with a gang of ship-carpenters,

saw-fish, and file-fish, and what not; and the whole posse of 'em

are now hard at work cutting and slashing at the bottom; making

improvements, I suppose. If old Rad were here now, I'd tell him to jump

overboard and scatter 'em. They're playing the devil with his estate, I

can tell him. But he's a simple old soul,--Rad, and a beauty too. Boys,

they say the rest of his property is invested in looking-glasses. I

wonder if he'd give a poor devil like me the model of his nose.'

"'Damn your eyes! what's that pump stopping for?' roared Radney,

pretending not to have heard the sailors' talk. 'Thunder away at it!'

"'Aye, aye, sir,' said Steelkilt, merry as a cricket. 'Lively, boys,

lively, now!' And with that the pump clanged like fifty fire-engines;

the men tossed their hats off to it, and ere long that peculiar gasping

of the lungs was heard which denotes the fullest tension of life's

utmost energies.

"Quitting the pump at last, with the rest of his band, the Lakeman went

forward all panting, and sat himself down on the windlass; his face

fiery red, his eyes bloodshot, and wiping the profuse sweat from his

brow. Now what cozening fiend it was, gentlemen, that possessed Radney

to meddle with such a man in that corporeally exasperated state, I know

not; but so it happened. Intolerably striding along the deck, the mate

commanded him to get a broom and sweep down the planks, and also a

shovel, and remove some offensive matters consequent upon allowing a pig

to run at large.

"Now, gentlemen, sweeping a ship's deck at sea is a piece of household

work which in all times but raging gales is regularly attended to every

evening; it has been known to be done in the case of ships actually

foundering at the time. Such, gentlemen, is the inflexibility of

sea-usages and the instinctive love of neatness in seamen; some of whom

would not willingly drown without first washing their faces. But in all

vessels this broom business is the prescriptive province of the boys,

if boys there be aboard. Besides, it was the stronger men in the Town-Ho

that had been divided into gangs, taking turns at the pumps; and being

the most athletic seaman of them all, Steelkilt had been regularly

assigned captain of one of the gangs; consequently he should have

been freed from any trivial business not connected with truly nautical

duties, such being the case with his comrades. I mention all these

particulars so that you may understand exactly how this affair stood

between the two men.

"But there was more than this: the order about the shovel was almost as

plainly meant to sting and insult Steelkilt, as though Radney had spat

in his face. Any man who has gone sailor in a whale-ship will

understand this; and all this and doubtless much more, the Lakeman fully

comprehended when the mate uttered his command. But as he sat still for

a moment, and as he steadfastly looked into the mate's malignant eye and

perceived the stacks of powder-casks heaped up in him and the slow-match

silently burning along towards them; as he instinctively saw all

this, that strange forbearance and unwillingness to stir up the deeper

passionateness in any already ireful being--a repugnance most felt, when

felt at all, by really valiant men even when aggrieved--this nameless

phantom feeling, gentlemen, stole over Steelkilt.

"Therefore, in his ordinary tone, only a little broken by the bodily

exhaustion he was temporarily in, he answered him saying that sweeping

the deck was not his business, and he would not do it. And then, without

at all alluding to the shovel, he pointed to three lads as the customary

sweepers; who, not being billeted at the pumps, had done little or

nothing all day. To this, Radney replied with an oath, in a most

domineering and outrageous manner unconditionally reiterating his

command; meanwhile advancing upon the still seated Lakeman, with an

uplifted cooper's club hammer which he had snatched from a cask near by.

"Heated and irritated as he was by his spasmodic toil at the pumps, for

all his first nameless feeling of forbearance the sweating Steelkilt

could but ill brook this bearing in the mate; but somehow still

smothering the conflagration within him, without speaking he remained

doggedly rooted to his seat, till at last the incensed Radney shook the

hammer within a few inches of his face, furiously commanding him to do

his bidding.

"Steelkilt rose, and slowly retreating round the windlass, steadily

followed by the mate with his menacing hammer, deliberately repeated his

intention not to obey. Seeing, however, that his forbearance had not

the slightest effect, by an awful and unspeakable intimation with his

twisted hand he warned off the foolish and infatuated man; but it was to

no purpose. And in this way the two went once slowly round the windlass;

when, resolved at last no longer to retreat, bethinking him that he had

now forborne as much as comported with his humor, the Lakeman paused on

the hatches and thus spoke to the officer:

"'Mr. Radney, I will not obey you. Take that hammer away, or look to

yourself.' But the predestinated mate coming still closer to him, where

the Lakeman stood fixed, now shook the heavy hammer within an inch of

his teeth; meanwhile repeating a string of insufferable maledictions.

Retreating not the thousandth part of an inch; stabbing him in the eye

with the unflinching poniard of his glance, Steelkilt, clenching

his right hand behind him and creepingly drawing it back, told his

persecutor that if the hammer but grazed his cheek he (Steelkilt) would

murder him. But, gentlemen, the fool had been branded for the slaughter

by the gods. Immediately the hammer touched the cheek; the next instant

the lower jaw of the mate was stove in his head; he fell on the hatch

spouting blood like a whale.

"Ere the cry could go aft Steelkilt was shaking one of the backstays

leading far aloft to where two of his comrades were standing their

mastheads. They were both Canallers.

"'Canallers!' cried Don Pedro. 'We have seen many whale-ships in our

harbours, but never heard of your Canallers. Pardon: who and what are

they?'

"'Canallers, Don, are the boatmen belonging to our grand Erie Canal. You

must have heard of it.'

"'Nay, Senor; hereabouts in this dull, warm, most lazy, and hereditary

land, we know but little of your vigorous North.'

"'Aye? Well then, Don, refill my cup. Your chicha's very fine; and

ere proceeding further I will tell ye what our Canallers are; for such

information may throw side-light upon my story.'

"For three hundred and sixty miles, gentlemen, through the entire

breadth of the state of New York; through numerous populous cities and

most thriving villages; through long, dismal, uninhabited swamps, and

affluent, cultivated fields, unrivalled for fertility; by billiard-room

and bar-room; through the holy-of-holies of great forests; on Roman

arches over Indian rivers; through sun and shade; by happy hearts or

broken; through all the wide contrasting scenery of those noble Mohawk

counties; and especially, by rows of snow-white chapels, whose spires

stand almost like milestones, flows one continual stream of Venetianly

corrupt and often lawless life. There's your true Ashantee, gentlemen;

there howl your pagans; where you ever find them, next door to you;

under the long-flung shadow, and the snug patronising lee of churches.

For by some curious fatality, as it is often noted of your metropolitan

freebooters that they ever encamp around the halls of justice, so

sinners, gentlemen, most abound in holiest vicinities.

"'Is that a friar passing?' said Don Pedro, looking downwards into the

crowded plazza, with humorous concern.

"'Well for our northern friend, Dame Isabella's Inquisition wanes in

Lima,' laughed Don Sebastian. 'Proceed, Senor.'

"'A moment! Pardon!' cried another of the company. 'In the name of all

us Limeese, I but desire to express to you, sir sailor, that we have by

no means overlooked your delicacy in not substituting present Lima

for distant Venice in your corrupt comparison. Oh! do not bow and look

surprised; you know the proverb all along this coast--"Corrupt as

Lima." It but bears out your saying, too; churches more plentiful than

billiard-tables, and for ever open--and "Corrupt as Lima." So, too,

Venice; I have been there; the holy city of the blessed evangelist, St.

Mark!--St. Dominic, purge it! Your cup! Thanks: here I refill; now, you

pour out again.'

"Freely depicted in his own vocation, gentlemen, the Canaller would make

a fine dramatic hero, so abundantly and picturesquely wicked is he. Like

Mark Antony, for days and days along his green-turfed, flowery Nile,

he indolently floats, openly toying with his red-cheeked Cleopatra,

ripening his apricot thigh upon the sunny deck. But ashore, all this

effeminacy is dashed. The brigandish guise which the Canaller so proudly

sports; his slouched and gaily-ribboned hat betoken his grand features.

A terror to the smiling innocence of the villages through which he

floats; his swart visage and bold swagger are not unshunned in cities.

Once a vagabond on his own canal, I have received good turns from one of

these Canallers; I thank him heartily; would fain be not ungrateful;

but it is often one of the prime redeeming qualities of your man of

violence, that at times he has as stiff an arm to back a poor stranger

in a strait, as to plunder a wealthy one. In sum, gentlemen, what the

wildness of this canal life is, is emphatically evinced by this; that

our wild whale-fishery contains so many of its most finished graduates,

and that scarce any race of mankind, except Sydney men, are so much

distrusted by our whaling captains. Nor does it at all diminish the

curiousness of this matter, that to many thousands of our rural boys and

young men born along its line, the probationary life of the Grand Canal

furnishes the sole transition between quietly reaping in a Christian

corn-field, and recklessly ploughing the waters of the most barbaric

seas.

"'I see! I see!' impetuously exclaimed Don Pedro, spilling his chicha

upon his silvery ruffles. 'No need to travel! The world's one Lima. I

had thought, now, that at your temperate North the generations were cold

and holy as the hills.--But the story.'

"I left off, gentlemen, where the Lakeman shook the backstay. Hardly

had he done so, when he was surrounded by the three junior mates and the

four harpooneers, who all crowded him to the deck. But sliding down the

ropes like baleful comets, the two Canallers rushed into the uproar, and

sought to drag their man out of it towards the forecastle. Others of the

sailors joined with them in this attempt, and a twisted turmoil ensued;

while standing out of harm's way, the valiant captain danced up and down

with a whale-pike, calling upon his officers to manhandle that atrocious

scoundrel, and smoke him along to the quarter-deck. At intervals, he ran

close up to the revolving border of the confusion, and prying into

the heart of it with his pike, sought to prick out the object of his

resentment. But Steelkilt and his desperadoes were too much for them

all; they succeeded in gaining the forecastle deck, where, hastily

slewing about three or four large casks in a line with the windlass,

these sea-Parisians entrenched themselves behind the barricade.

"'Come out of that, ye pirates!' roared the captain, now menacing them

with a pistol in each hand, just brought to him by the steward. 'Come

out of that, ye cut-throats!'

"Steelkilt leaped on the barricade, and striding up and down there,

defied the worst the pistols could do; but gave the captain to

understand distinctly, that his (Steelkilt's) death would be the signal

for a murderous mutiny on the part of all hands. Fearing in his heart

lest this might prove but too true, the captain a little desisted, but

still commanded the insurgents instantly to return to their duty.

"'Will you promise not to touch us, if we do?' demanded their

ringleader.

"'Turn to! turn to!--I make no promise;--to your duty! Do you want to

sink the ship, by knocking off at a time like this? Turn to!' and he

once more raised a pistol.

"'Sink the ship?' cried Steelkilt. 'Aye, let her sink. Not a man of us

turns to, unless you swear not to raise a rope-yarn against us. What say

ye, men?' turning to his comrades. A fierce cheer was their response.

"The Lakeman now patrolled the barricade, all the while keeping his eye

on the Captain, and jerking out such sentences as these:--'It's not our

fault; we didn't want it; I told him to take his hammer away; it was

boy's business; he might have known me before this; I told him not to

prick the buffalo; I believe I have broken a finger here against his

cursed jaw; ain't those mincing knives down in the forecastle there,

men? look to those handspikes, my hearties. Captain, by God, look to

yourself; say the word; don't be a fool; forget it all; we are ready

to turn to; treat us decently, and we're your men; but we won't be

flogged.'

"'Turn to! I make no promises, turn to, I say!'

"'Look ye, now,' cried the Lakeman, flinging out his arm towards him,

'there are a few of us here (and I am one of them) who have shipped

for the cruise, d'ye see; now as you well know, sir, we can claim our

discharge as soon as the anchor is down; so we don't want a row; it's

not our interest; we want to be peaceable; we are ready to work, but we

won't be flogged.'

"'Turn to!' roared the Captain.

"Steelkilt glanced round him a moment, and then said:--'I tell you what

it is now, Captain, rather than kill ye, and be hung for such a shabby

rascal, we won't lift a hand against ye unless ye attack us; but till

you say the word about not flogging us, we don't do a hand's turn.'

"'Down into the forecastle then, down with ye, I'll keep ye there till

ye're sick of it. Down ye go.'

"'Shall we?' cried the ringleader to his men. Most of them were against

it; but at length, in obedience to Steelkilt, they preceded him down

into their dark den, growlingly disappearing, like bears into a cave.

"As the Lakeman's bare head was just level with the planks, the Captain

and his posse leaped the barricade, and rapidly drawing over the slide

of the scuttle, planted their group of hands upon it, and loudly called

for the steward to bring the heavy brass padlock belonging to the

companionway.

"Then opening the slide a little, the Captain whispered something

down the crack, closed it, and turned the key upon them--ten in

number--leaving on deck some twenty or more, who thus far had remained

neutral.

"All night a wide-awake watch was kept by all the officers, forward and

aft, especially about the forecastle scuttle and fore hatchway; at which

last place it was feared the insurgents might emerge, after breaking

through the bulkhead below. But the hours of darkness passed in peace;

the men who still remained at their duty toiling hard at the pumps,

whose clinking and clanking at intervals through the dreary night

dismally resounded through the ship.

"At sunrise the Captain went forward, and knocking on the deck, summoned

the prisoners to work; but with a yell they refused. Water was then

lowered down to them, and a couple of handfuls of biscuit were tossed

after it; when again turning the key upon them and pocketing it, the

Captain returned to the quarter-deck. Twice every day for three days

this was repeated; but on the fourth morning a confused wrangling, and

then a scuffling was heard, as the customary summons was delivered; and

suddenly four men burst up from the forecastle, saying they were ready

to turn to. The fetid closeness of the air, and a famishing diet, united

perhaps to some fears of ultimate retribution, had constrained them to

surrender at discretion. Emboldened by this, the Captain reiterated his

demand to the rest, but Steelkilt shouted up to him a terrific hint to

stop his babbling and betake himself where he belonged. On the fifth

morning three others of the mutineers bolted up into the air from the

desperate arms below that sought to restrain them. Only three were left.

"'Better turn to, now?' said the Captain with a heartless jeer.

"'Shut us up again, will ye!' cried Steelkilt.

"'Oh certainly,' said the Captain, and the key clicked.

"It was at this point, gentlemen, that enraged by the defection of seven

of his former associates, and stung by the mocking voice that had last

hailed him, and maddened by his long entombment in a place as black as

the bowels of despair; it was then that Steelkilt proposed to the two

Canallers, thus far apparently of one mind with him, to burst out of

their hole at the next summoning of the garrison; and armed with their

keen mincing knives (long, crescentic, heavy implements with a handle

at each end) run amuck from the bowsprit to the taffrail; and if by any

devilishness of desperation possible, seize the ship. For himself, he

would do this, he said, whether they joined him or not. That was the

last night he should spend in that den. But the scheme met with no

opposition on the part of the other two; they swore they were ready for

that, or for any other mad thing, for anything in short but a surrender.

And what was more, they each insisted upon being the first man on deck,

when the time to make the rush should come. But to this their leader as

fiercely objected, reserving that priority for himself; particularly as

his two comrades would not yield, the one to the other, in the matter;

and both of them could not be first, for the ladder would but admit one

man at a time. And here, gentlemen, the foul play of these miscreants

must come out.

"Upon hearing the frantic project of their leader, each in his own

separate soul had suddenly lighted, it would seem, upon the same piece

of treachery, namely: to be foremost in breaking out, in order to be

the first of the three, though the last of the ten, to surrender; and

thereby secure whatever small chance of pardon such conduct might merit.

But when Steelkilt made known his determination still to lead them to

the last, they in some way, by some subtle chemistry of villany, mixed

their before secret treacheries together; and when their leader

fell into a doze, verbally opened their souls to each other in three

sentences; and bound the sleeper with cords, and gagged him with cords;

and shrieked out for the Captain at midnight.

"Thinking murder at hand, and smelling in the dark for the blood, he and

all his armed mates and harpooneers rushed for the forecastle. In a

few minutes the scuttle was opened, and, bound hand and foot, the still

struggling ringleader was shoved up into the air by his perfidious

allies, who at once claimed the honour of securing a man who had been

fully ripe for murder. But all these were collared, and dragged along

the deck like dead cattle; and, side by side, were seized up into the

mizzen rigging, like three quarters of meat, and there they hung till

morning. 'Damn ye,' cried the Captain, pacing to and fro before them,

'the vultures would not touch ye, ye villains!'

"At sunrise he summoned all hands; and separating those who had rebelled

from those who had taken no part in the mutiny, he told the former that

he had a good mind to flog them all round--thought, upon the whole,

he would do so--he ought to--justice demanded it; but for the present,

considering their timely surrender, he would let them go with a

reprimand, which he accordingly administered in the vernacular.

"'But as for you, ye carrion rogues,' turning to the three men in the

rigging--'for you, I mean to mince ye up for the try-pots;' and,

seizing a rope, he applied it with all his might to the backs of the

two traitors, till they yelled no more, but lifelessly hung their heads

sideways, as the two crucified thieves are drawn.

"'My wrist is sprained with ye!' he cried, at last; 'but there is still

rope enough left for you, my fine bantam, that wouldn't give up. Take

that gag from his mouth, and let us hear what he can say for himself.'

"For a moment the exhausted mutineer made a tremulous motion of his

cramped jaws, and then painfully twisting round his head, said in a sort

of hiss, 'What I say is this--and mind it well--if you flog me, I murder

you!'

"'Say ye so? then see how ye frighten me'--and the Captain drew off with

the rope to strike.

"'Best not,' hissed the Lakeman.

"'But I must,'--and the rope was once more drawn back for the stroke.

"Steelkilt here hissed out something, inaudible to all but the Captain;

who, to the amazement of all hands, started back, paced the deck rapidly

two or three times, and then suddenly throwing down his rope, said, 'I

won't do it--let him go--cut him down: d'ye hear?'

"But as the junior mates were hurrying to execute the order, a pale man,

with a bandaged head, arrested them--Radney the chief mate. Ever since

the blow, he had lain in his berth; but that morning, hearing the tumult

on the deck, he had crept out, and thus far had watched the whole

scene. Such was the state of his mouth, that he could hardly speak;

but mumbling something about his being willing and able to do what the

captain dared not attempt, he snatched the rope and advanced to his

pinioned foe.

"'You are a coward!' hissed the Lakeman.

"'So I am, but take that.' The mate was in the very act of striking,

when another hiss stayed his uplifted arm. He paused: and then pausing

no more, made good his word, spite of Steelkilt's threat, whatever that

might have been. The three men were then cut down, all hands were turned

to, and, sullenly worked by the moody seamen, the iron pumps clanged as

before.

"Just after dark that day, when one watch had retired below, a clamor

was heard in the forecastle; and the two trembling traitors running up,

besieged the cabin door, saying they durst not consort with the crew.

Entreaties, cuffs, and kicks could not drive them back, so at their own

instance they were put down in the ship's run for salvation. Still, no

sign of mutiny reappeared among the rest. On the contrary, it seemed,

that mainly at Steelkilt's instigation, they had resolved to maintain

the strictest peacefulness, obey all orders to the last, and, when the

ship reached port, desert her in a body. But in order to insure the

speediest end to the voyage, they all agreed to another thing--namely,

not to sing out for whales, in case any should be discovered. For,

spite of her leak, and spite of all her other perils, the Town-Ho still

maintained her mast-heads, and her captain was just as willing to

lower for a fish that moment, as on the day his craft first struck the

cruising ground; and Radney the mate was quite as ready to change his

berth for a boat, and with his bandaged mouth seek to gag in death the

vital jaw of the whale.

"But though the Lakeman had induced the seamen to adopt this sort of

passiveness in their conduct, he kept his own counsel (at least till all

was over) concerning his own proper and private revenge upon the man who

had stung him in the ventricles of his heart. He was in Radney the chief

mate's watch; and as if the infatuated man sought to run more than

half way to meet his doom, after the scene at the rigging, he insisted,

against the express counsel of the captain, upon resuming the head

of his watch at night. Upon this, and one or two other circumstances,

Steelkilt systematically built the plan of his revenge.

"During the night, Radney had an unseamanlike way of sitting on the

bulwarks of the quarter-deck, and leaning his arm upon the gunwale of

the boat which was hoisted up there, a little above the ship's side.

In this attitude, it was well known, he sometimes dozed. There was a

considerable vacancy between the boat and the ship, and down between

this was the sea. Steelkilt calculated his time, and found that his next

trick at the helm would come round at two o'clock, in the morning of the

third day from that in which he had been betrayed. At his leisure,

he employed the interval in braiding something very carefully in his

watches below.

"'What are you making there?' said a shipmate.

"'What do you think? what does it look like?'

"'Like a lanyard for your bag; but it's an odd one, seems to me.'

"'Yes, rather oddish,' said the Lakeman, holding it at arm's length

before him; 'but I think it will answer. Shipmate, I haven't enough

twine,--have you any?'

"But there was none in the forecastle.

"'Then I must get some from old Rad;' and he rose to go aft.

"'You don't mean to go a begging to HIM!' said a sailor.

"'Why not? Do you think he won't do me a turn, when it's to help himself

in the end, shipmate?' and going to the mate, he looked at him

quietly, and asked him for some twine to mend his hammock. It was given

him--neither twine nor lanyard were seen again; but the next night

an iron ball, closely netted, partly rolled from the pocket of the

Lakeman's monkey jacket, as he was tucking the coat into his hammock for

a pillow. Twenty-four hours after, his trick at the silent helm--nigh

to the man who was apt to doze over the grave always ready dug to

the seaman's hand--that fatal hour was then to come; and in the

fore-ordaining soul of Steelkilt, the mate was already stark and

stretched as a corpse, with his forehead crushed in.

"But, gentlemen, a fool saved the would-be murderer from the bloody

deed he had planned. Yet complete revenge he had, and without being the

avenger. For by a mysterious fatality, Heaven itself seemed to step in

to take out of his hands into its own the damning thing he would have

done.

"It was just between daybreak and sunrise of the morning of the second

day, when they were washing down the decks, that a stupid Teneriffe man,

drawing water in the main-chains, all at once shouted out, 'There she

rolls! there she rolls!' Jesu, what a whale! It was Moby Dick.

"'Moby Dick!' cried Don Sebastian; 'St. Dominic! Sir sailor, but do

whales have christenings? Whom call you Moby Dick?'

"'A very white, and famous, and most deadly immortal monster, Don;--but

that would be too long a story.'

"'How? how?' cried all the young Spaniards, crowding.

"'Nay, Dons, Dons--nay, nay! I cannot rehearse that now. Let me get more

into the air, Sirs.'

"'The chicha! the chicha!' cried Don Pedro; 'our vigorous friend looks

faint;--fill up his empty glass!'

"No need, gentlemen; one moment, and I proceed.--Now, gentlemen,

so suddenly perceiving the snowy whale within fifty yards of the

ship--forgetful of the compact among the crew--in the excitement of the

moment, the Teneriffe man had instinctively and involuntarily lifted

his voice for the monster, though for some little time past it had been

plainly beheld from the three sullen mast-heads. All was now a phrensy.

'The White Whale--the White Whale!' was the cry from captain, mates,

and harpooneers, who, undeterred by fearful rumours, were all anxious

to capture so famous and precious a fish; while the dogged crew eyed

askance, and with curses, the appalling beauty of the vast milky mass,

that lit up by a horizontal spangling sun, shifted and glistened like

a living opal in the blue morning sea. Gentlemen, a strange fatality

pervades the whole career of these events, as if verily mapped out

before the world itself was charted. The mutineer was the bowsman of the

mate, and when fast to a fish, it was his duty to sit next him, while

Radney stood up with his lance in the prow, and haul in or slacken

the line, at the word of command. Moreover, when the four boats were

lowered, the mate's got the start; and none howled more fiercely with

delight than did Steelkilt, as he strained at his oar. After a stiff

pull, their harpooneer got fast, and, spear in hand, Radney sprang to

the bow. He was always a furious man, it seems, in a boat. And now his

bandaged cry was, to beach him on the whale's topmost back. Nothing

loath, his bowsman hauled him up and up, through a blinding foam that

blent two whitenesses together; till of a sudden the boat struck as

against a sunken ledge, and keeling over, spilled out the standing mate.

That instant, as he fell on the whale's slippery back, the boat righted,

and was dashed aside by the swell, while Radney was tossed over into the

sea, on the other flank of the whale. He struck out through the spray,

and, for an instant, was dimly seen through that veil, wildly seeking to

remove himself from the eye of Moby Dick. But the whale rushed round

in a sudden maelstrom; seized the swimmer between his jaws; and rearing

high up with him, plunged headlong again, and went down.

"Meantime, at the first tap of the boat's bottom, the Lakeman had

slackened the line, so as to drop astern from the whirlpool; calmly

looking on, he thought his own thoughts. But a sudden, terrific,

downward jerking of the boat, quickly brought his knife to the line. He

cut it; and the whale was free. But, at some distance, Moby Dick rose

again, with some tatters of Radney's red woollen shirt, caught in the

teeth that had destroyed him. All four boats gave chase again; but the

whale eluded them, and finally wholly disappeared.

"In good time, the Town-Ho reached her port--a savage, solitary

place--where no civilized creature resided. There, headed by the

Lakeman, all but five or six of the foremastmen deliberately deserted

among the palms; eventually, as it turned out, seizing a large double

war-canoe of the savages, and setting sail for some other harbor.

"The ship's company being reduced to but a handful, the captain called

upon the Islanders to assist him in the laborious business of heaving

down the ship to stop the leak. But to such unresting vigilance over

their dangerous allies was this small band of whites necessitated, both

by night and by day, and so extreme was the hard work they underwent,

that upon the vessel being ready again for sea, they were in such a

weakened condition that the captain durst not put off with them in so

heavy a vessel. After taking counsel with his officers, he anchored the

ship as far off shore as possible; loaded and ran out his two cannon

from the bows; stacked his muskets on the poop; and warning the

Islanders not to approach the ship at their peril, took one man with

him, and setting the sail of his best whale-boat, steered straight

before the wind for Tahiti, five hundred miles distant, to procure a

reinforcement to his crew.

"On the fourth day of the sail, a large canoe was descried, which seemed

to have touched at a low isle of corals. He steered away from it; but

the savage craft bore down on him; and soon the voice of Steelkilt

hailed him to heave to, or he would run him under water. The captain

presented a pistol. With one foot on each prow of the yoked war-canoes,

the Lakeman laughed him to scorn; assuring him that if the pistol so

much as clicked in the lock, he would bury him in bubbles and foam.

"'What do you want of me?' cried the captain.

"'Where are you bound? and for what are you bound?' demanded Steelkilt;

'no lies.'

"'I am bound to Tahiti for more men.'

"'Very good. Let me board you a moment--I come in peace.' With that he

leaped from the canoe, swam to the boat; and climbing the gunwale, stood

face to face with the captain.

"'Cross your arms, sir; throw back your head. Now, repeat after me.

As soon as Steelkilt leaves me, I swear to beach this boat on yonder

island, and remain there six days. If I do not, may lightning strike

me!'

"'A pretty scholar,' laughed the Lakeman. 'Adios, Senor!' and leaping

into the sea, he swam back to his comrades.

"Watching the boat till it was fairly beached, and drawn up to the

roots of the cocoa-nut trees, Steelkilt made sail again, and in due time

arrived at Tahiti, his own place of destination. There, luck befriended

him; two ships were about to sail for France, and were providentially

in want of precisely that number of men which the sailor headed. They

embarked; and so for ever got the start of their former captain, had he

been at all minded to work them legal retribution.

"Some ten days after the French ships sailed, the whale-boat arrived,

and the captain was forced to enlist some of the more civilized

Tahitians, who had been somewhat used to the sea. Chartering a small

native schooner, he returned with them to his vessel; and finding all

right there, again resumed his cruisings.

"Where Steelkilt now is, gentlemen, none know; but upon the island of

Nantucket, the widow of Radney still turns to the sea which refuses

to give up its dead; still in dreams sees the awful white whale that

destroyed him.

"'Are you through?' said Don Sebastian, quietly.

"'I am, Don.'

"'Then I entreat you, tell me if to the best of your own convictions,

this your story is in substance really true? It is so passing wonderful!

Did you get it from an unquestionable source? Bear with me if I seem to

press.'

"'Also bear with all of us, sir sailor; for we all join in Don

Sebastian's suit,' cried the company, with exceeding interest.

"'Is there a copy of the Holy Evangelists in the Golden Inn, gentlemen?'

"'Nay,' said Don Sebastian; 'but I know a worthy priest near by, who

will quickly procure one for me. I go for it; but are you well advised?

this may grow too serious.'

"'Will you be so good as to bring the priest also, Don?'

"'Though there are no Auto-da-Fe's in Lima now,' said one of the company

to another; 'I fear our sailor friend runs risk of the archiepiscopacy.

Let us withdraw more out of the moonlight. I see no need of this.'

"'Excuse me for running after you, Don Sebastian; but may I also beg

that you will be particular in procuring the largest sized Evangelists

you can.'

"'This is the priest, he brings you the Evangelists,' said Don Sebastian,

gravely, returning with a tall and solemn figure.

"'Let me remove my hat. Now, venerable priest, further into the light,

and hold the Holy Book before me that I may touch it.

"'So help me Heaven, and on my honour the story I have told ye,

gentlemen, is in substance and its great items, true. I know it to be

true; it happened on this ball; I trod the ship; I knew the crew; I have

seen and talked with Steelkilt since the death of Radney.'"

CHAPTER 55. Of the Monstrous Pictures of Whales.

I shall ere long paint to you as well as one can without canvas,

something like the true form of the whale as he actually appears to the

eye of the whaleman when in his own absolute body the whale is moored

alongside the whale-ship so that he can be fairly stepped upon there.

It may be worth while, therefore, previously to advert to those

curious imaginary portraits of him which even down to the present day

confidently challenge the faith of the landsman. It is time to set the

world right in this matter, by proving such pictures of the whale all

wrong.

It may be that the primal source of all those pictorial delusions will

be found among the oldest Hindoo, Egyptian, and Grecian sculptures. For

ever since those inventive but unscrupulous times when on the marble

panellings of temples, the pedestals of statues, and on shields,

medallions, cups, and coins, the dolphin was drawn in scales of

chain-armor like Saladin's, and a helmeted head like St. George's; ever

since then has something of the same sort of license prevailed, not

only in most popular pictures of the whale, but in many scientific

presentations of him.

Now, by all odds, the most ancient extant portrait anyways purporting to

be the whale's, is to be found in the famous cavern-pagoda of Elephanta,

in India. The Brahmins maintain that in the almost endless sculptures of

that immemorial pagoda, all the trades and pursuits, every conceivable

avocation of man, were prefigured ages before any of them actually came

into being. No wonder then, that in some sort our noble profession of

whaling should have been there shadowed forth. The Hindoo whale

referred to, occurs in a separate department of the wall, depicting the

incarnation of Vishnu in the form of leviathan, learnedly known as the

Matse Avatar. But though this sculpture is half man and half whale, so

as only to give the tail of the latter, yet that small section of him is

all wrong. It looks more like the tapering tail of an anaconda, than the

broad palms of the true whale's majestic flukes.

But go to the old Galleries, and look now at a great Christian painter's

portrait of this fish; for he succeeds no better than the antediluvian

Hindoo. It is Guido's picture of Perseus rescuing Andromeda from the

sea-monster or whale. Where did Guido get the model of such a strange

creature as that? Nor does Hogarth, in painting the same scene in his

own "Perseus Descending," make out one whit better. The huge corpulence

of that Hogarthian monster undulates on the surface, scarcely drawing

one inch of water. It has a sort of howdah on its back, and its

distended tusked mouth into which the billows are rolling, might be

taken for the Traitors' Gate leading from the Thames by water into the

Tower. Then, there are the Prodromus whales of old Scotch Sibbald, and

Jonah's whale, as depicted in the prints of old Bibles and the cuts of

old primers. What shall be said of these? As for the book-binder's whale

winding like a vine-stalk round the stock of a descending anchor--as

stamped and gilded on the backs and title-pages of many books both

old and new--that is a very picturesque but purely fabulous creature,

imitated, I take it, from the like figures on antique vases.

Though universally denominated a dolphin, I nevertheless call this

book-binder's fish an attempt at a whale; because it was so intended

when the device was first introduced. It was introduced by an old

Italian publisher somewhere about the 15th century, during the Revival

of Learning; and in those days, and even down to a comparatively

late period, dolphins were popularly supposed to be a species of the

Leviathan.

In the vignettes and other embellishments of some ancient books you will

at times meet with very curious touches at the whale, where all manner

of spouts, jets d'eau, hot springs and cold, Saratoga and Baden-Baden,

come bubbling up from his unexhausted brain. In the title-page of the

original edition of the "Advancement of Learning" you will find some

curious whales.

But quitting all these unprofessional attempts, let us glance at those

pictures of leviathan purporting to be sober, scientific delineations,

by those who know. In old Harris's collection of voyages there are some

plates of whales extracted from a Dutch book of voyages, A.D. 1671,

entitled "A Whaling Voyage to Spitzbergen in the ship Jonas in the

Whale, Peter Peterson of Friesland, master." In one of those plates the

whales, like great rafts of logs, are represented lying among ice-isles,

with white bears running over their living backs. In another plate, the

prodigious blunder is made of representing the whale with perpendicular

flukes.

Then again, there is an imposing quarto, written by one Captain Colnett,

a Post Captain in the English navy, entitled "A Voyage round Cape Horn

into the South Seas, for the purpose of extending the Spermaceti Whale

Fisheries." In this book is an outline purporting to be a "Picture of

a Physeter or Spermaceti whale, drawn by scale from one killed on the

coast of Mexico, August, 1793, and hoisted on deck." I doubt not the

captain had this veracious picture taken for the benefit of his marines.

To mention but one thing about it, let me say that it has an eye which

applied, according to the accompanying scale, to a full grown sperm

whale, would make the eye of that whale a bow-window some five feet

long. Ah, my gallant captain, why did ye not give us Jonah looking out

of that eye!

Nor are the most conscientious compilations of Natural History for

the benefit of the young and tender, free from the same heinousness of

mistake. Look at that popular work "Goldsmith's Animated Nature." In the

abridged London edition of 1807, there are plates of an alleged "whale"

and a "narwhale." I do not wish to seem inelegant, but this unsightly

whale looks much like an amputated sow; and, as for the narwhale, one

glimpse at it is enough to amaze one, that in this nineteenth century

such a hippogriff could be palmed for genuine upon any intelligent

public of schoolboys.

Then, again, in 1825, Bernard Germain, Count de Lacepede, a great

naturalist, published a scientific systemized whale book, wherein are

several pictures of the different species of the Leviathan. All these

are not only incorrect, but the picture of the Mysticetus or Greenland

whale (that is to say, the Right whale), even Scoresby, a long

experienced man as touching that species, declares not to have its

counterpart in nature.

But the placing of the cap-sheaf to all this blundering business was

reserved for the scientific Frederick Cuvier, brother to the famous

Baron. In 1836, he published a Natural History of Whales, in which he

gives what he calls a picture of the Sperm Whale. Before showing that

picture to any Nantucketer, you had best provide for your summary

retreat from Nantucket. In a word, Frederick Cuvier's Sperm Whale is not

a Sperm Whale, but a squash. Of course, he never had the benefit of

a whaling voyage (such men seldom have), but whence he derived that

picture, who can tell? Perhaps he got it as his scientific predecessor

in the same field, Desmarest, got one of his authentic abortions; that

is, from a Chinese drawing. And what sort of lively lads with the pencil

those Chinese are, many queer cups and saucers inform us.

As for the sign-painters' whales seen in the streets hanging over the

shops of oil-dealers, what shall be said of them? They are generally

Richard III. whales, with dromedary humps, and very savage; breakfasting

on three or four sailor tarts, that is whaleboats full of mariners:

their deformities floundering in seas of blood and blue paint.

But these manifold mistakes in depicting the whale are not so very

surprising after all. Consider! Most of the scientific drawings have

been taken from the stranded fish; and these are about as correct as a

drawing of a wrecked ship, with broken back, would correctly represent

the noble animal itself in all its undashed pride of hull and spars.

Though elephants have stood for their full-lengths, the living Leviathan

has never yet fairly floated himself for his portrait. The living whale,

in his full majesty and significance, is only to be seen at sea in

unfathomable waters; and afloat the vast bulk of him is out of sight,

like a launched line-of-battle ship; and out of that element it is a

thing eternally impossible for mortal man to hoist him bodily into the

air, so as to preserve all his mighty swells and undulations. And, not

to speak of the highly presumable difference of contour between a young

sucking whale and a full-grown Platonian Leviathan; yet, even in the

case of one of those young sucking whales hoisted to a ship's deck, such

is then the outlandish, eel-like, limbered, varying shape of him, that

his precise expression the devil himself could not catch.

But it may be fancied, that from the naked skeleton of the stranded

whale, accurate hints may be derived touching his true form. Not at all.

For it is one of the more curious things about this Leviathan, that

his skeleton gives very little idea of his general shape. Though Jeremy

Bentham's skeleton, which hangs for candelabra in the library of one of

his executors, correctly conveys the idea of a burly-browed utilitarian

old gentleman, with all Jeremy's other leading personal characteristics;

yet nothing of this kind could be inferred from any leviathan's

articulated bones. In fact, as the great Hunter says, the mere skeleton

of the whale bears the same relation to the fully invested and padded

animal as the insect does to the chrysalis that so roundingly envelopes

it. This peculiarity is strikingly evinced in the head, as in some

part of this book will be incidentally shown. It is also very curiously

displayed in the side fin, the bones of which almost exactly answer to

the bones of the human hand, minus only the thumb. This fin has four

regular bone-fingers, the index, middle, ring, and little finger. But

all these are permanently lodged in their fleshy covering, as the human

fingers in an artificial covering. "However recklessly the whale may

sometimes serve us," said humorous Stubb one day, "he can never be truly

said to handle us without mittens."

For all these reasons, then, any way you may look at it, you must needs

conclude that the great Leviathan is that one creature in the world

which must remain unpainted to the last. True, one portrait may hit

the mark much nearer than another, but none can hit it with any very

considerable degree of exactness. So there is no earthly way of finding

out precisely what the whale really looks like. And the only mode in

which you can derive even a tolerable idea of his living contour, is

by going a whaling yourself; but by so doing, you run no small risk of

being eternally stove and sunk by him. Wherefore, it seems to me you had

best not be too fastidious in your curiosity touching this Leviathan.

CHAPTER 56. Of the Less Erroneous Pictures of Whales, and the True

Pictures of Whaling Scenes.

In connexion with the monstrous pictures of whales, I am strongly

tempted here to enter upon those still more monstrous stories of

them which are to be found in certain books, both ancient and modern,

especially in Pliny, Purchas, Hackluyt, Harris, Cuvier, etc. But I pass

that matter by.

I know of only four published outlines of the great Sperm Whale;

Colnett's, Huggins's, Frederick Cuvier's, and Beale's. In the previous

chapter Colnett and Cuvier have been referred to. Huggins's is far

better than theirs; but, by great odds, Beale's is the best. All Beale's

drawings of this whale are good, excepting the middle figure in the

picture of three whales in various attitudes, capping his second

chapter. His frontispiece, boats attacking Sperm Whales, though no

doubt calculated to excite the civil scepticism of some parlor men, is

admirably correct and life-like in its general effect. Some of the Sperm

Whale drawings in J. Ross Browne are pretty correct in contour; but they

are wretchedly engraved. That is not his fault though.

Of the Right Whale, the best outline pictures are in Scoresby; but they

are drawn on too small a scale to convey a desirable impression. He has

but one picture of whaling scenes, and this is a sad deficiency, because

it is by such pictures only, when at all well done, that you can derive

anything like a truthful idea of the living whale as seen by his living

hunters.

But, taken for all in all, by far the finest, though in some details

not the most correct, presentations of whales and whaling scenes to

be anywhere found, are two large French engravings, well executed,

and taken from paintings by one Garnery. Respectively, they represent

attacks on the Sperm and Right Whale. In the first engraving a noble

Sperm Whale is depicted in full majesty of might, just risen beneath

the boat from the profundities of the ocean, and bearing high in the air

upon his back the terrific wreck of the stoven planks. The prow of

the boat is partially unbroken, and is drawn just balancing upon

the monster's spine; and standing in that prow, for that one single

incomputable flash of time, you behold an oarsman, half shrouded by the

incensed boiling spout of the whale, and in the act of leaping, as if

from a precipice. The action of the whole thing is wonderfully good and

true. The half-emptied line-tub floats on the whitened sea; the wooden

poles of the spilled harpoons obliquely bob in it; the heads of the

swimming crew are scattered about the whale in contrasting expressions

of affright; while in the black stormy distance the ship is bearing down

upon the scene. Serious fault might be found with the anatomical details

of this whale, but let that pass; since, for the life of me, I could not

draw so good a one.

In the second engraving, the boat is in the act of drawing alongside

the barnacled flank of a large running Right Whale, that rolls his black

weedy bulk in the sea like some mossy rock-slide from the Patagonian

cliffs. His jets are erect, full, and black like soot; so that from so

abounding a smoke in the chimney, you would think there must be a brave

supper cooking in the great bowels below. Sea fowls are pecking at the

small crabs, shell-fish, and other sea candies and maccaroni, which the

Right Whale sometimes carries on his pestilent back. And all the while

the thick-lipped leviathan is rushing through the deep, leaving tons of

tumultuous white curds in his wake, and causing the slight boat to rock

in the swells like a skiff caught nigh the paddle-wheels of an ocean

steamer. Thus, the foreground is all raging commotion; but behind, in

admirable artistic contrast, is the glassy level of a sea becalmed, the

drooping unstarched sails of the powerless ship, and the inert mass of

a dead whale, a conquered fortress, with the flag of capture lazily

hanging from the whale-pole inserted into his spout-hole.

Who Garnery the painter is, or was, I know not. But my life for it he

was either practically conversant with his subject, or else marvellously

tutored by some experienced whaleman. The French are the lads for

painting action. Go and gaze upon all the paintings of Europe, and

where will you find such a gallery of living and breathing commotion

on canvas, as in that triumphal hall at Versailles; where the beholder

fights his way, pell-mell, through the consecutive great battles of

France; where every sword seems a flash of the Northern Lights, and the

successive armed kings and Emperors dash by, like a charge of crowned

centaurs? Not wholly unworthy of a place in that gallery, are these sea

battle-pieces of Garnery.

The natural aptitude of the French for seizing the picturesqueness of

things seems to be peculiarly evinced in what paintings and engravings

they have of their whaling scenes. With not one tenth of England's

experience in the fishery, and not the thousandth part of that of the

Americans, they have nevertheless furnished both nations with the only

finished sketches at all capable of conveying the real spirit of

the whale hunt. For the most part, the English and American whale

draughtsmen seem entirely content with presenting the mechanical outline

of things, such as the vacant profile of the whale; which, so far as

picturesqueness of effect is concerned, is about tantamount to sketching

the profile of a pyramid. Even Scoresby, the justly renowned Right

whaleman, after giving us a stiff full length of the Greenland whale,

and three or four delicate miniatures of narwhales and porpoises, treats

us to a series of classical engravings of boat hooks, chopping knives,

and grapnels; and with the microscopic diligence of a Leuwenhoeck

submits to the inspection of a shivering world ninety-six fac-similes of

magnified Arctic snow crystals. I mean no disparagement to the excellent

voyager (I honour him for a veteran), but in so important a matter it

was certainly an oversight not to have procured for every crystal a

sworn affidavit taken before a Greenland Justice of the Peace.

In addition to those fine engravings from Garnery, there are two other

French engravings worthy of note, by some one who subscribes himself

"H. Durand." One of them, though not precisely adapted to our present

purpose, nevertheless deserves mention on other accounts. It is a quiet

noon-scene among the isles of the Pacific; a French whaler anchored,

inshore, in a calm, and lazily taking water on board; the loosened sails

of the ship, and the long leaves of the palms in the background, both

drooping together in the breezeless air. The effect is very fine, when

considered with reference to its presenting the hardy fishermen under

one of their few aspects of oriental repose. The other engraving is

quite a different affair: the ship hove-to upon the open sea, and in the

very heart of the Leviathanic life, with a Right Whale alongside; the

vessel (in the act of cutting-in) hove over to the monster as if to a

quay; and a boat, hurriedly pushing off from this scene of activity, is

about giving chase to whales in the distance. The harpoons and lances

lie levelled for use; three oarsmen are just setting the mast in its

hole; while from a sudden roll of the sea, the little craft stands

half-erect out of the water, like a rearing horse. From the ship, the

smoke of the torments of the boiling whale is going up like the smoke

over a village of smithies; and to windward, a black cloud, rising up

with earnest of squalls and rains, seems to quicken the activity of the

excited seamen.

CHAPTER 57. Of Whales in Paint; in Teeth; in Wood; in Sheet-Iron; in

Stone; in Mountains; in Stars.

On Tower-hill, as you go down to the London docks, you may have seen a

crippled beggar (or KEDGER, as the sailors say) holding a painted board

before him, representing the tragic scene in which he lost his leg.

There are three whales and three boats; and one of the boats (presumed

to contain the missing leg in all its original integrity) is being

crunched by the jaws of the foremost whale. Any time these ten years,

they tell me, has that man held up that picture, and exhibited that

stump to an incredulous world. But the time of his justification has

now come. His three whales are as good whales as were ever published in

Wapping, at any rate; and his stump as unquestionable a stump as any you

will find in the western clearings. But, though for ever mounted on

that stump, never a stump-speech does the poor whaleman make; but, with

downcast eyes, stands ruefully contemplating his own amputation.

Throughout the Pacific, and also in Nantucket, and New Bedford, and

Sag Harbor, you will come across lively sketches of whales and

whaling-scenes, graven by the fishermen themselves on Sperm Whale-teeth,

or ladies' busks wrought out of the Right Whale-bone, and other

like skrimshander articles, as the whalemen call the numerous little

ingenious contrivances they elaborately carve out of the rough material,

in their hours of ocean leisure. Some of them have little boxes

of dentistical-looking implements, specially intended for the

skrimshandering business. But, in general, they toil with their

jack-knives alone; and, with that almost omnipotent tool of the sailor,

they will turn you out anything you please, in the way of a mariner's

fancy.

Long exile from Christendom and civilization inevitably restores a man

to that condition in which God placed him, i.e. what is called savagery.

Your true whale-hunter is as much a savage as an Iroquois. I myself am a

savage, owning no allegiance but to the King of the Cannibals; and ready

at any moment to rebel against him.

Now, one of the peculiar characteristics of the savage in his domestic

hours, is his wonderful patience of industry. An ancient Hawaiian

war-club or spear-paddle, in its full multiplicity and elaboration of

carving, is as great a trophy of human perseverance as a Latin lexicon.

For, with but a bit of broken sea-shell or a shark's tooth, that

miraculous intricacy of wooden net-work has been achieved; and it has

cost steady years of steady application.

As with the Hawaiian savage, so with the white sailor-savage. With the

same marvellous patience, and with the same single shark's tooth, of

his one poor jack-knife, he will carve you a bit of bone sculpture, not

quite as workmanlike, but as close packed in its maziness of design,

as the Greek savage, Achilles's shield; and full of barbaric spirit

and suggestiveness, as the prints of that fine old Dutch savage, Albert

Durer.

Wooden whales, or whales cut in profile out of the small dark slabs of

the noble South Sea war-wood, are frequently met with in the forecastles

of American whalers. Some of them are done with much accuracy.

At some old gable-roofed country houses you will see brass whales hung

by the tail for knockers to the road-side door. When the porter is

sleepy, the anvil-headed whale would be best. But these knocking

whales are seldom remarkable as faithful essays. On the spires of some

old-fashioned churches you will see sheet-iron whales placed there for

weather-cocks; but they are so elevated, and besides that are to all

intents and purposes so labelled with "HANDS OFF!" you cannot examine

them closely enough to decide upon their merit.

In bony, ribby regions of the earth, where at the base of high broken

cliffs masses of rock lie strewn in fantastic groupings upon the

plain, you will often discover images as of the petrified forms of the

Leviathan partly merged in grass, which of a windy day breaks against

them in a surf of green surges.

Then, again, in mountainous countries where the traveller is continually

girdled by amphitheatrical heights; here and there from some lucky

point of view you will catch passing glimpses of the profiles of

whales defined along the undulating ridges. But you must be a thorough

whaleman, to see these sights; and not only that, but if you wish

to return to such a sight again, you must be sure and take the exact

intersecting latitude and longitude of your first stand-point, else

so chance-like are such observations of the hills, that your precise,

previous stand-point would require a laborious re-discovery; like the

Soloma Islands, which still remain incognita, though once high-ruffed

Mendanna trod them and old Figuera chronicled them.

Nor when expandingly lifted by your subject, can you fail to trace out

great whales in the starry heavens, and boats in pursuit of them; as

when long filled with thoughts of war the Eastern nations saw armies

locked in battle among the clouds. Thus at the North have I chased

Leviathan round and round the Pole with the revolutions of the bright

points that first defined him to me. And beneath the effulgent Antarctic

skies I have boarded the Argo-Navis, and joined the chase against the

starry Cetus far beyond the utmost stretch of Hydrus and the Flying

Fish.

With a frigate's anchors for my bridle-bitts and fasces of harpoons for

spurs, would I could mount that whale and leap the topmost skies, to

see whether the fabled heavens with all their countless tents really lie

encamped beyond my mortal sight!

CHAPTER 58. Brit.

Steering north-eastward from the Crozetts, we fell in with vast meadows

of brit, the minute, yellow substance, upon which the Right Whale

largely feeds. For leagues and leagues it undulated round us, so that we

seemed to be sailing through boundless fields of ripe and golden wheat.

On the second day, numbers of Right Whales were seen, who, secure from

the attack of a Sperm Whaler like the Pequod, with open jaws sluggishly

swam through the brit, which, adhering to the fringing fibres of that

wondrous Venetian blind in their mouths, was in that manner separated

from the water that escaped at the lip.

As morning mowers, who side by side slowly and seethingly advance

their scythes through the long wet grass of marshy meads; even so these

monsters swam, making a strange, grassy, cutting sound; and leaving

behind them endless swaths of blue upon the yellow sea.\*

\*That part of the sea known among whalemen as the "Brazil Banks" does

not bear that name as the Banks of Newfoundland do, because of there

being shallows and soundings there, but because of this remarkable

meadow-like appearance, caused by the vast drifts of brit continually

floating in those latitudes, where the Right Whale is often chased.

But it was only the sound they made as they parted the brit which at all

reminded one of mowers. Seen from the mast-heads, especially when they

paused and were stationary for a while, their vast black forms looked

more like lifeless masses of rock than anything else. And as in the

great hunting countries of India, the stranger at a distance will

sometimes pass on the plains recumbent elephants without knowing them

to be such, taking them for bare, blackened elevations of the soil; even

so, often, with him, who for the first time beholds this species of the

leviathans of the sea. And even when recognised at last, their immense

magnitude renders it very hard really to believe that such bulky masses

of overgrowth can possibly be instinct, in all parts, with the same sort

of life that lives in a dog or a horse.

Indeed, in other respects, you can hardly regard any creatures of the

deep with the same feelings that you do those of the shore. For though

some old naturalists have maintained that all creatures of the land are

of their kind in the sea; and though taking a broad general view of

the thing, this may very well be; yet coming to specialties, where, for

example, does the ocean furnish any fish that in disposition answers to

the sagacious kindness of the dog? The accursed shark alone can in any

generic respect be said to bear comparative analogy to him.

But though, to landsmen in general, the native inhabitants of the

seas have ever been regarded with emotions unspeakably unsocial and

repelling; though we know the sea to be an everlasting terra incognita,

so that Columbus sailed over numberless unknown worlds to discover his

one superficial western one; though, by vast odds, the most terrific

of all mortal disasters have immemorially and indiscriminately befallen

tens and hundreds of thousands of those who have gone upon the waters;

though but a moment's consideration will teach, that however baby man

may brag of his science and skill, and however much, in a flattering

future, that science and skill may augment; yet for ever and for ever,

to the crack of doom, the sea will insult and murder him, and pulverize

the stateliest, stiffest frigate he can make; nevertheless, by the

continual repetition of these very impressions, man has lost that sense

of the full awfulness of the sea which aboriginally belongs to it.

The first boat we read of, floated on an ocean, that with Portuguese

vengeance had whelmed a whole world without leaving so much as a widow.

That same ocean rolls now; that same ocean destroyed the wrecked ships

of last year. Yea, foolish mortals, Noah's flood is not yet subsided;

two thirds of the fair world it yet covers.

Wherein differ the sea and the land, that a miracle upon one is not a

miracle upon the other? Preternatural terrors rested upon the Hebrews,

when under the feet of Korah and his company the live ground opened

and swallowed them up for ever; yet not a modern sun ever sets, but in

precisely the same manner the live sea swallows up ships and crews.

But not only is the sea such a foe to man who is an alien to it, but it

is also a fiend to its own off-spring; worse than the Persian host who

murdered his own guests; sparing not the creatures which itself hath

spawned. Like a savage tigress that tossing in the jungle overlays her

own cubs, so the sea dashes even the mightiest whales against the rocks,

and leaves them there side by side with the split wrecks of ships. No

mercy, no power but its own controls it. Panting and snorting like a mad

battle steed that has lost its rider, the masterless ocean overruns the

globe.

Consider the subtleness of the sea; how its most dreaded creatures glide

under water, unapparent for the most part, and treacherously hidden

beneath the loveliest tints of azure. Consider also the devilish

brilliance and beauty of many of its most remorseless tribes, as the

dainty embellished shape of many species of sharks. Consider, once more,

the universal cannibalism of the sea; all whose creatures prey upon each

other, carrying on eternal war since the world began.

Consider all this; and then turn to this green, gentle, and most docile

earth; consider them both, the sea and the land; and do you not find a

strange analogy to something in yourself? For as this appalling ocean

surrounds the verdant land, so in the soul of man there lies one insular

Tahiti, full of peace and joy, but encompassed by all the horrors of the

half known life. God keep thee! Push not off from that isle, thou canst

never return!

CHAPTER 59. Squid.

Slowly wading through the meadows of brit, the Pequod still held on her

way north-eastward towards the island of Java; a gentle air impelling

her keel, so that in the surrounding serenity her three tall tapering

masts mildly waved to that languid breeze, as three mild palms on a

plain. And still, at wide intervals in the silvery night, the lonely,

alluring jet would be seen.

But one transparent blue morning, when a stillness almost preternatural

spread over the sea, however unattended with any stagnant calm; when

the long burnished sun-glade on the waters seemed a golden finger laid

across them, enjoining some secrecy; when the slippered waves whispered

together as they softly ran on; in this profound hush of the visible

sphere a strange spectre was seen by Daggoo from the main-mast-head.

In the distance, a great white mass lazily rose, and rising higher and

higher, and disentangling itself from the azure, at last gleamed before

our prow like a snow-slide, new slid from the hills. Thus glistening

for a moment, as slowly it subsided, and sank. Then once more arose,

and silently gleamed. It seemed not a whale; and yet is this Moby Dick?

thought Daggoo. Again the phantom went down, but on re-appearing once

more, with a stiletto-like cry that startled every man from his nod, the

negro yelled out--"There! there again! there she breaches! right ahead!

The White Whale, the White Whale!"

Upon this, the seamen rushed to the yard-arms, as in swarming-time the

bees rush to the boughs. Bare-headed in the sultry sun, Ahab stood on

the bowsprit, and with one hand pushed far behind in readiness to wave

his orders to the helmsman, cast his eager glance in the direction

indicated aloft by the outstretched motionless arm of Daggoo.

Whether the flitting attendance of the one still and solitary jet had

gradually worked upon Ahab, so that he was now prepared to connect the

ideas of mildness and repose with the first sight of the particular

whale he pursued; however this was, or whether his eagerness betrayed

him; whichever way it might have been, no sooner did he distinctly

perceive the white mass, than with a quick intensity he instantly gave

orders for lowering.

The four boats were soon on the water; Ahab's in advance, and all

swiftly pulling towards their prey. Soon it went down, and while, with

oars suspended, we were awaiting its reappearance, lo! in the same

spot where it sank, once more it slowly rose. Almost forgetting for

the moment all thoughts of Moby Dick, we now gazed at the most wondrous

phenomenon which the secret seas have hitherto revealed to mankind.

A vast pulpy mass, furlongs in length and breadth, of a glancing

cream-colour, lay floating on the water, innumerable long arms radiating

from its centre, and curling and twisting like a nest of anacondas, as

if blindly to clutch at any hapless object within reach. No perceptible

face or front did it have; no conceivable token of either sensation or

instinct; but undulated there on the billows, an unearthly, formless,

chance-like apparition of life.

As with a low sucking sound it slowly disappeared again, Starbuck still

gazing at the agitated waters where it had sunk, with a wild voice

exclaimed--"Almost rather had I seen Moby Dick and fought him, than to

have seen thee, thou white ghost!"

"What was it, Sir?" said Flask.

"The great live squid, which, they say, few whale-ships ever beheld, and

returned to their ports to tell of it."

But Ahab said nothing; turning his boat, he sailed back to the vessel;

the rest as silently following.

Whatever superstitions the sperm whalemen in general have connected with

the sight of this object, certain it is, that a glimpse of it being

so very unusual, that circumstance has gone far to invest it with

portentousness. So rarely is it beheld, that though one and all of them

declare it to be the largest animated thing in the ocean, yet very few

of them have any but the most vague ideas concerning its true nature and

form; notwithstanding, they believe it to furnish to the sperm whale

his only food. For though other species of whales find their food above

water, and may be seen by man in the act of feeding, the spermaceti

whale obtains his whole food in unknown zones below the surface; and

only by inference is it that any one can tell of what, precisely, that

food consists. At times, when closely pursued, he will disgorge what

are supposed to be the detached arms of the squid; some of them thus

exhibited exceeding twenty and thirty feet in length. They fancy that

the monster to which these arms belonged ordinarily clings by them to

the bed of the ocean; and that the sperm whale, unlike other species, is

supplied with teeth in order to attack and tear it.

There seems some ground to imagine that the great Kraken of Bishop

Pontoppodan may ultimately resolve itself into Squid. The manner in

which the Bishop describes it, as alternately rising and sinking, with

some other particulars he narrates, in all this the two correspond.

But much abatement is necessary with respect to the incredible bulk he

assigns it.

By some naturalists who have vaguely heard rumors of the mysterious

creature, here spoken of, it is included among the class of cuttle-fish,

to which, indeed, in certain external respects it would seem to belong,

but only as the Anak of the tribe.

CHAPTER 60. The Line.

With reference to the whaling scene shortly to be described, as well as

for the better understanding of all similar scenes elsewhere presented,

I have here to speak of the magical, sometimes horrible whale-line.

The line originally used in the fishery was of the best hemp, slightly

vapoured with tar, not impregnated with it, as in the case of ordinary

ropes; for while tar, as ordinarily used, makes the hemp more pliable to

the rope-maker, and also renders the rope itself more convenient to the

sailor for common ship use; yet, not only would the ordinary quantity

too much stiffen the whale-line for the close coiling to which it must

be subjected; but as most seamen are beginning to learn, tar in general

by no means adds to the rope's durability or strength, however much it

may give it compactness and gloss.

Of late years the Manilla rope has in the American fishery almost

entirely superseded hemp as a material for whale-lines; for, though not

so durable as hemp, it is stronger, and far more soft and elastic; and

I will add (since there is an aesthetics in all things), is much more

handsome and becoming to the boat, than hemp. Hemp is a dusky, dark

fellow, a sort of Indian; but Manilla is as a golden-haired Circassian

to behold.

The whale-line is only two-thirds of an inch in thickness. At first

sight, you would not think it so strong as it really is. By experiment

its one and fifty yarns will each suspend a weight of one hundred and

twenty pounds; so that the whole rope will bear a strain nearly equal

to three tons. In length, the common sperm whale-line measures something

over two hundred fathoms. Towards the stern of the boat it is spirally

coiled away in the tub, not like the worm-pipe of a still though, but so

as to form one round, cheese-shaped mass of densely bedded "sheaves," or

layers of concentric spiralizations, without any hollow but the "heart,"

or minute vertical tube formed at the axis of the cheese. As the least

tangle or kink in the coiling would, in running out, infallibly take

somebody's arm, leg, or entire body off, the utmost precaution is used

in stowing the line in its tub. Some harpooneers will consume almost an

entire morning in this business, carrying the line high aloft and then

reeving it downwards through a block towards the tub, so as in the act

of coiling to free it from all possible wrinkles and twists.

In the English boats two tubs are used instead of one; the same line

being continuously coiled in both tubs. There is some advantage in this;

because these twin-tubs being so small they fit more readily into the

boat, and do not strain it so much; whereas, the American tub, nearly

three feet in diameter and of proportionate depth, makes a rather bulky

freight for a craft whose planks are but one half-inch in thickness; for

the bottom of the whale-boat is like critical ice, which will bear up

a considerable distributed weight, but not very much of a concentrated

one. When the painted canvas cover is clapped on the American line-tub,

the boat looks as if it were pulling off with a prodigious great

wedding-cake to present to the whales.

Both ends of the line are exposed; the lower end terminating in an

eye-splice or loop coming up from the bottom against the side of the

tub, and hanging over its edge completely disengaged from everything.

This arrangement of the lower end is necessary on two accounts. First:

In order to facilitate the fastening to it of an additional line from a

neighboring boat, in case the stricken whale should sound so deep as

to threaten to carry off the entire line originally attached to the

harpoon. In these instances, the whale of course is shifted like a mug

of ale, as it were, from the one boat to the other; though the

first boat always hovers at hand to assist its consort. Second: This

arrangement is indispensable for common safety's sake; for were the

lower end of the line in any way attached to the boat, and were the

whale then to run the line out to the end almost in a single, smoking

minute as he sometimes does, he would not stop there, for the doomed

boat would infallibly be dragged down after him into the profundity of

the sea; and in that case no town-crier would ever find her again.

Before lowering the boat for the chase, the upper end of the line is

taken aft from the tub, and passing round the loggerhead there, is again

carried forward the entire length of the boat, resting crosswise upon

the loom or handle of every man's oar, so that it jogs against his wrist

in rowing; and also passing between the men, as they alternately sit at

the opposite gunwales, to the leaded chocks or grooves in the extreme

pointed prow of the boat, where a wooden pin or skewer the size of a

common quill, prevents it from slipping out. From the chocks it hangs

in a slight festoon over the bows, and is then passed inside the boat

again; and some ten or twenty fathoms (called box-line) being coiled

upon the box in the bows, it continues its way to the gunwale still a

little further aft, and is then attached to the short-warp--the rope

which is immediately connected with the harpoon; but previous to that

connexion, the short-warp goes through sundry mystifications too tedious

to detail.

Thus the whale-line folds the whole boat in its complicated coils,

twisting and writhing around it in almost every direction. All the

oarsmen are involved in its perilous contortions; so that to the timid

eye of the landsman, they seem as Indian jugglers, with the deadliest

snakes sportively festooning their limbs. Nor can any son of mortal

woman, for the first time, seat himself amid those hempen intricacies,

and while straining his utmost at the oar, bethink him that at any

unknown instant the harpoon may be darted, and all these horrible

contortions be put in play like ringed lightnings; he cannot be thus

circumstanced without a shudder that makes the very marrow in his bones

to quiver in him like a shaken jelly. Yet habit--strange thing! what

cannot habit accomplish?--Gayer sallies, more merry mirth, better jokes,

and brighter repartees, you never heard over your mahogany, than you

will hear over the half-inch white cedar of the whale-boat, when thus

hung in hangman's nooses; and, like the six burghers of Calais before

King Edward, the six men composing the crew pull into the jaws of death,

with a halter around every neck, as you may say.

Perhaps a very little thought will now enable you to account for

those repeated whaling disasters--some few of which are casually

chronicled--of this man or that man being taken out of the boat by the

line, and lost. For, when the line is darting out, to be seated then in

the boat, is like being seated in the midst of the manifold whizzings

of a steam-engine in full play, when every flying beam, and shaft, and

wheel, is grazing you. It is worse; for you cannot sit motionless in the

heart of these perils, because the boat is rocking like a cradle, and

you are pitched one way and the other, without the slightest warning;

and only by a certain self-adjusting buoyancy and simultaneousness of

volition and action, can you escape being made a Mazeppa of, and run

away with where the all-seeing sun himself could never pierce you out.

Again: as the profound calm which only apparently precedes and

prophesies of the storm, is perhaps more awful than the storm itself;

for, indeed, the calm is but the wrapper and envelope of the storm; and

contains it in itself, as the seemingly harmless rifle holds the fatal

powder, and the ball, and the explosion; so the graceful repose of the

line, as it silently serpentines about the oarsmen before being brought

into actual play--this is a thing which carries more of true terror than

any other aspect of this dangerous affair. But why say more? All men

live enveloped in whale-lines. All are born with halters round their

necks; but it is only when caught in the swift, sudden turn of death,

that mortals realize the silent, subtle, ever-present perils of life.

And if you be a philosopher, though seated in the whale-boat, you would

not at heart feel one whit more of terror, than though seated before

your evening fire with a poker, and not a harpoon, by your side.

CHAPTER 61. Stubb Kills a Whale.

If to Starbuck the apparition of the Squid was a thing of portents, to

Queequeg it was quite a different object.

"When you see him 'quid," said the savage, honing his harpoon in the bow

of his hoisted boat, "then you quick see him 'parm whale."

The next day was exceedingly still and sultry, and with nothing special

to engage them, the Pequod's crew could hardly resist the spell of sleep

induced by such a vacant sea. For this part of the Indian Ocean through

which we then were voyaging is not what whalemen call a lively ground;

that is, it affords fewer glimpses of porpoises, dolphins, flying-fish,

and other vivacious denizens of more stirring waters, than those off the

Rio de la Plata, or the in-shore ground off Peru.

It was my turn to stand at the foremast-head; and with my shoulders

leaning against the slackened royal shrouds, to and fro I idly swayed in

what seemed an enchanted air. No resolution could withstand it; in that

dreamy mood losing all consciousness, at last my soul went out of my

body; though my body still continued to sway as a pendulum will, long

after the power which first moved it is withdrawn.

Ere forgetfulness altogether came over me, I had noticed that the seamen

at the main and mizzen-mast-heads were already drowsy. So that at last

all three of us lifelessly swung from the spars, and for every swing

that we made there was a nod from below from the slumbering helmsman.

The waves, too, nodded their indolent crests; and across the wide trance

of the sea, east nodded to west, and the sun over all.

Suddenly bubbles seemed bursting beneath my closed eyes; like vices my

hands grasped the shrouds; some invisible, gracious agency preserved me;

with a shock I came back to life. And lo! close under our lee, not forty

fathoms off, a gigantic Sperm Whale lay rolling in the water like the

capsized hull of a frigate, his broad, glossy back, of an Ethiopian hue,

glistening in the sun's rays like a mirror. But lazily undulating in

the trough of the sea, and ever and anon tranquilly spouting his vapoury

jet, the whale looked like a portly burgher smoking his pipe of a warm

afternoon. But that pipe, poor whale, was thy last. As if struck by some

enchanter's wand, the sleepy ship and every sleeper in it all at once

started into wakefulness; and more than a score of voices from all parts

of the vessel, simultaneously with the three notes from aloft, shouted

forth the accustomed cry, as the great fish slowly and regularly spouted

the sparkling brine into the air.

"Clear away the boats! Luff!" cried Ahab. And obeying his own order, he

dashed the helm down before the helmsman could handle the spokes.

The sudden exclamations of the crew must have alarmed the whale; and ere

the boats were down, majestically turning, he swam away to the leeward,

but with such a steady tranquillity, and making so few ripples as he

swam, that thinking after all he might not as yet be alarmed, Ahab gave

orders that not an oar should be used, and no man must speak but in

whispers. So seated like Ontario Indians on the gunwales of the boats,

we swiftly but silently paddled along; the calm not admitting of the

noiseless sails being set. Presently, as we thus glided in chase, the

monster perpendicularly flitted his tail forty feet into the air, and

then sank out of sight like a tower swallowed up.

"There go flukes!" was the cry, an announcement immediately followed by

Stubb's producing his match and igniting his pipe, for now a respite was

granted. After the full interval of his sounding had elapsed, the whale

rose again, and being now in advance of the smoker's boat, and much

nearer to it than to any of the others, Stubb counted upon the honour

of the capture. It was obvious, now, that the whale had at length become

aware of his pursuers. All silence of cautiousness was therefore no

longer of use. Paddles were dropped, and oars came loudly into play. And

still puffing at his pipe, Stubb cheered on his crew to the assault.

Yes, a mighty change had come over the fish. All alive to his jeopardy,

he was going "head out"; that part obliquely projecting from the mad

yeast which he brewed.\*

\*It will be seen in some other place of what a very light substance

the entire interior of the sperm whale's enormous head consists. Though

apparently the most massive, it is by far the most buoyant part about

him. So that with ease he elevates it in the air, and invariably does

so when going at his utmost speed. Besides, such is the breadth of the

upper part of the front of his head, and such the tapering cut-water

formation of the lower part, that by obliquely elevating his head, he

thereby may be said to transform himself from a bluff-bowed sluggish

galliot into a sharppointed New York pilot-boat.

"Start her, start her, my men! Don't hurry yourselves; take plenty of

time--but start her; start her like thunder-claps, that's all," cried

Stubb, spluttering out the smoke as he spoke. "Start her, now; give 'em

the long and strong stroke, Tashtego. Start her, Tash, my boy--start

her, all; but keep cool, keep cool--cucumbers is the word--easy,

easy--only start her like grim death and grinning devils, and raise the

buried dead perpendicular out of their graves, boys--that's all. Start

her!"

"Woo-hoo! Wa-hee!" screamed the Gay-Header in reply, raising some

old war-whoop to the skies; as every oarsman in the strained boat

involuntarily bounced forward with the one tremendous leading stroke

which the eager Indian gave.

But his wild screams were answered by others quite as wild. "Kee-hee!

Kee-hee!" yelled Daggoo, straining forwards and backwards on his seat,

like a pacing tiger in his cage.

"Ka-la! Koo-loo!" howled Queequeg, as if smacking his lips over a

mouthful of Grenadier's steak. And thus with oars and yells the keels

cut the sea. Meanwhile, Stubb retaining his place in the van, still

encouraged his men to the onset, all the while puffing the smoke from

his mouth. Like desperadoes they tugged and they strained, till the

welcome cry was heard--"Stand up, Tashtego!--give it to him!" The

harpoon was hurled. "Stern all!" The oarsmen backed water; the same

moment something went hot and hissing along every one of their wrists.

It was the magical line. An instant before, Stubb had swiftly caught two

additional turns with it round the loggerhead, whence, by reason of its

increased rapid circlings, a hempen blue smoke now jetted up and mingled

with the steady fumes from his pipe. As the line passed round and

round the loggerhead; so also, just before reaching that point, it

blisteringly passed through and through both of Stubb's hands, from

which the hand-cloths, or squares of quilted canvas sometimes worn at

these times, had accidentally dropped. It was like holding an enemy's

sharp two-edged sword by the blade, and that enemy all the time striving

to wrest it out of your clutch.

"Wet the line! wet the line!" cried Stubb to the tub oarsman (him seated

by the tub) who, snatching off his hat, dashed sea-water into it.\* More

turns were taken, so that the line began holding its place. The boat now

flew through the boiling water like a shark all fins. Stubb and Tashtego

here changed places--stem for stern--a staggering business truly in that

rocking commotion.

\*Partly to show the indispensableness of this act, it may here be

stated, that, in the old Dutch fishery, a mop was used to dash the

running line with water; in many other ships, a wooden piggin, or

bailer, is set apart for that purpose. Your hat, however, is the most

convenient.

From the vibrating line extending the entire length of the upper part of

the boat, and from its now being more tight than a harpstring, you would

have thought the craft had two keels--one cleaving the water, the other

the air--as the boat churned on through both opposing elements at once.

A continual cascade played at the bows; a ceaseless whirling eddy in

her wake; and, at the slightest motion from within, even but of a little

finger, the vibrating, cracking craft canted over her spasmodic gunwale

into the sea. Thus they rushed; each man with might and main clinging

to his seat, to prevent being tossed to the foam; and the tall form of

Tashtego at the steering oar crouching almost double, in order to bring

down his centre of gravity. Whole Atlantics and Pacifics seemed passed

as they shot on their way, till at length the whale somewhat slackened

his flight.

"Haul in--haul in!" cried Stubb to the bowsman! and, facing round

towards the whale, all hands began pulling the boat up to him, while yet

the boat was being towed on. Soon ranging up by his flank, Stubb, firmly

planting his knee in the clumsy cleat, darted dart after dart into the

flying fish; at the word of command, the boat alternately sterning

out of the way of the whale's horrible wallow, and then ranging up for

another fling.

The red tide now poured from all sides of the monster like brooks down a

hill. His tormented body rolled not in brine but in blood, which bubbled

and seethed for furlongs behind in their wake. The slanting sun playing

upon this crimson pond in the sea, sent back its reflection into every

face, so that they all glowed to each other like red men. And all

the while, jet after jet of white smoke was agonizingly shot from the

spiracle of the whale, and vehement puff after puff from the mouth of

the excited headsman; as at every dart, hauling in upon his crooked

lance (by the line attached to it), Stubb straightened it again and

again, by a few rapid blows against the gunwale, then again and again

sent it into the whale.

"Pull up--pull up!" he now cried to the bowsman, as the waning whale

relaxed in his wrath. "Pull up!--close to!" and the boat ranged along

the fish's flank. When reaching far over the bow, Stubb slowly churned

his long sharp lance into the fish, and kept it there, carefully

churning and churning, as if cautiously seeking to feel after some gold

watch that the whale might have swallowed, and which he was fearful of

breaking ere he could hook it out. But that gold watch he sought was the

innermost life of the fish. And now it is struck; for, starting from

his trance into that unspeakable thing called his "flurry," the monster

horribly wallowed in his blood, overwrapped himself in impenetrable,

mad, boiling spray, so that the imperilled craft, instantly dropping

astern, had much ado blindly to struggle out from that phrensied

twilight into the clear air of the day.

And now abating in his flurry, the whale once more rolled out into view;

surging from side to side; spasmodically dilating and contracting his

spout-hole, with sharp, cracking, agonized respirations. At last, gush

after gush of clotted red gore, as if it had been the purple lees of red

wine, shot into the frighted air; and falling back again, ran dripping

down his motionless flanks into the sea. His heart had burst!

"He's dead, Mr. Stubb," said Daggoo.

"Yes; both pipes smoked out!" and withdrawing his own from his mouth,

Stubb scattered the dead ashes over the water; and, for a moment, stood

thoughtfully eyeing the vast corpse he had made.

CHAPTER 62. The Dart.

A word concerning an incident in the last chapter.

According to the invariable usage of the fishery, the whale-boat pushes

off from the ship, with the headsman or whale-killer as temporary

steersman, and the harpooneer or whale-fastener pulling the foremost

oar, the one known as the harpooneer-oar. Now it needs a strong, nervous

arm to strike the first iron into the fish; for often, in what is called

a long dart, the heavy implement has to be flung to the distance of

twenty or thirty feet. But however prolonged and exhausting the chase,

the harpooneer is expected to pull his oar meanwhile to the uttermost;

indeed, he is expected to set an example of superhuman activity to the

rest, not only by incredible rowing, but by repeated loud and intrepid

exclamations; and what it is to keep shouting at the top of one's

compass, while all the other muscles are strained and half started--what

that is none know but those who have tried it. For one, I cannot bawl

very heartily and work very recklessly at one and the same time. In this

straining, bawling state, then, with his back to the fish, all at once

the exhausted harpooneer hears the exciting cry--"Stand up, and give it

to him!" He now has to drop and secure his oar, turn round on his

centre half way, seize his harpoon from the crotch, and with what little

strength may remain, he essays to pitch it somehow into the whale. No

wonder, taking the whole fleet of whalemen in a body, that out of fifty

fair chances for a dart, not five are successful; no wonder that so many

hapless harpooneers are madly cursed and disrated; no wonder that some

of them actually burst their blood-vessels in the boat; no wonder that

some sperm whalemen are absent four years with four barrels; no wonder

that to many ship owners, whaling is but a losing concern; for it is the

harpooneer that makes the voyage, and if you take the breath out of his

body how can you expect to find it there when most wanted!

Again, if the dart be successful, then at the second critical instant,

that is, when the whale starts to run, the boatheader and harpooneer

likewise start to running fore and aft, to the imminent jeopardy of

themselves and every one else. It is then they change places; and

the headsman, the chief officer of the little craft, takes his proper

station in the bows of the boat.

Now, I care not who maintains the contrary, but all this is both foolish

and unnecessary. The headsman should stay in the bows from first to

last; he should both dart the harpoon and the lance, and no rowing

whatever should be expected of him, except under circumstances obvious

to any fisherman. I know that this would sometimes involve a slight loss

of speed in the chase; but long experience in various whalemen of more

than one nation has convinced me that in the vast majority of failures

in the fishery, it has not by any means been so much the speed of the

whale as the before described exhaustion of the harpooneer that has

caused them.

To insure the greatest efficiency in the dart, the harpooneers of this

world must start to their feet from out of idleness, and not from out of

toil.

CHAPTER 63. The Crotch.

Out of the trunk, the branches grow; out of them, the twigs. So, in

productive subjects, grow the chapters.

The crotch alluded to on a previous page deserves independent mention.

It is a notched stick of a peculiar form, some two feet in length, which

is perpendicularly inserted into the starboard gunwale near the bow,

for the purpose of furnishing a rest for the wooden extremity of the

harpoon, whose other naked, barbed end slopingly projects from the prow.

Thereby the weapon is instantly at hand to its hurler, who snatches it

up as readily from its rest as a backwoodsman swings his rifle from

the wall. It is customary to have two harpoons reposing in the crotch,

respectively called the first and second irons.

But these two harpoons, each by its own cord, are both connected with

the line; the object being this: to dart them both, if possible, one

instantly after the other into the same whale; so that if, in the coming

drag, one should draw out, the other may still retain a hold. It is a

doubling of the chances. But it very often happens that owing to the

instantaneous, violent, convulsive running of the whale upon receiving

the first iron, it becomes impossible for the harpooneer, however

lightning-like in his movements, to pitch the second iron into him.

Nevertheless, as the second iron is already connected with the line,

and the line is running, hence that weapon must, at all events, be

anticipatingly tossed out of the boat, somehow and somewhere; else the

most terrible jeopardy would involve all hands. Tumbled into the water,

it accordingly is in such cases; the spare coils of box line (mentioned

in a preceding chapter) making this feat, in most instances, prudently

practicable. But this critical act is not always unattended with the

saddest and most fatal casualties.

Furthermore: you must know that when the second iron is thrown

overboard, it thenceforth becomes a dangling, sharp-edged terror,

skittishly curvetting about both boat and whale, entangling the lines,

or cutting them, and making a prodigious sensation in all directions.

Nor, in general, is it possible to secure it again until the whale is

fairly captured and a corpse.

Consider, now, how it must be in the case of four boats all engaging

one unusually strong, active, and knowing whale; when owing to these

qualities in him, as well as to the thousand concurring accidents of

such an audacious enterprise, eight or ten loose second irons may be

simultaneously dangling about him. For, of course, each boat is supplied

with several harpoons to bend on to the line should the first one

be ineffectually darted without recovery. All these particulars are

faithfully narrated here, as they will not fail to elucidate several

most important, however intricate passages, in scenes hereafter to be

painted.

CHAPTER 64. Stubb's Supper.

Stubb's whale had been killed some distance from the ship. It was

a calm; so, forming a tandem of three boats, we commenced the slow

business of towing the trophy to the Pequod. And now, as we eighteen men

with our thirty-six arms, and one hundred and eighty thumbs and fingers,

slowly toiled hour after hour upon that inert, sluggish corpse in the

sea; and it seemed hardly to budge at all, except at long intervals;

good evidence was hereby furnished of the enormousness of the mass we

moved. For, upon the great canal of Hang-Ho, or whatever they call

it, in China, four or five laborers on the foot-path will draw a bulky

freighted junk at the rate of a mile an hour; but this grand argosy we

towed heavily forged along, as if laden with pig-lead in bulk.

Darkness came on; but three lights up and down in the Pequod's

main-rigging dimly guided our way; till drawing nearer we saw Ahab

dropping one of several more lanterns over the bulwarks. Vacantly eyeing

the heaving whale for a moment, he issued the usual orders for securing

it for the night, and then handing his lantern to a seaman, went his way

into the cabin, and did not come forward again until morning.

Though, in overseeing the pursuit of this whale, Captain Ahab had

evinced his customary activity, to call it so; yet now that the creature

was dead, some vague dissatisfaction, or impatience, or despair, seemed

working in him; as if the sight of that dead body reminded him that

Moby Dick was yet to be slain; and though a thousand other whales were

brought to his ship, all that would not one jot advance his grand,

monomaniac object. Very soon you would have thought from the sound on

the Pequod's decks, that all hands were preparing to cast anchor in

the deep; for heavy chains are being dragged along the deck, and thrust

rattling out of the port-holes. But by those clanking links, the vast

corpse itself, not the ship, is to be moored. Tied by the head to the

stern, and by the tail to the bows, the whale now lies with its black

hull close to the vessel's and seen through the darkness of the night,

which obscured the spars and rigging aloft, the two--ship and whale,

seemed yoked together like colossal bullocks, whereof one reclines while

the other remains standing.\*

\*A little item may as well be related here. The strongest and most

reliable hold which the ship has upon the whale when moored alongside,

is by the flukes or tail; and as from its greater density that part

is relatively heavier than any other (excepting the side-fins), its

flexibility even in death, causes it to sink low beneath the surface; so

that with the hand you cannot get at it from the boat, in order to

put the chain round it. But this difficulty is ingeniously overcome: a

small, strong line is prepared with a wooden float at its outer end, and

a weight in its middle, while the other end is secured to the ship. By

adroit management the wooden float is made to rise on the other side

of the mass, so that now having girdled the whale, the chain is readily

made to follow suit; and being slipped along the body, is at last locked

fast round the smallest part of the tail, at the point of junction with

its broad flukes or lobes.

If moody Ahab was now all quiescence, at least so far as could be known

on deck, Stubb, his second mate, flushed with conquest, betrayed an

unusual but still good-natured excitement. Such an unwonted bustle was

he in that the staid Starbuck, his official superior, quietly resigned

to him for the time the sole management of affairs. One small, helping

cause of all this liveliness in Stubb, was soon made strangely manifest.

Stubb was a high liver; he was somewhat intemperately fond of the whale

as a flavorish thing to his palate.

"A steak, a steak, ere I sleep! You, Daggoo! overboard you go, and cut

me one from his small!"

Here be it known, that though these wild fishermen do not, as a general

thing, and according to the great military maxim, make the enemy defray

the current expenses of the war (at least before realizing the proceeds

of the voyage), yet now and then you find some of these Nantucketers

who have a genuine relish for that particular part of the Sperm Whale

designated by Stubb; comprising the tapering extremity of the body.

About midnight that steak was cut and cooked; and lighted by two

lanterns of sperm oil, Stubb stoutly stood up to his spermaceti supper

at the capstan-head, as if that capstan were a sideboard. Nor was Stubb

the only banqueter on whale's flesh that night. Mingling their mumblings

with his own mastications, thousands on thousands of sharks, swarming

round the dead leviathan, smackingly feasted on its fatness. The few

sleepers below in their bunks were often startled by the sharp slapping

of their tails against the hull, within a few inches of the sleepers'

hearts. Peering over the side you could just see them (as before you

heard them) wallowing in the sullen, black waters, and turning over on

their backs as they scooped out huge globular pieces of the whale of the

bigness of a human head. This particular feat of the shark seems all

but miraculous. How at such an apparently unassailable surface, they

contrive to gouge out such symmetrical mouthfuls, remains a part of the

universal problem of all things. The mark they thus leave on the whale,

may best be likened to the hollow made by a carpenter in countersinking

for a screw.

Though amid all the smoking horror and diabolism of a sea-fight, sharks

will be seen longingly gazing up to the ship's decks, like hungry dogs

round a table where red meat is being carved, ready to bolt down

every killed man that is tossed to them; and though, while the valiant

butchers over the deck-table are thus cannibally carving each other's

live meat with carving-knives all gilded and tasselled, the sharks,

also, with their jewel-hilted mouths, are quarrelsomely carving away

under the table at the dead meat; and though, were you to turn the whole

affair upside down, it would still be pretty much the same thing, that

is to say, a shocking sharkish business enough for all parties; and

though sharks also are the invariable outriders of all slave ships

crossing the Atlantic, systematically trotting alongside, to be handy in

case a parcel is to be carried anywhere, or a dead slave to be decently

buried; and though one or two other like instances might be set down,

touching the set terms, places, and occasions, when sharks do most

socially congregate, and most hilariously feast; yet is there no

conceivable time or occasion when you will find them in such countless

numbers, and in gayer or more jovial spirits, than around a dead sperm

whale, moored by night to a whaleship at sea. If you have never

seen that sight, then suspend your decision about the propriety of

devil-worship, and the expediency of conciliating the devil.

But, as yet, Stubb heeded not the mumblings of the banquet that was

going on so nigh him, no more than the sharks heeded the smacking of his

own epicurean lips.

"Cook, cook!--where's that old Fleece?" he cried at length, widening

his legs still further, as if to form a more secure base for his supper;

and, at the same time darting his fork into the dish, as if stabbing

with his lance; "cook, you cook!--sail this way, cook!"

The old black, not in any very high glee at having been previously

roused from his warm hammock at a most unseasonable hour, came shambling

along from his galley, for, like many old blacks, there was something

the matter with his knee-pans, which he did not keep well scoured like

his other pans; this old Fleece, as they called him, came shuffling and

limping along, assisting his step with his tongs, which, after a clumsy

fashion, were made of straightened iron hoops; this old Ebony floundered

along, and in obedience to the word of command, came to a dead stop on

the opposite side of Stubb's sideboard; when, with both hands folded

before him, and resting on his two-legged cane, he bowed his arched back

still further over, at the same time sideways inclining his head, so as

to bring his best ear into play.

"Cook," said Stubb, rapidly lifting a rather reddish morsel to his

mouth, "don't you think this steak is rather overdone? You've been

beating this steak too much, cook; it's too tender. Don't I always say

that to be good, a whale-steak must be tough? There are those sharks

now over the side, don't you see they prefer it tough and rare? What a

shindy they are kicking up! Cook, go and talk to 'em; tell 'em they are

welcome to help themselves civilly, and in moderation, but they must

keep quiet. Blast me, if I can hear my own voice. Away, cook, and

deliver my message. Here, take this lantern," snatching one from his

sideboard; "now then, go and preach to 'em!"

Sullenly taking the offered lantern, old Fleece limped across the deck

to the bulwarks; and then, with one hand dropping his light low over the

sea, so as to get a good view of his congregation, with the other hand

he solemnly flourished his tongs, and leaning far over the side in a

mumbling voice began addressing the sharks, while Stubb, softly crawling

behind, overheard all that was said.

"Fellow-critters: I'se ordered here to say dat you must stop dat dam

noise dare. You hear? Stop dat dam smackin' ob de lips! Massa Stubb say

dat you can fill your dam bellies up to de hatchings, but by Gor! you

must stop dat dam racket!"

"Cook," here interposed Stubb, accompanying the word with a sudden slap

on the shoulder,--"Cook! why, damn your eyes, you mustn't swear that way

when you're preaching. That's no way to convert sinners, cook!"

"Who dat? Den preach to him yourself," sullenly turning to go.

"No, cook; go on, go on."

"Well, den, Belubed fellow-critters:"--

"Right!" exclaimed Stubb, approvingly, "coax 'em to it; try that," and

Fleece continued.

"Do you is all sharks, and by natur wery woracious, yet I zay to you,

fellow-critters, dat dat woraciousness--'top dat dam slappin' ob de

tail! How you tink to hear, spose you keep up such a dam slappin' and

bitin' dare?"

"Cook," cried Stubb, collaring him, "I won't have that swearing. Talk to

'em gentlemanly."

Once more the sermon proceeded.

"Your woraciousness, fellow-critters, I don't blame ye so much for; dat

is natur, and can't be helped; but to gobern dat wicked natur, dat is de

pint. You is sharks, sartin; but if you gobern de shark in you, why den

you be angel; for all angel is not'ing more dan de shark well goberned.

Now, look here, bred'ren, just try wonst to be cibil, a helping

yourselbs from dat whale. Don't be tearin' de blubber out your

neighbour's mout, I say. Is not one shark dood right as toder to dat

whale? And, by Gor, none on you has de right to dat whale; dat whale

belong to some one else. I know some o' you has berry brig mout, brigger

dan oders; but den de brig mouts sometimes has de small bellies; so dat

de brigness of de mout is not to swaller wid, but to bit off de blubber

for de small fry ob sharks, dat can't get into de scrouge to help

demselves."

"Well done, old Fleece!" cried Stubb, "that's Christianity; go on."

"No use goin' on; de dam willains will keep a scougin' and slappin' each

oder, Massa Stubb; dey don't hear one word; no use a-preaching to

such dam g'uttons as you call 'em, till dare bellies is full, and dare

bellies is bottomless; and when dey do get 'em full, dey wont hear you

den; for den dey sink in the sea, go fast to sleep on de coral, and

can't hear noting at all, no more, for eber and eber."

"Upon my soul, I am about of the same opinion; so give the benediction,

Fleece, and I'll away to my supper."

Upon this, Fleece, holding both hands over the fishy mob, raised his

shrill voice, and cried--

"Cussed fellow-critters! Kick up de damndest row as ever you can; fill

your dam bellies 'till dey bust--and den die."

"Now, cook," said Stubb, resuming his supper at the capstan; "stand

just where you stood before, there, over against me, and pay particular

attention."

"All 'dention," said Fleece, again stooping over upon his tongs in the

desired position.

"Well," said Stubb, helping himself freely meanwhile; "I shall now go

back to the subject of this steak. In the first place, how old are you,

cook?"

"What dat do wid de 'teak," said the old black, testily.

"Silence! How old are you, cook?"

"'Bout ninety, dey say," he gloomily muttered.

"And you have lived in this world hard upon one hundred years, cook,

and don't know yet how to cook a whale-steak?" rapidly bolting another

mouthful at the last word, so that morsel seemed a continuation of the

question. "Where were you born, cook?"

"'Hind de hatchway, in ferry-boat, goin' ober de Roanoke."

"Born in a ferry-boat! That's queer, too. But I want to know what

country you were born in, cook!"

"Didn't I say de Roanoke country?" he cried sharply.

"No, you didn't, cook; but I'll tell you what I'm coming to, cook.

You must go home and be born over again; you don't know how to cook a

whale-steak yet."

"Bress my soul, if I cook noder one," he growled, angrily, turning round

to depart.

"Come back here, cook;--here, hand me those tongs;--now take that bit of

steak there, and tell me if you think that steak cooked as it should be?

Take it, I say"--holding the tongs towards him--"take it, and taste it."

Faintly smacking his withered lips over it for a moment, the old negro

muttered, "Best cooked 'teak I eber taste; joosy, berry joosy."

"Cook," said Stubb, squaring himself once more; "do you belong to the

church?"

"Passed one once in Cape-Down," said the old man sullenly.

"And you have once in your life passed a holy church in Cape-Town, where

you doubtless overheard a holy parson addressing his hearers as his

beloved fellow-creatures, have you, cook! And yet you come here, and

tell me such a dreadful lie as you did just now, eh?" said Stubb. "Where

do you expect to go to, cook?"

"Go to bed berry soon," he mumbled, half-turning as he spoke.

"Avast! heave to! I mean when you die, cook. It's an awful question. Now

what's your answer?"

"When dis old brack man dies," said the negro slowly, changing his whole

air and demeanor, "he hisself won't go nowhere; but some bressed angel

will come and fetch him."

"Fetch him? How? In a coach and four, as they fetched Elijah? And fetch

him where?"

"Up dere," said Fleece, holding his tongs straight over his head, and

keeping it there very solemnly.

"So, then, you expect to go up into our main-top, do you, cook, when you

are dead? But don't you know the higher you climb, the colder it gets?

Main-top, eh?"

"Didn't say dat t'all," said Fleece, again in the sulks.

"You said up there, didn't you? and now look yourself, and see where

your tongs are pointing. But, perhaps you expect to get into heaven by

crawling through the lubber's hole, cook; but, no, no, cook, you don't

get there, except you go the regular way, round by the rigging. It's a

ticklish business, but must be done, or else it's no go. But none of

us are in heaven yet. Drop your tongs, cook, and hear my orders. Do ye

hear? Hold your hat in one hand, and clap t'other a'top of your heart,

when I'm giving my orders, cook. What! that your heart, there?--that's

your gizzard! Aloft! aloft!--that's it--now you have it. Hold it there

now, and pay attention."

"All 'dention," said the old black, with both hands placed as desired,

vainly wriggling his grizzled head, as if to get both ears in front at

one and the same time.

"Well then, cook, you see this whale-steak of yours was so very bad,

that I have put it out of sight as soon as possible; you see that, don't

you? Well, for the future, when you cook another whale-steak for my

private table here, the capstan, I'll tell you what to do so as not to

spoil it by overdoing. Hold the steak in one hand, and show a live coal

to it with the other; that done, dish it; d'ye hear? And now to-morrow,

cook, when we are cutting in the fish, be sure you stand by to get

the tips of his fins; have them put in pickle. As for the ends of the

flukes, have them soused, cook. There, now ye may go."

But Fleece had hardly got three paces off, when he was recalled.

"Cook, give me cutlets for supper to-morrow night in the mid-watch.

D'ye hear? away you sail, then.--Halloa! stop! make a bow before you

go.--Avast heaving again! Whale-balls for breakfast--don't forget."

"Wish, by gor! whale eat him, 'stead of him eat whale. I'm bressed if

he ain't more of shark dan Massa Shark hisself," muttered the old man,

limping away; with which sage ejaculation he went to his hammock.

CHAPTER 65. The Whale as a Dish.

That mortal man should feed upon the creature that feeds his lamp, and,

like Stubb, eat him by his own light, as you may say; this seems so

outlandish a thing that one must needs go a little into the history and

philosophy of it.

It is upon record, that three centuries ago the tongue of the Right

Whale was esteemed a great delicacy in France, and commanded large

prices there. Also, that in Henry VIIIth's time, a certain cook of the

court obtained a handsome reward for inventing an admirable sauce to be

eaten with barbacued porpoises, which, you remember, are a species of

whale. Porpoises, indeed, are to this day considered fine eating. The

meat is made into balls about the size of billiard balls, and being well

seasoned and spiced might be taken for turtle-balls or veal balls.

The old monks of Dunfermline were very fond of them. They had a great

porpoise grant from the crown.

The fact is, that among his hunters at least, the whale would by all

hands be considered a noble dish, were there not so much of him; but

when you come to sit down before a meat-pie nearly one hundred feet

long, it takes away your appetite. Only the most unprejudiced of men

like Stubb, nowadays partake of cooked whales; but the Esquimaux are not

so fastidious. We all know how they live upon whales, and have rare

old vintages of prime old train oil. Zogranda, one of their most famous

doctors, recommends strips of blubber for infants, as being exceedingly

juicy and nourishing. And this reminds me that certain Englishmen, who

long ago were accidentally left in Greenland by a whaling vessel--that

these men actually lived for several months on the mouldy scraps of

whales which had been left ashore after trying out the blubber. Among

the Dutch whalemen these scraps are called "fritters"; which, indeed,

they greatly resemble, being brown and crisp, and smelling something

like old Amsterdam housewives' dough-nuts or oly-cooks, when fresh. They

have such an eatable look that the most self-denying stranger can hardly

keep his hands off.

But what further depreciates the whale as a civilized dish, is his

exceeding richness. He is the great prize ox of the sea, too fat to be

delicately good. Look at his hump, which would be as fine eating as

the buffalo's (which is esteemed a rare dish), were it not such a solid

pyramid of fat. But the spermaceti itself, how bland and creamy that

is; like the transparent, half-jellied, white meat of a cocoanut in the

third month of its growth, yet far too rich to supply a substitute for

butter. Nevertheless, many whalemen have a method of absorbing it into

some other substance, and then partaking of it. In the long try

watches of the night it is a common thing for the seamen to dip their

ship-biscuit into the huge oil-pots and let them fry there awhile. Many

a good supper have I thus made.

In the case of a small Sperm Whale the brains are accounted a fine dish.

The casket of the skull is broken into with an axe, and the two plump,

whitish lobes being withdrawn (precisely resembling two large puddings),

they are then mixed with flour, and cooked into a most delectable mess,

in flavor somewhat resembling calves' head, which is quite a dish among

some epicures; and every one knows that some young bucks among the

epicures, by continually dining upon calves' brains, by and by get to

have a little brains of their own, so as to be able to tell a

calf's head from their own heads; which, indeed, requires uncommon

discrimination. And that is the reason why a young buck with an

intelligent looking calf's head before him, is somehow one of the

saddest sights you can see. The head looks a sort of reproachfully at

him, with an "Et tu Brute!" expression.

It is not, perhaps, entirely because the whale is so excessively

unctuous that landsmen seem to regard the eating of him with abhorrence;

that appears to result, in some way, from the consideration before

mentioned: i.e. that a man should eat a newly murdered thing of the sea,

and eat it too by its own light. But no doubt the first man that ever

murdered an ox was regarded as a murderer; perhaps he was hung; and if

he had been put on his trial by oxen, he certainly would have been; and

he certainly deserved it if any murderer does. Go to the meat-market

of a Saturday night and see the crowds of live bipeds staring up at the

long rows of dead quadrupeds. Does not that sight take a tooth out of

the cannibal's jaw? Cannibals? who is not a cannibal? I tell you it will

be more tolerable for the Fejee that salted down a lean missionary in

his cellar against a coming famine; it will be more tolerable for that

provident Fejee, I say, in the day of judgment, than for thee, civilized

and enlightened gourmand, who nailest geese to the ground and feastest

on their bloated livers in thy pate-de-foie-gras.

But Stubb, he eats the whale by its own light, does he? and that is

adding insult to injury, is it? Look at your knife-handle, there, my

civilized and enlightened gourmand dining off that roast beef, what is

that handle made of?--what but the bones of the brother of the very ox

you are eating? And what do you pick your teeth with, after devouring

that fat goose? With a feather of the same fowl. And with what quill did

the Secretary of the Society for the Suppression of Cruelty to Ganders

formally indite his circulars? It is only within the last month or two

that that society passed a resolution to patronise nothing but steel

pens.

CHAPTER 66. The Shark Massacre.

When in the Southern Fishery, a captured Sperm Whale, after long and

weary toil, is brought alongside late at night, it is not, as a general

thing at least, customary to proceed at once to the business of cutting

him in. For that business is an exceedingly laborious one; is not very

soon completed; and requires all hands to set about it. Therefore, the

common usage is to take in all sail; lash the helm a'lee; and then send

every one below to his hammock till daylight, with the reservation that,

until that time, anchor-watches shall be kept; that is, two and two for

an hour, each couple, the crew in rotation shall mount the deck to see

that all goes well.

But sometimes, especially upon the Line in the Pacific, this plan will

not answer at all; because such incalculable hosts of sharks gather

round the moored carcase, that were he left so for six hours, say, on a

stretch, little more than the skeleton would be visible by morning.

In most other parts of the ocean, however, where these fish do not so

largely abound, their wondrous voracity can be at times considerably

diminished, by vigorously stirring them up with sharp whaling-spades,

a procedure notwithstanding, which, in some instances, only seems to

tickle them into still greater activity. But it was not thus in the

present case with the Pequod's sharks; though, to be sure, any man

unaccustomed to such sights, to have looked over her side that night,

would have almost thought the whole round sea was one huge cheese, and

those sharks the maggots in it.

Nevertheless, upon Stubb setting the anchor-watch after his supper was

concluded; and when, accordingly, Queequeg and a forecastle seaman

came on deck, no small excitement was created among the sharks; for

immediately suspending the cutting stages over the side, and lowering

three lanterns, so that they cast long gleams of light over the turbid

sea, these two mariners, darting their long whaling-spades, kept up an

incessant murdering of the sharks,\* by striking the keen steel deep

into their skulls, seemingly their only vital part. But in the foamy

confusion of their mixed and struggling hosts, the marksmen could not

always hit their mark; and this brought about new revelations of the

incredible ferocity of the foe. They viciously snapped, not only at each

other's disembowelments, but like flexible bows, bent round, and bit

their own; till those entrails seemed swallowed over and over again by

the same mouth, to be oppositely voided by the gaping wound. Nor was

this all. It was unsafe to meddle with the corpses and ghosts of these

creatures. A sort of generic or Pantheistic vitality seemed to lurk in

their very joints and bones, after what might be called the individual

life had departed. Killed and hoisted on deck for the sake of his skin,

one of these sharks almost took poor Queequeg's hand off, when he tried

to shut down the dead lid of his murderous jaw.

\*The whaling-spade used for cutting-in is made of the very best steel;

is about the bigness of a man's spread hand; and in general shape,

corresponds to the garden implement after which it is named; only its

sides are perfectly flat, and its upper end considerably narrower than

the lower. This weapon is always kept as sharp as possible; and when

being used is occasionally honed, just like a razor. In its socket, a

stiff pole, from twenty to thirty feet long, is inserted for a handle.

"Queequeg no care what god made him shark," said the savage, agonizingly

lifting his hand up and down; "wedder Fejee god or Nantucket god; but de

god wat made shark must be one dam Ingin."

CHAPTER 67. Cutting In.

It was a Saturday night, and such a Sabbath as followed! Ex officio

professors of Sabbath breaking are all whalemen. The ivory Pequod was

turned into what seemed a shamble; every sailor a butcher. You would

have thought we were offering up ten thousand red oxen to the sea gods.

In the first place, the enormous cutting tackles, among other ponderous

things comprising a cluster of blocks generally painted green, and which

no single man can possibly lift--this vast bunch of grapes was swayed up

to the main-top and firmly lashed to the lower mast-head, the strongest

point anywhere above a ship's deck. The end of the hawser-like rope

winding through these intricacies, was then conducted to the windlass,

and the huge lower block of the tackles was swung over the whale; to

this block the great blubber hook, weighing some one hundred pounds, was

attached. And now suspended in stages over the side, Starbuck and Stubb,

the mates, armed with their long spades, began cutting a hole in the

body for the insertion of the hook just above the nearest of the two

side-fins. This done, a broad, semicircular line is cut round the hole,

the hook is inserted, and the main body of the crew striking up a wild

chorus, now commence heaving in one dense crowd at the windlass. When

instantly, the entire ship careens over on her side; every bolt in

her starts like the nail-heads of an old house in frosty weather; she

trembles, quivers, and nods her frighted mast-heads to the sky. More

and more she leans over to the whale, while every gasping heave of the

windlass is answered by a helping heave from the billows; till at last,

a swift, startling snap is heard; with a great swash the ship rolls

upwards and backwards from the whale, and the triumphant tackle rises

into sight dragging after it the disengaged semicircular end of the

first strip of blubber. Now as the blubber envelopes the whale precisely

as the rind does an orange, so is it stripped off from the body

precisely as an orange is sometimes stripped by spiralizing it. For the

strain constantly kept up by the windlass continually keeps the whale

rolling over and over in the water, and as the blubber in one strip

uniformly peels off along the line called the "scarf," simultaneously

cut by the spades of Starbuck and Stubb, the mates; and just as fast as

it is thus peeled off, and indeed by that very act itself, it is all the

time being hoisted higher and higher aloft till its upper end grazes the

main-top; the men at the windlass then cease heaving, and for a moment

or two the prodigious blood-dripping mass sways to and fro as if let

down from the sky, and every one present must take good heed to dodge

it when it swings, else it may box his ears and pitch him headlong

overboard.

One of the attending harpooneers now advances with a long, keen weapon

called a boarding-sword, and watching his chance he dexterously slices

out a considerable hole in the lower part of the swaying mass. Into this

hole, the end of the second alternating great tackle is then hooked

so as to retain a hold upon the blubber, in order to prepare for what

follows. Whereupon, this accomplished swordsman, warning all hands to

stand off, once more makes a scientific dash at the mass, and with a few

sidelong, desperate, lunging slicings, severs it completely in twain;

so that while the short lower part is still fast, the long upper strip,

called a blanket-piece, swings clear, and is all ready for lowering.

The heavers forward now resume their song, and while the one tackle is

peeling and hoisting a second strip from the whale, the other is slowly

slackened away, and down goes the first strip through the main hatchway

right beneath, into an unfurnished parlor called the blubber-room. Into

this twilight apartment sundry nimble hands keep coiling away the long

blanket-piece as if it were a great live mass of plaited serpents.

And thus the work proceeds; the two tackles hoisting and lowering

simultaneously; both whale and windlass heaving, the heavers singing,

the blubber-room gentlemen coiling, the mates scarfing, the ship

straining, and all hands swearing occasionally, by way of assuaging the

general friction.

CHAPTER 68. The Blanket.

I have given no small attention to that not unvexed subject, the skin of

the whale. I have had controversies about it with experienced whalemen

afloat, and learned naturalists ashore. My original opinion remains

unchanged; but it is only an opinion.

The question is, what and where is the skin of the whale? Already you

know what his blubber is. That blubber is something of the consistence

of firm, close-grained beef, but tougher, more elastic and compact, and

ranges from eight or ten to twelve and fifteen inches in thickness.

Now, however preposterous it may at first seem to talk of any creature's

skin as being of that sort of consistence and thickness, yet in point

of fact these are no arguments against such a presumption; because you

cannot raise any other dense enveloping layer from the whale's body but

that same blubber; and the outermost enveloping layer of any animal, if

reasonably dense, what can that be but the skin? True, from the unmarred

dead body of the whale, you may scrape off with your hand an infinitely

thin, transparent substance, somewhat resembling the thinnest shreds

of isinglass, only it is almost as flexible and soft as satin; that is,

previous to being dried, when it not only contracts and thickens, but

becomes rather hard and brittle. I have several such dried bits, which

I use for marks in my whale-books. It is transparent, as I said before;

and being laid upon the printed page, I have sometimes pleased myself

with fancying it exerted a magnifying influence. At any rate, it is

pleasant to read about whales through their own spectacles, as you may

say. But what I am driving at here is this. That same infinitely thin,

isinglass substance, which, I admit, invests the entire body of the

whale, is not so much to be regarded as the skin of the creature, as

the skin of the skin, so to speak; for it were simply ridiculous to say,

that the proper skin of the tremendous whale is thinner and more tender

than the skin of a new-born child. But no more of this.

Assuming the blubber to be the skin of the whale; then, when this skin,

as in the case of a very large Sperm Whale, will yield the bulk of one

hundred barrels of oil; and, when it is considered that, in quantity, or

rather weight, that oil, in its expressed state, is only three fourths,

and not the entire substance of the coat; some idea may hence be had

of the enormousness of that animated mass, a mere part of whose mere

integument yields such a lake of liquid as that. Reckoning ten barrels

to the ton, you have ten tons for the net weight of only three quarters

of the stuff of the whale's skin.

In life, the visible surface of the Sperm Whale is not the least among

the many marvels he presents. Almost invariably it is all over obliquely

crossed and re-crossed with numberless straight marks in thick array,

something like those in the finest Italian line engravings. But these

marks do not seem to be impressed upon the isinglass substance above

mentioned, but seem to be seen through it, as if they were engraved

upon the body itself. Nor is this all. In some instances, to the quick,

observant eye, those linear marks, as in a veritable engraving, but

afford the ground for far other delineations. These are hieroglyphical;

that is, if you call those mysterious cyphers on the walls of pyramids

hieroglyphics, then that is the proper word to use in the present

connexion. By my retentive memory of the hieroglyphics upon one Sperm

Whale in particular, I was much struck with a plate representing the old

Indian characters chiselled on the famous hieroglyphic palisades on

the banks of the Upper Mississippi. Like those mystic rocks, too, the

mystic-marked whale remains undecipherable. This allusion to the Indian

rocks reminds me of another thing. Besides all the other phenomena which

the exterior of the Sperm Whale presents, he not seldom displays the

back, and more especially his flanks, effaced in great part of the

regular linear appearance, by reason of numerous rude scratches,

altogether of an irregular, random aspect. I should say that those New

England rocks on the sea-coast, which Agassiz imagines to bear the marks

of violent scraping contact with vast floating icebergs--I should say,

that those rocks must not a little resemble the Sperm Whale in this

particular. It also seems to me that such scratches in the whale are

probably made by hostile contact with other whales; for I have most

remarked them in the large, full-grown bulls of the species.

A word or two more concerning this matter of the skin or blubber of

the whale. It has already been said, that it is stript from him in long

pieces, called blanket-pieces. Like most sea-terms, this one is very

happy and significant. For the whale is indeed wrapt up in his blubber

as in a real blanket or counterpane; or, still better, an Indian poncho

slipt over his head, and skirting his extremity. It is by reason of this

cosy blanketing of his body, that the whale is enabled to keep himself

comfortable in all weathers, in all seas, times, and tides. What would

become of a Greenland whale, say, in those shuddering, icy seas of the

North, if unsupplied with his cosy surtout? True, other fish are

found exceedingly brisk in those Hyperborean waters; but these, be it

observed, are your cold-blooded, lungless fish, whose very bellies

are refrigerators; creatures, that warm themselves under the lee of

an iceberg, as a traveller in winter would bask before an inn fire;

whereas, like man, the whale has lungs and warm blood. Freeze his blood,

and he dies. How wonderful is it then--except after explanation--that

this great monster, to whom corporeal warmth is as indispensable as it

is to man; how wonderful that he should be found at home, immersed

to his lips for life in those Arctic waters! where, when seamen fall

overboard, they are sometimes found, months afterwards, perpendicularly

frozen into the hearts of fields of ice, as a fly is found glued

in amber. But more surprising is it to know, as has been proved by

experiment, that the blood of a Polar whale is warmer than that of a

Borneo negro in summer.

It does seem to me, that herein we see the rare virtue of a strong

individual vitality, and the rare virtue of thick walls, and the rare

virtue of interior spaciousness. Oh, man! admire and model thyself after

the whale! Do thou, too, remain warm among ice. Do thou, too, live in

this world without being of it. Be cool at the equator; keep thy blood

fluid at the Pole. Like the great dome of St. Peter's, and like the

great whale, retain, O man! in all seasons a temperature of thine own.

But how easy and how hopeless to teach these fine things! Of erections,

how few are domed like St. Peter's! of creatures, how few vast as the

whale!

CHAPTER 69. The Funeral.

Haul in the chains! Let the carcase go astern!

The vast tackles have now done their duty. The peeled white body of the

beheaded whale flashes like a marble sepulchre; though changed in hue,

it has not perceptibly lost anything in bulk. It is still colossal.

Slowly it floats more and more away, the water round it torn and

splashed by the insatiate sharks, and the air above vexed with rapacious

flights of screaming fowls, whose beaks are like so many insulting

poniards in the whale. The vast white headless phantom floats further

and further from the ship, and every rod that it so floats, what seem

square roods of sharks and cubic roods of fowls, augment the murderous

din. For hours and hours from the almost stationary ship that hideous

sight is seen. Beneath the unclouded and mild azure sky, upon the fair

face of the pleasant sea, wafted by the joyous breezes, that great mass

of death floats on and on, till lost in infinite perspectives.

There's a most doleful and most mocking funeral! The sea-vultures all in

pious mourning, the air-sharks all punctiliously in black or speckled.

In life but few of them would have helped the whale, I ween, if

peradventure he had needed it; but upon the banquet of his funeral they

most piously do pounce. Oh, horrible vultureism of earth! from which not

the mightiest whale is free.

Nor is this the end. Desecrated as the body is, a vengeful ghost

survives and hovers over it to scare. Espied by some timid man-of-war or

blundering discovery-vessel from afar, when the distance obscuring the

swarming fowls, nevertheless still shows the white mass floating in

the sun, and the white spray heaving high against it; straightway the

whale's unharming corpse, with trembling fingers is set down in the

log--SHOALS, ROCKS, AND BREAKERS HEREABOUTS: BEWARE! And for years

afterwards, perhaps, ships shun the place; leaping over it as silly

sheep leap over a vacuum, because their leader originally leaped there

when a stick was held. There's your law of precedents; there's your

utility of traditions; there's the story of your obstinate survival of

old beliefs never bottomed on the earth, and now not even hovering in

the air! There's orthodoxy!

Thus, while in life the great whale's body may have been a real terror

to his foes, in his death his ghost becomes a powerless panic to a

world.

Are you a believer in ghosts, my friend? There are other ghosts than

the Cock-Lane one, and far deeper men than Doctor Johnson who believe in

them.

CHAPTER 70. The Sphynx.

It should not have been omitted that previous to completely stripping

the body of the leviathan, he was beheaded. Now, the beheading of the

Sperm Whale is a scientific anatomical feat, upon which experienced

whale surgeons very much pride themselves: and not without reason.

Consider that the whale has nothing that can properly be called a neck;

on the contrary, where his head and body seem to join, there, in that

very place, is the thickest part of him. Remember, also, that the

surgeon must operate from above, some eight or ten feet intervening

between him and his subject, and that subject almost hidden in a

discoloured, rolling, and oftentimes tumultuous and bursting sea. Bear

in mind, too, that under these untoward circumstances he has to cut many

feet deep in the flesh; and in that subterraneous manner, without so

much as getting one single peep into the ever-contracting gash thus

made, he must skilfully steer clear of all adjacent, interdicted parts,

and exactly divide the spine at a critical point hard by its insertion

into the skull. Do you not marvel, then, at Stubb's boast, that he

demanded but ten minutes to behead a sperm whale?

When first severed, the head is dropped astern and held there by a cable

till the body is stripped. That done, if it belong to a small whale

it is hoisted on deck to be deliberately disposed of. But, with a full

grown leviathan this is impossible; for the sperm whale's head embraces

nearly one third of his entire bulk, and completely to suspend such a

burden as that, even by the immense tackles of a whaler, this were as

vain a thing as to attempt weighing a Dutch barn in jewellers' scales.

The Pequod's whale being decapitated and the body stripped, the head was

hoisted against the ship's side--about half way out of the sea, so that

it might yet in great part be buoyed up by its native element. And there

with the strained craft steeply leaning over to it, by reason of the

enormous downward drag from the lower mast-head, and every yard-arm

on that side projecting like a crane over the waves; there, that

blood-dripping head hung to the Pequod's waist like the giant

Holofernes's from the girdle of Judith.

When this last task was accomplished it was noon, and the seamen went

below to their dinner. Silence reigned over the before tumultuous but

now deserted deck. An intense copper calm, like a universal yellow

lotus, was more and more unfolding its noiseless measureless leaves upon

the sea.

A short space elapsed, and up into this noiselessness came Ahab alone

from his cabin. Taking a few turns on the quarter-deck, he paused to

gaze over the side, then slowly getting into the main-chains he

took Stubb's long spade--still remaining there after the whale's

Decapitation--and striking it into the lower part of the half-suspended

mass, placed its other end crutch-wise under one arm, and so stood

leaning over with eyes attentively fixed on this head.

It was a black and hooded head; and hanging there in the midst of so

intense a calm, it seemed the Sphynx's in the desert. "Speak, thou vast

and venerable head," muttered Ahab, "which, though ungarnished with a

beard, yet here and there lookest hoary with mosses; speak, mighty head,

and tell us the secret thing that is in thee. Of all divers, thou hast

dived the deepest. That head upon which the upper sun now gleams, has

moved amid this world's foundations. Where unrecorded names and navies

rust, and untold hopes and anchors rot; where in her murderous hold this

frigate earth is ballasted with bones of millions of the drowned; there,

in that awful water-land, there was thy most familiar home. Thou hast

been where bell or diver never went; hast slept by many a sailor's side,

where sleepless mothers would give their lives to lay them down. Thou

saw'st the locked lovers when leaping from their flaming ship; heart

to heart they sank beneath the exulting wave; true to each other, when

heaven seemed false to them. Thou saw'st the murdered mate when tossed

by pirates from the midnight deck; for hours he fell into the deeper

midnight of the insatiate maw; and his murderers still sailed on

unharmed--while swift lightnings shivered the neighboring ship that

would have borne a righteous husband to outstretched, longing arms. O

head! thou hast seen enough to split the planets and make an infidel of

Abraham, and not one syllable is thine!"

"Sail ho!" cried a triumphant voice from the main-mast-head.

"Aye? Well, now, that's cheering," cried Ahab, suddenly erecting

himself, while whole thunder-clouds swept aside from his brow.

"That lively cry upon this deadly calm might almost convert a better

man.--Where away?"

"Three points on the starboard bow, sir, and bringing down her breeze to

us!

"Better and better, man. Would now St. Paul would come along that way,

and to my breezelessness bring his breeze! O Nature, and O soul of man!

how far beyond all utterance are your linked analogies! not the smallest

atom stirs or lives on matter, but has its cunning duplicate in mind."

CHAPTER 71. The Jeroboam's Story.

Hand in hand, ship and breeze blew on; but the breeze came faster than

the ship, and soon the Pequod began to rock.

By and by, through the glass the stranger's boats and manned mast-heads

proved her a whale-ship. But as she was so far to windward, and shooting

by, apparently making a passage to some other ground, the Pequod could

not hope to reach her. So the signal was set to see what response would

be made.

Here be it said, that like the vessels of military marines, the ships of

the American Whale Fleet have each a private signal; all which signals

being collected in a book with the names of the respective vessels

attached, every captain is provided with it. Thereby, the whale

commanders are enabled to recognise each other upon the ocean, even at

considerable distances and with no small facility.

The Pequod's signal was at last responded to by the stranger's setting

her own; which proved the ship to be the Jeroboam of Nantucket. Squaring

her yards, she bore down, ranged abeam under the Pequod's lee, and

lowered a boat; it soon drew nigh; but, as the side-ladder was being

rigged by Starbuck's order to accommodate the visiting captain, the

stranger in question waved his hand from his boat's stern in token

of that proceeding being entirely unnecessary. It turned out that

the Jeroboam had a malignant epidemic on board, and that Mayhew, her

captain, was fearful of infecting the Pequod's company. For, though

himself and boat's crew remained untainted, and though his ship was half

a rifle-shot off, and an incorruptible sea and air rolling and flowing

between; yet conscientiously adhering to the timid quarantine of the

land, he peremptorily refused to come into direct contact with the

Pequod.

But this did by no means prevent all communications. Preserving an

interval of some few yards between itself and the ship, the Jeroboam's

boat by the occasional use of its oars contrived to keep parallel to the

Pequod, as she heavily forged through the sea (for by this time it blew

very fresh), with her main-topsail aback; though, indeed, at times by

the sudden onset of a large rolling wave, the boat would be pushed some

way ahead; but would be soon skilfully brought to her proper bearings

again. Subject to this, and other the like interruptions now and then, a

conversation was sustained between the two parties; but at intervals not

without still another interruption of a very different sort.

Pulling an oar in the Jeroboam's boat, was a man of a singular

appearance, even in that wild whaling life where individual notabilities

make up all totalities. He was a small, short, youngish man, sprinkled

all over his face with freckles, and wearing redundant yellow hair. A

long-skirted, cabalistically-cut coat of a faded walnut tinge enveloped

him; the overlapping sleeves of which were rolled up on his wrists. A

deep, settled, fanatic delirium was in his eyes.

So soon as this figure had been first descried, Stubb had

exclaimed--"That's he! that's he!--the long-togged scaramouch the

Town-Ho's company told us of!" Stubb here alluded to a strange story

told of the Jeroboam, and a certain man among her crew, some time

previous when the Pequod spoke the Town-Ho. According to this account

and what was subsequently learned, it seemed that the scaramouch in

question had gained a wonderful ascendency over almost everybody in the

Jeroboam. His story was this:

He had been originally nurtured among the crazy society of Neskyeuna

Shakers, where he had been a great prophet; in their cracked, secret

meetings having several times descended from heaven by the way of a

trap-door, announcing the speedy opening of the seventh vial, which he

carried in his vest-pocket; but, which, instead of containing gunpowder,

was supposed to be charged with laudanum. A strange, apostolic whim

having seized him, he had left Neskyeuna for Nantucket, where, with

that cunning peculiar to craziness, he assumed a steady, common-sense

exterior, and offered himself as a green-hand candidate for the

Jeroboam's whaling voyage. They engaged him; but straightway upon

the ship's getting out of sight of land, his insanity broke out in a

freshet. He announced himself as the archangel Gabriel, and commanded

the captain to jump overboard. He published his manifesto, whereby

he set himself forth as the deliverer of the isles of the sea and

vicar-general of all Oceanica. The unflinching earnestness with which he

declared these things;--the dark, daring play of his sleepless, excited

imagination, and all the preternatural terrors of real delirium, united

to invest this Gabriel in the minds of the majority of the ignorant

crew, with an atmosphere of sacredness. Moreover, they were afraid of

him. As such a man, however, was not of much practical use in the ship,

especially as he refused to work except when he pleased, the incredulous

captain would fain have been rid of him; but apprised that that

individual's intention was to land him in the first convenient port, the

archangel forthwith opened all his seals and vials--devoting the ship

and all hands to unconditional perdition, in case this intention was

carried out. So strongly did he work upon his disciples among the crew,

that at last in a body they went to the captain and told him if Gabriel

was sent from the ship, not a man of them would remain. He was therefore

forced to relinquish his plan. Nor would they permit Gabriel to be any

way maltreated, say or do what he would; so that it came to pass that

Gabriel had the complete freedom of the ship. The consequence of all

this was, that the archangel cared little or nothing for the captain and

mates; and since the epidemic had broken out, he carried a higher hand

than ever; declaring that the plague, as he called it, was at his sole

command; nor should it be stayed but according to his good pleasure.

The sailors, mostly poor devils, cringed, and some of them fawned before

him; in obedience to his instructions, sometimes rendering him personal

homage, as to a god. Such things may seem incredible; but, however

wondrous, they are true. Nor is the history of fanatics half so striking

in respect to the measureless self-deception of the fanatic himself, as

his measureless power of deceiving and bedevilling so many others. But

it is time to return to the Pequod.

"I fear not thy epidemic, man," said Ahab from the bulwarks, to Captain

Mayhew, who stood in the boat's stern; "come on board."

But now Gabriel started to his feet.

"Think, think of the fevers, yellow and bilious! Beware of the horrible

plague!"

"Gabriel! Gabriel!" cried Captain Mayhew; "thou must either--" But

that instant a headlong wave shot the boat far ahead, and its seethings

drowned all speech.

"Hast thou seen the White Whale?" demanded Ahab, when the boat drifted

back.

"Think, think of thy whale-boat, stoven and sunk! Beware of the horrible

tail!"

"I tell thee again, Gabriel, that--" But again the boat tore ahead as if

dragged by fiends. Nothing was said for some moments, while a succession

of riotous waves rolled by, which by one of those occasional caprices

of the seas were tumbling, not heaving it. Meantime, the hoisted sperm

whale's head jogged about very violently, and Gabriel was seen eyeing

it with rather more apprehensiveness than his archangel nature seemed to

warrant.

When this interlude was over, Captain Mayhew began a dark story

concerning Moby Dick; not, however, without frequent interruptions from

Gabriel, whenever his name was mentioned, and the crazy sea that seemed

leagued with him.

It seemed that the Jeroboam had not long left home, when upon speaking

a whale-ship, her people were reliably apprised of the existence of Moby

Dick, and the havoc he had made. Greedily sucking in this intelligence,

Gabriel solemnly warned the captain against attacking the White

Whale, in case the monster should be seen; in his gibbering insanity,

pronouncing the White Whale to be no less a being than the Shaker God

incarnated; the Shakers receiving the Bible. But when, some year or two

afterwards, Moby Dick was fairly sighted from the mast-heads, Macey, the

chief mate, burned with ardour to encounter him; and the captain himself

being not unwilling to let him have the opportunity, despite all

the archangel's denunciations and forewarnings, Macey succeeded in

persuading five men to man his boat. With them he pushed off; and, after

much weary pulling, and many perilous, unsuccessful onsets, he at last

succeeded in getting one iron fast. Meantime, Gabriel, ascending to

the main-royal mast-head, was tossing one arm in frantic gestures, and

hurling forth prophecies of speedy doom to the sacrilegious assailants

of his divinity. Now, while Macey, the mate, was standing up in his

boat's bow, and with all the reckless energy of his tribe was venting

his wild exclamations upon the whale, and essaying to get a fair chance

for his poised lance, lo! a broad white shadow rose from the sea; by its

quick, fanning motion, temporarily taking the breath out of the bodies

of the oarsmen. Next instant, the luckless mate, so full of furious

life, was smitten bodily into the air, and making a long arc in his

descent, fell into the sea at the distance of about fifty yards. Not a

chip of the boat was harmed, nor a hair of any oarsman's head; but the

mate for ever sank.

It is well to parenthesize here, that of the fatal accidents in the

Sperm-Whale Fishery, this kind is perhaps almost as frequent as any.

Sometimes, nothing is injured but the man who is thus annihilated;

oftener the boat's bow is knocked off, or the thigh-board, in which the

headsman stands, is torn from its place and accompanies the body. But

strangest of all is the circumstance, that in more instances than one,

when the body has been recovered, not a single mark of violence is

discernible; the man being stark dead.

The whole calamity, with the falling form of Macey, was plainly descried

from the ship. Raising a piercing shriek--"The vial! the vial!" Gabriel

called off the terror-stricken crew from the further hunting of the

whale. This terrible event clothed the archangel with added influence;

because his credulous disciples believed that he had specifically

fore-announced it, instead of only making a general prophecy, which any

one might have done, and so have chanced to hit one of many marks in the

wide margin allowed. He became a nameless terror to the ship.

Mayhew having concluded his narration, Ahab put such questions to

him, that the stranger captain could not forbear inquiring whether he

intended to hunt the White Whale, if opportunity should offer. To which

Ahab answered--"Aye." Straightway, then, Gabriel once more started

to his feet, glaring upon the old man, and vehemently exclaimed, with

downward pointed finger--"Think, think of the blasphemer--dead, and down

there!--beware of the blasphemer's end!"

Ahab stolidly turned aside; then said to Mayhew, "Captain, I have

just bethought me of my letter-bag; there is a letter for one of thy

officers, if I mistake not. Starbuck, look over the bag."

Every whale-ship takes out a goodly number of letters for various ships,

whose delivery to the persons to whom they may be addressed, depends

upon the mere chance of encountering them in the four oceans. Thus,

most letters never reach their mark; and many are only received after

attaining an age of two or three years or more.

Soon Starbuck returned with a letter in his hand. It was sorely tumbled,

damp, and covered with a dull, spotted, green mould, in consequence

of being kept in a dark locker of the cabin. Of such a letter, Death

himself might well have been the post-boy.

"Can'st not read it?" cried Ahab. "Give it me, man. Aye, aye, it's but

a dim scrawl;--what's this?" As he was studying it out, Starbuck took a

long cutting-spade pole, and with his knife slightly split the end, to

insert the letter there, and in that way, hand it to the boat, without

its coming any closer to the ship.

Meantime, Ahab holding the letter, muttered, "Mr. Har--yes, Mr.

Harry--(a woman's pinny hand,--the man's wife, I'll wager)--Aye--Mr.

Harry Macey, Ship Jeroboam;--why it's Macey, and he's dead!"

"Poor fellow! poor fellow! and from his wife," sighed Mayhew; "but let

me have it."

"Nay, keep it thyself," cried Gabriel to Ahab; "thou art soon going that

way."

"Curses throttle thee!" yelled Ahab. "Captain Mayhew, stand by now to

receive it"; and taking the fatal missive from Starbuck's hands, he

caught it in the slit of the pole, and reached it over towards the boat.

But as he did so, the oarsmen expectantly desisted from rowing; the boat

drifted a little towards the ship's stern; so that, as if by magic, the

letter suddenly ranged along with Gabriel's eager hand. He clutched it

in an instant, seized the boat-knife, and impaling the letter on it,

sent it thus loaded back into the ship. It fell at Ahab's feet. Then

Gabriel shrieked out to his comrades to give way with their oars, and in

that manner the mutinous boat rapidly shot away from the Pequod.

As, after this interlude, the seamen resumed their work upon the jacket

of the whale, many strange things were hinted in reference to this wild

affair.

CHAPTER 72. The Monkey-Rope.

In the tumultuous business of cutting-in and attending to a whale, there

is much running backwards and forwards among the crew. Now hands are

wanted here, and then again hands are wanted there. There is no staying

in any one place; for at one and the same time everything has to be done

everywhere. It is much the same with him who endeavors the description

of the scene. We must now retrace our way a little. It was mentioned

that upon first breaking ground in the whale's back, the blubber-hook

was inserted into the original hole there cut by the spades of the

mates. But how did so clumsy and weighty a mass as that same hook

get fixed in that hole? It was inserted there by my particular friend

Queequeg, whose duty it was, as harpooneer, to descend upon the

monster's back for the special purpose referred to. But in very many

cases, circumstances require that the harpooneer shall remain on the

whale till the whole flensing or stripping operation is concluded. The

whale, be it observed, lies almost entirely submerged, excepting the

immediate parts operated upon. So down there, some ten feet below the

level of the deck, the poor harpooneer flounders about, half on the

whale and half in the water, as the vast mass revolves like a tread-mill

beneath him. On the occasion in question, Queequeg figured in the

Highland costume--a shirt and socks--in which to my eyes, at least,

he appeared to uncommon advantage; and no one had a better chance to

observe him, as will presently be seen.

Being the savage's bowsman, that is, the person who pulled the bow-oar

in his boat (the second one from forward), it was my cheerful duty to

attend upon him while taking that hard-scrabble scramble upon the dead

whale's back. You have seen Italian organ-boys holding a dancing-ape by

a long cord. Just so, from the ship's steep side, did I hold Queequeg

down there in the sea, by what is technically called in the fishery

a monkey-rope, attached to a strong strip of canvas belted round his

waist.

It was a humorously perilous business for both of us. For, before we

proceed further, it must be said that the monkey-rope was fast at

both ends; fast to Queequeg's broad canvas belt, and fast to my narrow

leather one. So that for better or for worse, we two, for the time, were

wedded; and should poor Queequeg sink to rise no more, then both usage

and honour demanded, that instead of cutting the cord, it should drag

me down in his wake. So, then, an elongated Siamese ligature united us.

Queequeg was my own inseparable twin brother; nor could I any way get

rid of the dangerous liabilities which the hempen bond entailed.

So strongly and metaphysically did I conceive of my situation then, that

while earnestly watching his motions, I seemed distinctly to perceive

that my own individuality was now merged in a joint stock company of

two; that my free will had received a mortal wound; and that another's

mistake or misfortune might plunge innocent me into unmerited disaster

and death. Therefore, I saw that here was a sort of interregnum in

Providence; for its even-handed equity never could have so gross an

injustice. And yet still further pondering--while I jerked him now

and then from between the whale and ship, which would threaten to jam

him--still further pondering, I say, I saw that this situation of mine

was the precise situation of every mortal that breathes; only, in most

cases, he, one way or other, has this Siamese connexion with a plurality

of other mortals. If your banker breaks, you snap; if your apothecary by

mistake sends you poison in your pills, you die. True, you may say

that, by exceeding caution, you may possibly escape these and the

multitudinous other evil chances of life. But handle Queequeg's

monkey-rope heedfully as I would, sometimes he jerked it so, that I came

very near sliding overboard. Nor could I possibly forget that, do what I

would, I only had the management of one end of it.\*

\*The monkey-rope is found in all whalers; but it was only in the Pequod

that the monkey and his holder were ever tied together. This improvement

upon the original usage was introduced by no less a man than Stubb,

in order to afford the imperilled harpooneer the strongest possible

guarantee for the faithfulness and vigilance of his monkey-rope holder.

I have hinted that I would often jerk poor Queequeg from between the

whale and the ship--where he would occasionally fall, from the incessant

rolling and swaying of both. But this was not the only jamming jeopardy

he was exposed to. Unappalled by the massacre made upon them during the

night, the sharks now freshly and more keenly allured by the before pent

blood which began to flow from the carcass--the rabid creatures swarmed

round it like bees in a beehive.

And right in among those sharks was Queequeg; who often pushed them

aside with his floundering feet. A thing altogether incredible were

it not that attracted by such prey as a dead whale, the otherwise

miscellaneously carnivorous shark will seldom touch a man.

Nevertheless, it may well be believed that since they have such a

ravenous finger in the pie, it is deemed but wise to look sharp to them.

Accordingly, besides the monkey-rope, with which I now and then jerked

the poor fellow from too close a vicinity to the maw of what seemed

a peculiarly ferocious shark--he was provided with still another

protection. Suspended over the side in one of the stages, Tashtego

and Daggoo continually flourished over his head a couple of keen

whale-spades, wherewith they slaughtered as many sharks as they could

reach. This procedure of theirs, to be sure, was very disinterested and

benevolent of them. They meant Queequeg's best happiness, I admit; but

in their hasty zeal to befriend him, and from the circumstance that both

he and the sharks were at times half hidden by the blood-muddled water,

those indiscreet spades of theirs would come nearer amputating a leg

than a tail. But poor Queequeg, I suppose, straining and gasping there

with that great iron hook--poor Queequeg, I suppose, only prayed to his

Yojo, and gave up his life into the hands of his gods.

Well, well, my dear comrade and twin-brother, thought I, as I drew in

and then slacked off the rope to every swell of the sea--what matters

it, after all? Are you not the precious image of each and all of us men

in this whaling world? That unsounded ocean you gasp in, is Life; those

sharks, your foes; those spades, your friends; and what between sharks

and spades you are in a sad pickle and peril, poor lad.

But courage! there is good cheer in store for you, Queequeg. For now, as

with blue lips and blood-shot eyes the exhausted savage at last climbs

up the chains and stands all dripping and involuntarily trembling over

the side; the steward advances, and with a benevolent, consolatory

glance hands him--what? Some hot Cognac? No! hands him, ye gods! hands

him a cup of tepid ginger and water!

"Ginger? Do I smell ginger?" suspiciously asked Stubb, coming near.

"Yes, this must be ginger," peering into the as yet untasted cup. Then

standing as if incredulous for a while, he calmly walked towards the

astonished steward slowly saying, "Ginger? ginger? and will you have

the goodness to tell me, Mr. Dough-Boy, where lies the virtue of ginger?

Ginger! is ginger the sort of fuel you use, Dough-boy, to kindle a fire

in this shivering cannibal? Ginger!--what the devil is ginger?

Sea-coal? firewood?--lucifer matches?--tinder?--gunpowder?--what the

devil is ginger, I say, that you offer this cup to our poor Queequeg

here."

"There is some sneaking Temperance Society movement about this

business," he suddenly added, now approaching Starbuck, who had just

come from forward. "Will you look at that kannakin, sir; smell of it,

if you please." Then watching the mate's countenance, he added, "The

steward, Mr. Starbuck, had the face to offer that calomel and jalap

to Queequeg, there, this instant off the whale. Is the steward an

apothecary, sir? and may I ask whether this is the sort of bitters by

which he blows back the life into a half-drowned man?"

"I trust not," said Starbuck, "it is poor stuff enough."

"Aye, aye, steward," cried Stubb, "we'll teach you to drug a

harpooneer; none of your apothecary's medicine here; you want to poison

us, do ye? You have got out insurances on our lives and want to murder

us all, and pocket the proceeds, do ye?"

"It was not me," cried Dough-Boy, "it was Aunt Charity that brought the

ginger on board; and bade me never give the harpooneers any spirits, but

only this ginger-jub--so she called it."

"Ginger-jub! you gingerly rascal! take that! and run along with ye

to the lockers, and get something better. I hope I do no wrong, Mr.

Starbuck. It is the captain's orders--grog for the harpooneer on a

whale."

"Enough," replied Starbuck, "only don't hit him again, but--"

"Oh, I never hurt when I hit, except when I hit a whale or something of

that sort; and this fellow's a weazel. What were you about saying, sir?"

"Only this: go down with him, and get what thou wantest thyself."

When Stubb reappeared, he came with a dark flask in one hand, and a sort

of tea-caddy in the other. The first contained strong spirits, and was

handed to Queequeg; the second was Aunt Charity's gift, and that was

freely given to the waves.

CHAPTER 73. Stubb and Flask Kill a Right Whale; and Then Have a Talk

Over Him.

It must be borne in mind that all this time we have a Sperm Whale's

prodigious head hanging to the Pequod's side. But we must let it

continue hanging there a while till we can get a chance to attend to it.

For the present other matters press, and the best we can do now for the

head, is to pray heaven the tackles may hold.

Now, during the past night and forenoon, the Pequod had gradually

drifted into a sea, which, by its occasional patches of yellow brit,

gave unusual tokens of the vicinity of Right Whales, a species of the

Leviathan that but few supposed to be at this particular time lurking

anywhere near. And though all hands commonly disdained the capture of

those inferior creatures; and though the Pequod was not commissioned to

cruise for them at all, and though she had passed numbers of them near

the Crozetts without lowering a boat; yet now that a Sperm Whale

had been brought alongside and beheaded, to the surprise of all, the

announcement was made that a Right Whale should be captured that day, if

opportunity offered.

Nor was this long wanting. Tall spouts were seen to leeward; and two

boats, Stubb's and Flask's, were detached in pursuit. Pulling further

and further away, they at last became almost invisible to the men at

the mast-head. But suddenly in the distance, they saw a great heap of

tumultuous white water, and soon after news came from aloft that one or

both the boats must be fast. An interval passed and the boats were in

plain sight, in the act of being dragged right towards the ship by the

towing whale. So close did the monster come to the hull, that at

first it seemed as if he meant it malice; but suddenly going down in a

maelstrom, within three rods of the planks, he wholly disappeared from

view, as if diving under the keel. "Cut, cut!" was the cry from the

ship to the boats, which, for one instant, seemed on the point of being

brought with a deadly dash against the vessel's side. But having plenty

of line yet in the tubs, and the whale not sounding very rapidly, they

paid out abundance of rope, and at the same time pulled with all their

might so as to get ahead of the ship. For a few minutes the struggle was

intensely critical; for while they still slacked out the tightened line

in one direction, and still plied their oars in another, the contending

strain threatened to take them under. But it was only a few feet advance

they sought to gain. And they stuck to it till they did gain it; when

instantly, a swift tremor was felt running like lightning along the

keel, as the strained line, scraping beneath the ship, suddenly rose

to view under her bows, snapping and quivering; and so flinging off its

drippings, that the drops fell like bits of broken glass on the water,

while the whale beyond also rose to sight, and once more the boats were

free to fly. But the fagged whale abated his speed, and blindly altering

his course, went round the stern of the ship towing the two boats after

him, so that they performed a complete circuit.

Meantime, they hauled more and more upon their lines, till close

flanking him on both sides, Stubb answered Flask with lance for

lance; and thus round and round the Pequod the battle went, while the

multitudes of sharks that had before swum round the Sperm Whale's body,

rushed to the fresh blood that was spilled, thirstily drinking at every

new gash, as the eager Israelites did at the new bursting fountains that

poured from the smitten rock.

At last his spout grew thick, and with a frightful roll and vomit, he

turned upon his back a corpse.

While the two headsmen were engaged in making fast cords to his flukes,

and in other ways getting the mass in readiness for towing, some

conversation ensued between them.

"I wonder what the old man wants with this lump of foul lard," said

Stubb, not without some disgust at the thought of having to do with so

ignoble a leviathan.

"Wants with it?" said Flask, coiling some spare line in the boat's bow,

"did you never hear that the ship which but once has a Sperm Whale's

head hoisted on her starboard side, and at the same time a Right Whale's

on the larboard; did you never hear, Stubb, that that ship can never

afterwards capsize?"

"Why not?

"I don't know, but I heard that gamboge ghost of a Fedallah saying so,

and he seems to know all about ships' charms. But I sometimes think

he'll charm the ship to no good at last. I don't half like that chap,

Stubb. Did you ever notice how that tusk of his is a sort of carved into

a snake's head, Stubb?"

"Sink him! I never look at him at all; but if ever I get a chance of a

dark night, and he standing hard by the bulwarks, and no one by; look

down there, Flask"--pointing into the sea with a peculiar motion of

both hands--"Aye, will I! Flask, I take that Fedallah to be the devil in

disguise. Do you believe that cock and bull story about his having been

stowed away on board ship? He's the devil, I say. The reason why you

don't see his tail, is because he tucks it up out of sight; he carries

it coiled away in his pocket, I guess. Blast him! now that I think of

it, he's always wanting oakum to stuff into the toes of his boots."

"He sleeps in his boots, don't he? He hasn't got any hammock; but I've

seen him lay of nights in a coil of rigging."

"No doubt, and it's because of his cursed tail; he coils it down, do ye

see, in the eye of the rigging."

"What's the old man have so much to do with him for?"

"Striking up a swap or a bargain, I suppose."

"Bargain?--about what?"

"Why, do ye see, the old man is hard bent after that White Whale, and

the devil there is trying to come round him, and get him to swap away

his silver watch, or his soul, or something of that sort, and then he'll

surrender Moby Dick."

"Pooh! Stubb, you are skylarking; how can Fedallah do that?"

"I don't know, Flask, but the devil is a curious chap, and a wicked

one, I tell ye. Why, they say as how he went a sauntering into the

old flag-ship once, switching his tail about devilish easy and

gentlemanlike, and inquiring if the old governor was at home. Well, he

was at home, and asked the devil what he wanted. The devil, switching

his hoofs, up and says, 'I want John.' 'What for?' says the old

governor. 'What business is that of yours,' says the devil, getting

mad,--'I want to use him.' 'Take him,' says the governor--and by the

Lord, Flask, if the devil didn't give John the Asiatic cholera before

he got through with him, I'll eat this whale in one mouthful. But look

sharp--ain't you all ready there? Well, then, pull ahead, and let's get

the whale alongside."

"I think I remember some such story as you were telling," said Flask,

when at last the two boats were slowly advancing with their burden

towards the ship, "but I can't remember where."

"Three Spaniards? Adventures of those three bloody-minded soladoes? Did

ye read it there, Flask? I guess ye did?"

"No: never saw such a book; heard of it, though. But now, tell me,

Stubb, do you suppose that that devil you was speaking of just now, was

the same you say is now on board the Pequod?"

"Am I the same man that helped kill this whale? Doesn't the devil live

for ever; who ever heard that the devil was dead? Did you ever see

any parson a wearing mourning for the devil? And if the devil has a

latch-key to get into the admiral's cabin, don't you suppose he can

crawl into a porthole? Tell me that, Mr. Flask?"

"How old do you suppose Fedallah is, Stubb?"

"Do you see that mainmast there?" pointing to the ship; "well, that's

the figure one; now take all the hoops in the Pequod's hold, and string

along in a row with that mast, for oughts, do you see; well, that

wouldn't begin to be Fedallah's age. Nor all the coopers in creation

couldn't show hoops enough to make oughts enough."

"But see here, Stubb, I thought you a little boasted just now, that you

meant to give Fedallah a sea-toss, if you got a good chance. Now, if

he's so old as all those hoops of yours come to, and if he is going

to live for ever, what good will it do to pitch him overboard--tell me

that?

"Give him a good ducking, anyhow."

"But he'd crawl back."

"Duck him again; and keep ducking him."

"Suppose he should take it into his head to duck you, though--yes, and

drown you--what then?"

"I should like to see him try it; I'd give him such a pair of black eyes

that he wouldn't dare to show his face in the admiral's cabin again for

a long while, let alone down in the orlop there, where he lives, and

hereabouts on the upper decks where he sneaks so much. Damn the devil,

Flask; so you suppose I'm afraid of the devil? Who's afraid of

him, except the old governor who daresn't catch him and put him in

double-darbies, as he deserves, but lets him go about kidnapping

people; aye, and signed a bond with him, that all the people the devil

kidnapped, he'd roast for him? There's a governor!"

"Do you suppose Fedallah wants to kidnap Captain Ahab?"

"Do I suppose it? You'll know it before long, Flask. But I am going now

to keep a sharp look-out on him; and if I see anything very suspicious

going on, I'll just take him by the nape of his neck, and say--Look

here, Beelzebub, you don't do it; and if he makes any fuss, by the Lord

I'll make a grab into his pocket for his tail, take it to the capstan,

and give him such a wrenching and heaving, that his tail will come short

off at the stump--do you see; and then, I rather guess when he finds

himself docked in that queer fashion, he'll sneak off without the poor

satisfaction of feeling his tail between his legs."

"And what will you do with the tail, Stubb?"

"Do with it? Sell it for an ox whip when we get home;--what else?"

"Now, do you mean what you say, and have been saying all along, Stubb?"

"Mean or not mean, here we are at the ship."

The boats were here hailed, to tow the whale on the larboard side, where

fluke chains and other necessaries were already prepared for securing

him.

"Didn't I tell you so?" said Flask; "yes, you'll soon see this right

whale's head hoisted up opposite that parmacetti's."

In good time, Flask's saying proved true. As before, the Pequod steeply

leaned over towards the sperm whale's head, now, by the counterpoise of

both heads, she regained her even keel; though sorely strained, you may

well believe. So, when on one side you hoist in Locke's head, you go

over that way; but now, on the other side, hoist in Kant's and you come

back again; but in very poor plight. Thus, some minds for ever keep

trimming boat. Oh, ye foolish! throw all these thunder-heads overboard,

and then you will float light and right.

In disposing of the body of a right whale, when brought alongside the

ship, the same preliminary proceedings commonly take place as in the

case of a sperm whale; only, in the latter instance, the head is cut off

whole, but in the former the lips and tongue are separately removed and

hoisted on deck, with all the well known black bone attached to what is

called the crown-piece. But nothing like this, in the present case,

had been done. The carcases of both whales had dropped astern; and

the head-laden ship not a little resembled a mule carrying a pair of

overburdening panniers.

Meantime, Fedallah was calmly eyeing the right whale's head, and ever

and anon glancing from the deep wrinkles there to the lines in his own

hand. And Ahab chanced so to stand, that the Parsee occupied his shadow;

while, if the Parsee's shadow was there at all it seemed only to

blend with, and lengthen Ahab's. As the crew toiled on, Laplandish

speculations were bandied among them, concerning all these passing

things.

CHAPTER 74. The Sperm Whale's Head--Contrasted View.

Here, now, are two great whales, laying their heads together; let us

join them, and lay together our own.

Of the grand order of folio leviathans, the Sperm Whale and the Right

Whale are by far the most noteworthy. They are the only whales regularly

hunted by man. To the Nantucketer, they present the two extremes of all

the known varieties of the whale. As the external difference between

them is mainly observable in their heads; and as a head of each is this

moment hanging from the Pequod's side; and as we may freely go from one

to the other, by merely stepping across the deck:--where, I should like

to know, will you obtain a better chance to study practical cetology

than here?

In the first place, you are struck by the general contrast between these

heads. Both are massive enough in all conscience; but there is a certain

mathematical symmetry in the Sperm Whale's which the Right Whale's sadly

lacks. There is more character in the Sperm Whale's head. As you behold

it, you involuntarily yield the immense superiority to him, in point

of pervading dignity. In the present instance, too, this dignity is

heightened by the pepper and salt colour of his head at the summit,

giving token of advanced age and large experience. In short, he is what

the fishermen technically call a "grey-headed whale."

Let us now note what is least dissimilar in these heads--namely, the two

most important organs, the eye and the ear. Far back on the side of

the head, and low down, near the angle of either whale's jaw, if you

narrowly search, you will at last see a lashless eye, which you would

fancy to be a young colt's eye; so out of all proportion is it to the

magnitude of the head.

Now, from this peculiar sideway position of the whale's eyes, it is

plain that he can never see an object which is exactly ahead, no more

than he can one exactly astern. In a word, the position of the whale's

eyes corresponds to that of a man's ears; and you may fancy, for

yourself, how it would fare with you, did you sideways survey objects

through your ears. You would find that you could only command some

thirty degrees of vision in advance of the straight side-line of sight;

and about thirty more behind it. If your bitterest foe were walking

straight towards you, with dagger uplifted in broad day, you would not

be able to see him, any more than if he were stealing upon you from

behind. In a word, you would have two backs, so to speak; but, at the

same time, also, two fronts (side fronts): for what is it that makes the

front of a man--what, indeed, but his eyes?

Moreover, while in most other animals that I can now think of, the eyes

are so planted as imperceptibly to blend their visual power, so as to

produce one picture and not two to the brain; the peculiar position of

the whale's eyes, effectually divided as they are by many cubic feet of

solid head, which towers between them like a great mountain separating

two lakes in valleys; this, of course, must wholly separate the

impressions which each independent organ imparts. The whale, therefore,

must see one distinct picture on this side, and another distinct

picture on that side; while all between must be profound darkness and

nothingness to him. Man may, in effect, be said to look out on the world

from a sentry-box with two joined sashes for his window. But with the

whale, these two sashes are separately inserted, making two distinct

windows, but sadly impairing the view. This peculiarity of the whale's

eyes is a thing always to be borne in mind in the fishery; and to be

remembered by the reader in some subsequent scenes.

A curious and most puzzling question might be started concerning this

visual matter as touching the Leviathan. But I must be content with a

hint. So long as a man's eyes are open in the light, the act of seeing

is involuntary; that is, he cannot then help mechanically seeing

whatever objects are before him. Nevertheless, any one's experience

will teach him, that though he can take in an undiscriminating sweep of

things at one glance, it is quite impossible for him, attentively,

and completely, to examine any two things--however large or however

small--at one and the same instant of time; never mind if they lie side

by side and touch each other. But if you now come to separate these two

objects, and surround each by a circle of profound darkness; then, in

order to see one of them, in such a manner as to bring your mind to

bear on it, the other will be utterly excluded from your contemporary

consciousness. How is it, then, with the whale? True, both his eyes,

in themselves, must simultaneously act; but is his brain so much more

comprehensive, combining, and subtle than man's, that he can at the same

moment of time attentively examine two distinct prospects, one on one

side of him, and the other in an exactly opposite direction? If he

can, then is it as marvellous a thing in him, as if a man were able

simultaneously to go through the demonstrations of two distinct problems

in Euclid. Nor, strictly investigated, is there any incongruity in this

comparison.

It may be but an idle whim, but it has always seemed to me, that the

extraordinary vacillations of movement displayed by some whales when

beset by three or four boats; the timidity and liability to queer

frights, so common to such whales; I think that all this indirectly

proceeds from the helpless perplexity of volition, in which their

divided and diametrically opposite powers of vision must involve them.

But the ear of the whale is full as curious as the eye. If you are an

entire stranger to their race, you might hunt over these two heads

for hours, and never discover that organ. The ear has no external leaf

whatever; and into the hole itself you can hardly insert a quill, so

wondrously minute is it. It is lodged a little behind the eye. With

respect to their ears, this important difference is to be observed

between the sperm whale and the right. While the ear of the former has

an external opening, that of the latter is entirely and evenly covered

over with a membrane, so as to be quite imperceptible from without.

Is it not curious, that so vast a being as the whale should see the

world through so small an eye, and hear the thunder through an ear which

is smaller than a hare's? But if his eyes were broad as the lens of

Herschel's great telescope; and his ears capacious as the porches of

cathedrals; would that make him any longer of sight, or sharper of

hearing? Not at all.--Why then do you try to "enlarge" your mind?

Subtilize it.

Let us now with whatever levers and steam-engines we have at hand, cant

over the sperm whale's head, that it may lie bottom up; then, ascending

by a ladder to the summit, have a peep down the mouth; and were it not

that the body is now completely separated from it, with a lantern we

might descend into the great Kentucky Mammoth Cave of his stomach. But

let us hold on here by this tooth, and look about us where we are. What

a really beautiful and chaste-looking mouth! from floor to ceiling,

lined, or rather papered with a glistening white membrane, glossy as

bridal satins.

But come out now, and look at this portentous lower jaw, which seems

like the long narrow lid of an immense snuff-box, with the hinge at one

end, instead of one side. If you pry it up, so as to get it overhead,

and expose its rows of teeth, it seems a terrific portcullis; and such,

alas! it proves to many a poor wight in the fishery, upon whom these

spikes fall with impaling force. But far more terrible is it to behold,

when fathoms down in the sea, you see some sulky whale, floating there

suspended, with his prodigious jaw, some fifteen feet long, hanging

straight down at right-angles with his body, for all the world like a

ship's jib-boom. This whale is not dead; he is only dispirited; out of

sorts, perhaps; hypochondriac; and so supine, that the hinges of his

jaw have relaxed, leaving him there in that ungainly sort of plight, a

reproach to all his tribe, who must, no doubt, imprecate lock-jaws upon

him.

In most cases this lower jaw--being easily unhinged by a practised

artist--is disengaged and hoisted on deck for the purpose of extracting

the ivory teeth, and furnishing a supply of that hard white whalebone

with which the fishermen fashion all sorts of curious articles,

including canes, umbrella-stocks, and handles to riding-whips.

With a long, weary hoist the jaw is dragged on board, as if it were an

anchor; and when the proper time comes--some few days after the other

work--Queequeg, Daggoo, and Tashtego, being all accomplished dentists,

are set to drawing teeth. With a keen cutting-spade, Queequeg lances

the gums; then the jaw is lashed down to ringbolts, and a tackle being

rigged from aloft, they drag out these teeth, as Michigan oxen drag

stumps of old oaks out of wild wood lands. There are generally forty-two

teeth in all; in old whales, much worn down, but undecayed; nor filled

after our artificial fashion. The jaw is afterwards sawn into slabs, and

piled away like joists for building houses.

CHAPTER 75. The Right Whale's Head--Contrasted View.

Crossing the deck, let us now have a good long look at the Right Whale's

head.

As in general shape the noble Sperm Whale's head may be compared to a

Roman war-chariot (especially in front, where it is so broadly rounded);

so, at a broad view, the Right Whale's head bears a rather inelegant

resemblance to a gigantic galliot-toed shoe. Two hundred years ago an

old Dutch voyager likened its shape to that of a shoemaker's last. And

in this same last or shoe, that old woman of the nursery tale, with

the swarming brood, might very comfortably be lodged, she and all her

progeny.

But as you come nearer to this great head it begins to assume different

aspects, according to your point of view. If you stand on its summit and

look at these two F-shaped spoutholes, you would take the whole head

for an enormous bass-viol, and these spiracles, the apertures in its

sounding-board. Then, again, if you fix your eye upon this strange,

crested, comb-like incrustation on the top of the mass--this green,

barnacled thing, which the Greenlanders call the "crown," and the

Southern fishers the "bonnet" of the Right Whale; fixing your eyes

solely on this, you would take the head for the trunk of some huge oak,

with a bird's nest in its crotch. At any rate, when you watch those live

crabs that nestle here on this bonnet, such an idea will be almost

sure to occur to you; unless, indeed, your fancy has been fixed by the

technical term "crown" also bestowed upon it; in which case you will

take great interest in thinking how this mighty monster is actually a

diademed king of the sea, whose green crown has been put together for

him in this marvellous manner. But if this whale be a king, he is a very

sulky looking fellow to grace a diadem. Look at that hanging lower lip!

what a huge sulk and pout is there! a sulk and pout, by carpenter's

measurement, about twenty feet long and five feet deep; a sulk and pout

that will yield you some 500 gallons of oil and more.

A great pity, now, that this unfortunate whale should be hare-lipped.

The fissure is about a foot across. Probably the mother during an

important interval was sailing down the Peruvian coast, when earthquakes

caused the beach to gape. Over this lip, as over a slippery threshold,

we now slide into the mouth. Upon my word were I at Mackinaw, I should

take this to be the inside of an Indian wigwam. Good Lord! is this the

road that Jonah went? The roof is about twelve feet high, and runs to a

pretty sharp angle, as if there were a regular ridge-pole there; while

these ribbed, arched, hairy sides, present us with those wondrous, half

vertical, scimetar-shaped slats of whalebone, say three hundred on a

side, which depending from the upper part of the head or crown

bone, form those Venetian blinds which have elsewhere been cursorily

mentioned. The edges of these bones are fringed with hairy fibres,

through which the Right Whale strains the water, and in whose

intricacies he retains the small fish, when openmouthed he goes through

the seas of brit in feeding time. In the central blinds of bone, as they

stand in their natural order, there are certain curious marks, curves,

hollows, and ridges, whereby some whalemen calculate the creature's age,

as the age of an oak by its circular rings. Though the certainty of this

criterion is far from demonstrable, yet it has the savor of analogical

probability. At any rate, if we yield to it, we must grant a far greater

age to the Right Whale than at first glance will seem reasonable.

In old times, there seem to have prevailed the most curious fancies

concerning these blinds. One voyager in Purchas calls them the wondrous

"whiskers" inside of the whale's mouth;\* another, "hogs' bristles"; a

third old gentleman in Hackluyt uses the following elegant language:

"There are about two hundred and fifty fins growing on each side of his

upper CHOP, which arch over his tongue on each side of his mouth."

\*This reminds us that the Right Whale really has a sort of whisker, or

rather a moustache, consisting of a few scattered white hairs on the

upper part of the outer end of the lower jaw. Sometimes these

tufts impart a rather brigandish expression to his otherwise solemn

countenance.

As every one knows, these same "hogs' bristles," "fins," "whiskers,"

"blinds," or whatever you please, furnish to the ladies their busks and

other stiffening contrivances. But in this particular, the demand has

long been on the decline. It was in Queen Anne's time that the bone was

in its glory, the farthingale being then all the fashion. And as those

ancient dames moved about gaily, though in the jaws of the whale, as

you may say; even so, in a shower, with the like thoughtlessness, do we

nowadays fly under the same jaws for protection; the umbrella being a

tent spread over the same bone.

But now forget all about blinds and whiskers for a moment, and, standing

in the Right Whale's mouth, look around you afresh. Seeing all these

colonnades of bone so methodically ranged about, would you not think

you were inside of the great Haarlem organ, and gazing upon its

thousand pipes? For a carpet to the organ we have a rug of the softest

Turkey--the tongue, which is glued, as it were, to the floor of the

mouth. It is very fat and tender, and apt to tear in pieces in hoisting

it on deck. This particular tongue now before us; at a passing glance I

should say it was a six-barreler; that is, it will yield you about that

amount of oil.

Ere this, you must have plainly seen the truth of what I started

with--that the Sperm Whale and the Right Whale have almost entirely

different heads. To sum up, then: in the Right Whale's there is no great

well of sperm; no ivory teeth at all; no long, slender mandible of a

lower jaw, like the Sperm Whale's. Nor in the Sperm Whale are there any

of those blinds of bone; no huge lower lip; and scarcely anything of a

tongue. Again, the Right Whale has two external spout-holes, the Sperm

Whale only one.

Look your last, now, on these venerable hooded heads, while they yet lie

together; for one will soon sink, unrecorded, in the sea; the other will

not be very long in following.

Can you catch the expression of the Sperm Whale's there? It is the same

he died with, only some of the longer wrinkles in the forehead seem

now faded away. I think his broad brow to be full of a prairie-like

placidity, born of a speculative indifference as to death. But mark the

other head's expression. See that amazing lower lip, pressed by accident

against the vessel's side, so as firmly to embrace the jaw. Does not

this whole head seem to speak of an enormous practical resolution in

facing death? This Right Whale I take to have been a Stoic; the Sperm

Whale, a Platonian, who might have taken up Spinoza in his latter years.

CHAPTER 76. The Battering-Ram.

Ere quitting, for the nonce, the Sperm Whale's head, I would have

you, as a sensible physiologist, simply--particularly remark its front

aspect, in all its compacted collectedness. I would have you investigate

it now with the sole view of forming to yourself some unexaggerated,

intelligent estimate of whatever battering-ram power may be lodged

there. Here is a vital point; for you must either satisfactorily settle

this matter with yourself, or for ever remain an infidel as to one of

the most appalling, but not the less true events, perhaps anywhere to be

found in all recorded history.

You observe that in the ordinary swimming position of the Sperm Whale,

the front of his head presents an almost wholly vertical plane to the

water; you observe that the lower part of that front slopes considerably

backwards, so as to furnish more of a retreat for the long socket which

receives the boom-like lower jaw; you observe that the mouth is entirely

under the head, much in the same way, indeed, as though your own mouth

were entirely under your chin. Moreover you observe that the whale has

no external nose; and that what nose he has--his spout hole--is on the

top of his head; you observe that his eyes and ears are at the sides

of his head, nearly one third of his entire length from the front.

Wherefore, you must now have perceived that the front of the Sperm

Whale's head is a dead, blind wall, without a single organ or tender

prominence of any sort whatsoever. Furthermore, you are now to consider

that only in the extreme, lower, backward sloping part of the front of

the head, is there the slightest vestige of bone; and not till you

get near twenty feet from the forehead do you come to the full cranial

development. So that this whole enormous boneless mass is as one wad.

Finally, though, as will soon be revealed, its contents partly comprise

the most delicate oil; yet, you are now to be apprised of the nature of

the substance which so impregnably invests all that apparent effeminacy.

In some previous place I have described to you how the blubber wraps the

body of the whale, as the rind wraps an orange. Just so with the head;

but with this difference: about the head this envelope, though not so

thick, is of a boneless toughness, inestimable by any man who has not

handled it. The severest pointed harpoon, the sharpest lance darted by

the strongest human arm, impotently rebounds from it. It is as though

the forehead of the Sperm Whale were paved with horses' hoofs. I do not

think that any sensation lurks in it.

Bethink yourself also of another thing. When two large, loaded Indiamen

chance to crowd and crush towards each other in the docks, what do the

sailors do? They do not suspend between them, at the point of coming

contact, any merely hard substance, like iron or wood. No, they hold

there a large, round wad of tow and cork, enveloped in the thickest

and toughest of ox-hide. That bravely and uninjured takes the jam which

would have snapped all their oaken handspikes and iron crow-bars. By

itself this sufficiently illustrates the obvious fact I drive at. But

supplementary to this, it has hypothetically occurred to me, that

as ordinary fish possess what is called a swimming bladder in them,

capable, at will, of distension or contraction; and as the Sperm Whale,

as far as I know, has no such provision in him; considering, too,

the otherwise inexplicable manner in which he now depresses his head

altogether beneath the surface, and anon swims with it high elevated out

of the water; considering the unobstructed elasticity of its envelope;

considering the unique interior of his head; it has hypothetically

occurred to me, I say, that those mystical lung-celled honeycombs there

may possibly have some hitherto unknown and unsuspected connexion with

the outer air, so as to be susceptible to atmospheric distension and

contraction. If this be so, fancy the irresistibleness of that might, to

which the most impalpable and destructive of all elements contributes.

Now, mark. Unerringly impelling this dead, impregnable, uninjurable

wall, and this most buoyant thing within; there swims behind it all a

mass of tremendous life, only to be adequately estimated as piled wood

is--by the cord; and all obedient to one volition, as the smallest

insect. So that when I shall hereafter detail to you all the

specialities and concentrations of potency everywhere lurking in this

expansive monster; when I shall show you some of his more inconsiderable

braining feats; I trust you will have renounced all ignorant

incredulity, and be ready to abide by this; that though the Sperm Whale

stove a passage through the Isthmus of Darien, and mixed the Atlantic

with the Pacific, you would not elevate one hair of your eye-brow. For

unless you own the whale, you are but a provincial and sentimentalist

in Truth. But clear Truth is a thing for salamander giants only to

encounter; how small the chances for the provincials then? What befell

the weakling youth lifting the dread goddess's veil at Lais?

CHAPTER 77. The Great Heidelburgh Tun.

Now comes the Baling of the Case. But to comprehend it aright, you must

know something of the curious internal structure of the thing operated

upon.

Regarding the Sperm Whale's head as a solid oblong, you may, on an

inclined plane, sideways divide it into two quoins,\* whereof the lower

is the bony structure, forming the cranium and jaws, and the upper an

unctuous mass wholly free from bones; its broad forward end forming the

expanded vertical apparent forehead of the whale. At the middle of the

forehead horizontally subdivide this upper quoin, and then you have two

almost equal parts, which before were naturally divided by an internal

wall of a thick tendinous substance.

\*Quoin is not a Euclidean term. It belongs to the pure nautical

mathematics. I know not that it has been defined before. A quoin is a

solid which differs from a wedge in having its sharp end formed by the

steep inclination of one side, instead of the mutual tapering of both

sides.

The lower subdivided part, called the junk, is one immense honeycomb

of oil, formed by the crossing and recrossing, into ten thousand

infiltrated cells, of tough elastic white fibres throughout its whole

extent. The upper part, known as the Case, may be regarded as the great

Heidelburgh Tun of the Sperm Whale. And as that famous great tierce is

mystically carved in front, so the whale's vast plaited forehead forms

innumerable strange devices for the emblematical adornment of his

wondrous tun. Moreover, as that of Heidelburgh was always replenished

with the most excellent of the wines of the Rhenish valleys, so the tun

of the whale contains by far the most precious of all his oily vintages;

namely, the highly-prized spermaceti, in its absolutely pure, limpid,

and odoriferous state. Nor is this precious substance found unalloyed

in any other part of the creature. Though in life it remains perfectly

fluid, yet, upon exposure to the air, after death, it soon begins to

concrete; sending forth beautiful crystalline shoots, as when the

first thin delicate ice is just forming in water. A large whale's

case generally yields about five hundred gallons of sperm, though from

unavoidable circumstances, considerable of it is spilled, leaks, and

dribbles away, or is otherwise irrevocably lost in the ticklish business

of securing what you can.

I know not with what fine and costly material the Heidelburgh Tun

was coated within, but in superlative richness that coating could not

possibly have compared with the silken pearl-coloured membrane, like the

lining of a fine pelisse, forming the inner surface of the Sperm Whale's

case.

It will have been seen that the Heidelburgh Tun of the Sperm Whale

embraces the entire length of the entire top of the head; and since--as

has been elsewhere set forth--the head embraces one third of the whole

length of the creature, then setting that length down at eighty feet for

a good sized whale, you have more than twenty-six feet for the depth

of the tun, when it is lengthwise hoisted up and down against a ship's

side.

As in decapitating the whale, the operator's instrument is brought close

to the spot where an entrance is subsequently forced into the spermaceti

magazine; he has, therefore, to be uncommonly heedful, lest a careless,

untimely stroke should invade the sanctuary and wastingly let out its

invaluable contents. It is this decapitated end of the head, also, which

is at last elevated out of the water, and retained in that position by

the enormous cutting tackles, whose hempen combinations, on one side,

make quite a wilderness of ropes in that quarter.

Thus much being said, attend now, I pray you, to that marvellous and--in

this particular instance--almost fatal operation whereby the Sperm

Whale's great Heidelburgh Tun is tapped.

CHAPTER 78. Cistern and Buckets.

Nimble as a cat, Tashtego mounts aloft; and without altering his erect

posture, runs straight out upon the overhanging mainyard-arm, to the

part where it exactly projects over the hoisted Tun. He has carried

with him a light tackle called a whip, consisting of only two parts,

travelling through a single-sheaved block. Securing this block, so that

it hangs down from the yard-arm, he swings one end of the rope, till it

is caught and firmly held by a hand on deck. Then, hand-over-hand, down

the other part, the Indian drops through the air, till dexterously he

lands on the summit of the head. There--still high elevated above the

rest of the company, to whom he vivaciously cries--he seems some Turkish

Muezzin calling the good people to prayers from the top of a tower. A

short-handled sharp spade being sent up to him, he diligently searches

for the proper place to begin breaking into the Tun. In this business

he proceeds very heedfully, like a treasure-hunter in some old house,

sounding the walls to find where the gold is masoned in. By the time

this cautious search is over, a stout iron-bound bucket, precisely like

a well-bucket, has been attached to one end of the whip; while the other

end, being stretched across the deck, is there held by two or three

alert hands. These last now hoist the bucket within grasp of the Indian,

to whom another person has reached up a very long pole. Inserting this

pole into the bucket, Tashtego downward guides the bucket into the Tun,

till it entirely disappears; then giving the word to the seamen at the

whip, up comes the bucket again, all bubbling like a dairy-maid's pail

of new milk. Carefully lowered from its height, the full-freighted

vessel is caught by an appointed hand, and quickly emptied into a large

tub. Then remounting aloft, it again goes through the same round until

the deep cistern will yield no more. Towards the end, Tashtego has to

ram his long pole harder and harder, and deeper and deeper into the Tun,

until some twenty feet of the pole have gone down.

Now, the people of the Pequod had been baling some time in this way;

several tubs had been filled with the fragrant sperm; when all at once a

queer accident happened. Whether it was that Tashtego, that wild Indian,

was so heedless and reckless as to let go for a moment his one-handed

hold on the great cabled tackles suspending the head; or whether the

place where he stood was so treacherous and oozy; or whether the Evil

One himself would have it to fall out so, without stating his particular

reasons; how it was exactly, there is no telling now; but, on a sudden,

as the eightieth or ninetieth bucket came suckingly up--my God! poor

Tashtego--like the twin reciprocating bucket in a veritable well,

dropped head-foremost down into this great Tun of Heidelburgh, and with

a horrible oily gurgling, went clean out of sight!

"Man overboard!" cried Daggoo, who amid the general consternation first

came to his senses. "Swing the bucket this way!" and putting one foot

into it, so as the better to secure his slippery hand-hold on the whip

itself, the hoisters ran him high up to the top of the head, almost

before Tashtego could have reached its interior bottom. Meantime,

there was a terrible tumult. Looking over the side, they saw the before

lifeless head throbbing and heaving just below the surface of the sea,

as if that moment seized with some momentous idea; whereas it was only

the poor Indian unconsciously revealing by those struggles the perilous

depth to which he had sunk.

At this instant, while Daggoo, on the summit of the head, was clearing

the whip--which had somehow got foul of the great cutting tackles--a

sharp cracking noise was heard; and to the unspeakable horror of all,

one of the two enormous hooks suspending the head tore out, and with

a vast vibration the enormous mass sideways swung, till the drunk ship

reeled and shook as if smitten by an iceberg. The one remaining hook,

upon which the entire strain now depended, seemed every instant to be

on the point of giving way; an event still more likely from the violent

motions of the head.

"Come down, come down!" yelled the seamen to Daggoo, but with one hand

holding on to the heavy tackles, so that if the head should drop, he

would still remain suspended; the negro having cleared the foul line,

rammed down the bucket into the now collapsed well, meaning that the

buried harpooneer should grasp it, and so be hoisted out.

"In heaven's name, man," cried Stubb, "are you ramming home a cartridge

there?--Avast! How will that help him; jamming that iron-bound bucket on

top of his head? Avast, will ye!"

"Stand clear of the tackle!" cried a voice like the bursting of a

rocket.

Almost in the same instant, with a thunder-boom, the enormous mass

dropped into the sea, like Niagara's Table-Rock into the whirlpool; the

suddenly relieved hull rolled away from it, to far down her glittering

copper; and all caught their breath, as half swinging--now over the

sailors' heads, and now over the water--Daggoo, through a thick mist of

spray, was dimly beheld clinging to the pendulous tackles, while poor,

buried-alive Tashtego was sinking utterly down to the bottom of the sea!

But hardly had the blinding vapour cleared away, when a naked figure

with a boarding-sword in his hand, was for one swift moment seen

hovering over the bulwarks. The next, a loud splash announced that my

brave Queequeg had dived to the rescue. One packed rush was made to the

side, and every eye counted every ripple, as moment followed moment, and

no sign of either the sinker or the diver could be seen. Some hands now

jumped into a boat alongside, and pushed a little off from the ship.

"Ha! ha!" cried Daggoo, all at once, from his now quiet, swinging perch

overhead; and looking further off from the side, we saw an arm thrust

upright from the blue waves; a sight strange to see, as an arm thrust

forth from the grass over a grave.

"Both! both!--it is both!"--cried Daggoo again with a joyful shout; and

soon after, Queequeg was seen boldly striking out with one hand, and

with the other clutching the long hair of the Indian. Drawn into the

waiting boat, they were quickly brought to the deck; but Tashtego was

long in coming to, and Queequeg did not look very brisk.

Now, how had this noble rescue been accomplished? Why, diving after

the slowly descending head, Queequeg with his keen sword had made

side lunges near its bottom, so as to scuttle a large hole there; then

dropping his sword, had thrust his long arm far inwards and upwards,

and so hauled out poor Tash by the head. He averred, that upon first

thrusting in for him, a leg was presented; but well knowing that that

was not as it ought to be, and might occasion great trouble;--he had

thrust back the leg, and by a dexterous heave and toss, had wrought a

somerset upon the Indian; so that with the next trial, he came forth in

the good old way--head foremost. As for the great head itself, that was

doing as well as could be expected.

And thus, through the courage and great skill in obstetrics of Queequeg,

the deliverance, or rather, delivery of Tashtego, was successfully

accomplished, in the teeth, too, of the most untoward and apparently

hopeless impediments; which is a lesson by no means to be forgotten.

Midwifery should be taught in the same course with fencing and boxing,

riding and rowing.

I know that this queer adventure of the Gay-Header's will be sure to

seem incredible to some landsmen, though they themselves may have either

seen or heard of some one's falling into a cistern ashore; an accident

which not seldom happens, and with much less reason too than the

Indian's, considering the exceeding slipperiness of the curb of the

Sperm Whale's well.

But, peradventure, it may be sagaciously urged, how is this? We thought

the tissued, infiltrated head of the Sperm Whale, was the lightest and

most corky part about him; and yet thou makest it sink in an element of

a far greater specific gravity than itself. We have thee there. Not at

all, but I have ye; for at the time poor Tash fell in, the case had been

nearly emptied of its lighter contents, leaving little but the dense

tendinous wall of the well--a double welded, hammered substance, as I

have before said, much heavier than the sea water, and a lump of which

sinks in it like lead almost. But the tendency to rapid sinking in this

substance was in the present instance materially counteracted by the

other parts of the head remaining undetached from it, so that it sank

very slowly and deliberately indeed, affording Queequeg a fair chance

for performing his agile obstetrics on the run, as you may say. Yes, it

was a running delivery, so it was.

Now, had Tashtego perished in that head, it had been a very precious

perishing; smothered in the very whitest and daintiest of fragrant

spermaceti; coffined, hearsed, and tombed in the secret inner chamber

and sanctum sanctorum of the whale. Only one sweeter end can readily be

recalled--the delicious death of an Ohio honey-hunter, who seeking honey

in the crotch of a hollow tree, found such exceeding store of it, that

leaning too far over, it sucked him in, so that he died embalmed.

How many, think ye, have likewise fallen into Plato's honey head, and

sweetly perished there?

CHAPTER 79. The Prairie.

To scan the lines of his face, or feel the bumps on the head of this

Leviathan; this is a thing which no Physiognomist or Phrenologist has as

yet undertaken. Such an enterprise would seem almost as hopeful as for

Lavater to have scrutinized the wrinkles on the Rock of Gibraltar,

or for Gall to have mounted a ladder and manipulated the Dome of the

Pantheon. Still, in that famous work of his, Lavater not only treats

of the various faces of men, but also attentively studies the faces

of horses, birds, serpents, and fish; and dwells in detail upon the

modifications of expression discernible therein. Nor have Gall and

his disciple Spurzheim failed to throw out some hints touching the

phrenological characteristics of other beings than man. Therefore,

though I am but ill qualified for a pioneer, in the application of these

two semi-sciences to the whale, I will do my endeavor. I try all things;

I achieve what I can.

Physiognomically regarded, the Sperm Whale is an anomalous creature.

He has no proper nose. And since the nose is the central and most

conspicuous of the features; and since it perhaps most modifies and

finally controls their combined expression; hence it would seem that its

entire absence, as an external appendage, must very largely affect

the countenance of the whale. For as in landscape gardening, a spire,

cupola, monument, or tower of some sort, is deemed almost indispensable

to the completion of the scene; so no face can be physiognomically in

keeping without the elevated open-work belfry of the nose. Dash the nose

from Phidias's marble Jove, and what a sorry remainder! Nevertheless,

Leviathan is of so mighty a magnitude, all his proportions are so

stately, that the same deficiency which in the sculptured Jove were

hideous, in him is no blemish at all. Nay, it is an added grandeur. A

nose to the whale would have been impertinent. As on your physiognomical

voyage you sail round his vast head in your jolly-boat, your noble

conceptions of him are never insulted by the reflection that he has a

nose to be pulled. A pestilent conceit, which so often will insist upon

obtruding even when beholding the mightiest royal beadle on his throne.

In some particulars, perhaps the most imposing physiognomical view to

be had of the Sperm Whale, is that of the full front of his head. This

aspect is sublime.

In thought, a fine human brow is like the East when troubled with the

morning. In the repose of the pasture, the curled brow of the bull has a

touch of the grand in it. Pushing heavy cannon up mountain defiles, the

elephant's brow is majestic. Human or animal, the mystical brow is as

that great golden seal affixed by the German Emperors to their decrees.

It signifies--"God: done this day by my hand." But in most creatures,

nay in man himself, very often the brow is but a mere strip of alpine

land lying along the snow line. Few are the foreheads which like

Shakespeare's or Melancthon's rise so high, and descend so low, that the

eyes themselves seem clear, eternal, tideless mountain lakes; and all

above them in the forehead's wrinkles, you seem to track the antlered

thoughts descending there to drink, as the Highland hunters track the

snow prints of the deer. But in the great Sperm Whale, this high and

mighty god-like dignity inherent in the brow is so immensely amplified,

that gazing on it, in that full front view, you feel the Deity and the

dread powers more forcibly than in beholding any other object in living

nature. For you see no one point precisely; not one distinct feature is

revealed; no nose, eyes, ears, or mouth; no face; he has none, proper;

nothing but that one broad firmament of a forehead, pleated with

riddles; dumbly lowering with the doom of boats, and ships, and men.

Nor, in profile, does this wondrous brow diminish; though that way

viewed its grandeur does not domineer upon you so. In profile, you

plainly perceive that horizontal, semi-crescentic depression in the

forehead's middle, which, in man, is Lavater's mark of genius.

But how? Genius in the Sperm Whale? Has the Sperm Whale ever written

a book, spoken a speech? No, his great genius is declared in his

doing nothing particular to prove it. It is moreover declared in his

pyramidical silence. And this reminds me that had the great Sperm Whale

been known to the young Orient World, he would have been deified by

their child-magian thoughts. They deified the crocodile of the Nile,

because the crocodile is tongueless; and the Sperm Whale has no

tongue, or at least it is so exceedingly small, as to be incapable of

protrusion. If hereafter any highly cultured, poetical nation shall lure

back to their birth-right, the merry May-day gods of old; and livingly

enthrone them again in the now egotistical sky; in the now unhaunted

hill; then be sure, exalted to Jove's high seat, the great Sperm Whale

shall lord it.

Champollion deciphered the wrinkled granite hieroglyphics. But there is

no Champollion to decipher the Egypt of every man's and every being's

face. Physiognomy, like every other human science, is but a passing

fable. If then, Sir William Jones, who read in thirty languages, could

not read the simplest peasant's face in its profounder and more subtle

meanings, how may unlettered Ishmael hope to read the awful Chaldee of

the Sperm Whale's brow? I but put that brow before you. Read it if you

can.

CHAPTER 80. The Nut.

If the Sperm Whale be physiognomically a Sphinx, to the phrenologist his

brain seems that geometrical circle which it is impossible to square.

In the full-grown creature the skull will measure at least twenty feet

in length. Unhinge the lower jaw, and the side view of this skull is as

the side of a moderately inclined plane resting throughout on a level

base. But in life--as we have elsewhere seen--this inclined plane is

angularly filled up, and almost squared by the enormous superincumbent

mass of the junk and sperm. At the high end the skull forms a crater to

bed that part of the mass; while under the long floor of this crater--in

another cavity seldom exceeding ten inches in length and as many in

depth--reposes the mere handful of this monster's brain. The brain is at

least twenty feet from his apparent forehead in life; it is hidden

away behind its vast outworks, like the innermost citadel within the

amplified fortifications of Quebec. So like a choice casket is it

secreted in him, that I have known some whalemen who peremptorily deny

that the Sperm Whale has any other brain than that palpable semblance

of one formed by the cubic-yards of his sperm magazine. Lying in strange

folds, courses, and convolutions, to their apprehensions, it seems more

in keeping with the idea of his general might to regard that mystic part

of him as the seat of his intelligence.

It is plain, then, that phrenologically the head of this Leviathan, in

the creature's living intact state, is an entire delusion. As for his

true brain, you can then see no indications of it, nor feel any. The

whale, like all things that are mighty, wears a false brow to the common

world.

If you unload his skull of its spermy heaps and then take a rear view

of its rear end, which is the high end, you will be struck by its

resemblance to the human skull, beheld in the same situation, and from

the same point of view. Indeed, place this reversed skull (scaled down

to the human magnitude) among a plate of men's skulls, and you would

involuntarily confound it with them; and remarking the depressions on

one part of its summit, in phrenological phrase you would say--This

man had no self-esteem, and no veneration. And by those negations,

considered along with the affirmative fact of his prodigious bulk and

power, you can best form to yourself the truest, though not the most

exhilarating conception of what the most exalted potency is.

But if from the comparative dimensions of the whale's proper brain, you

deem it incapable of being adequately charted, then I have another idea

for you. If you attentively regard almost any quadruped's spine,

you will be struck with the resemblance of its vertebrae to a strung

necklace of dwarfed skulls, all bearing rudimental resemblance to the

skull proper. It is a German conceit, that the vertebrae are absolutely

undeveloped skulls. But the curious external resemblance, I take it

the Germans were not the first men to perceive. A foreign friend once

pointed it out to me, in the skeleton of a foe he had slain, and with

the vertebrae of which he was inlaying, in a sort of basso-relievo, the

beaked prow of his canoe. Now, I consider that the phrenologists have

omitted an important thing in not pushing their investigations from the

cerebellum through the spinal canal. For I believe that much of a man's

character will be found betokened in his backbone. I would rather feel

your spine than your skull, whoever you are. A thin joist of a spine

never yet upheld a full and noble soul. I rejoice in my spine, as in the

firm audacious staff of that flag which I fling half out to the world.

Apply this spinal branch of phrenology to the Sperm Whale. His cranial

cavity is continuous with the first neck-vertebra; and in that vertebra

the bottom of the spinal canal will measure ten inches across, being

eight in height, and of a triangular figure with the base downwards. As

it passes through the remaining vertebrae the canal tapers in size, but

for a considerable distance remains of large capacity. Now, of course,

this canal is filled with much the same strangely fibrous substance--the

spinal cord--as the brain; and directly communicates with the brain.

And what is still more, for many feet after emerging from the brain's

cavity, the spinal cord remains of an undecreasing girth, almost

equal to that of the brain. Under all these circumstances, would it be

unreasonable to survey and map out the whale's spine phrenologically?

For, viewed in this light, the wonderful comparative smallness of his

brain proper is more than compensated by the wonderful comparative

magnitude of his spinal cord.

But leaving this hint to operate as it may with the phrenologists, I

would merely assume the spinal theory for a moment, in reference to the

Sperm Whale's hump. This august hump, if I mistake not, rises over one

of the larger vertebrae, and is, therefore, in some sort, the outer

convex mould of it. From its relative situation then, I should call this

high hump the organ of firmness or indomitableness in the Sperm Whale.

And that the great monster is indomitable, you will yet have reason to

know.

CHAPTER 81. The Pequod Meets The Virgin.

The predestinated day arrived, and we duly met the ship Jungfrau, Derick

De Deer, master, of Bremen.

At one time the greatest whaling people in the world, the Dutch and

Germans are now among the least; but here and there at very wide

intervals of latitude and longitude, you still occasionally meet with

their flag in the Pacific.

For some reason, the Jungfrau seemed quite eager to pay her respects.

While yet some distance from the Pequod, she rounded to, and dropping a

boat, her captain was impelled towards us, impatiently standing in the

bows instead of the stern.

"What has he in his hand there?" cried Starbuck, pointing to something

wavingly held by the German. "Impossible!--a lamp-feeder!"

"Not that," said Stubb, "no, no, it's a coffee-pot, Mr. Starbuck; he's

coming off to make us our coffee, is the Yarman; don't you see that big

tin can there alongside of him?--that's his boiling water. Oh! he's all

right, is the Yarman."

"Go along with you," cried Flask, "it's a lamp-feeder and an oil-can.

He's out of oil, and has come a-begging."

However curious it may seem for an oil-ship to be borrowing oil on the

whale-ground, and however much it may invertedly contradict the old

proverb about carrying coals to Newcastle, yet sometimes such a thing

really happens; and in the present case Captain Derick De Deer did

indubitably conduct a lamp-feeder as Flask did declare.

As he mounted the deck, Ahab abruptly accosted him, without at all

heeding what he had in his hand; but in his broken lingo, the German

soon evinced his complete ignorance of the White Whale; immediately

turning the conversation to his lamp-feeder and oil can, with some

remarks touching his having to turn into his hammock at night in

profound darkness--his last drop of Bremen oil being gone, and not a

single flying-fish yet captured to supply the deficiency; concluding

by hinting that his ship was indeed what in the Fishery is technically

called a CLEAN one (that is, an empty one), well deserving the name of

Jungfrau or the Virgin.

His necessities supplied, Derick departed; but he had not gained his

ship's side, when whales were almost simultaneously raised from the

mast-heads of both vessels; and so eager for the chase was Derick, that

without pausing to put his oil-can and lamp-feeder aboard, he slewed

round his boat and made after the leviathan lamp-feeders.

Now, the game having risen to leeward, he and the other three German

boats that soon followed him, had considerably the start of the Pequod's

keels. There were eight whales, an average pod. Aware of their danger,

they were going all abreast with great speed straight before the wind,

rubbing their flanks as closely as so many spans of horses in harness.

They left a great, wide wake, as though continually unrolling a great

wide parchment upon the sea.

Full in this rapid wake, and many fathoms in the rear, swam a huge,

humped old bull, which by his comparatively slow progress, as well as

by the unusual yellowish incrustations overgrowing him, seemed afflicted

with the jaundice, or some other infirmity. Whether this whale belonged

to the pod in advance, seemed questionable; for it is not customary for

such venerable leviathans to be at all social. Nevertheless, he stuck

to their wake, though indeed their back water must have retarded him,

because the white-bone or swell at his broad muzzle was a dashed one,

like the swell formed when two hostile currents meet. His spout was

short, slow, and laborious; coming forth with a choking sort of gush,

and spending itself in torn shreds, followed by strange subterranean

commotions in him, which seemed to have egress at his other buried

extremity, causing the waters behind him to upbubble.

"Who's got some paregoric?" said Stubb, "he has the stomach-ache, I'm

afraid. Lord, think of having half an acre of stomach-ache! Adverse

winds are holding mad Christmas in him, boys. It's the first foul wind

I ever knew to blow from astern; but look, did ever whale yaw so before?

it must be, he's lost his tiller."

As an overladen Indiaman bearing down the Hindostan coast with a deck

load of frightened horses, careens, buries, rolls, and wallows on her

way; so did this old whale heave his aged bulk, and now and then partly

turning over on his cumbrous rib-ends, expose the cause of his devious

wake in the unnatural stump of his starboard fin. Whether he had lost

that fin in battle, or had been born without it, it were hard to say.

"Only wait a bit, old chap, and I'll give ye a sling for that wounded

arm," cried cruel Flask, pointing to the whale-line near him.

"Mind he don't sling thee with it," cried Starbuck. "Give way, or the

German will have him."

With one intent all the combined rival boats were pointed for this

one fish, because not only was he the largest, and therefore the most

valuable whale, but he was nearest to them, and the other whales were

going with such great velocity, moreover, as almost to defy pursuit

for the time. At this juncture the Pequod's keels had shot by the three

German boats last lowered; but from the great start he had had, Derick's

boat still led the chase, though every moment neared by his foreign

rivals. The only thing they feared, was, that from being already so

nigh to his mark, he would be enabled to dart his iron before they

could completely overtake and pass him. As for Derick, he seemed quite

confident that this would be the case, and occasionally with a deriding

gesture shook his lamp-feeder at the other boats.

"The ungracious and ungrateful dog!" cried Starbuck; "he mocks and dares

me with the very poor-box I filled for him not five minutes ago!"--then

in his old intense whisper--"Give way, greyhounds! Dog to it!"

"I tell ye what it is, men"--cried Stubb to his crew--"it's against

my religion to get mad; but I'd like to eat that villainous

Yarman--Pull--won't ye? Are ye going to let that rascal beat ye? Do

ye love brandy? A hogshead of brandy, then, to the best man. Come,

why don't some of ye burst a blood-vessel? Who's that been dropping an

anchor overboard--we don't budge an inch--we're becalmed. Halloo, here's

grass growing in the boat's bottom--and by the Lord, the mast there's

budding. This won't do, boys. Look at that Yarman! The short and long of

it is, men, will ye spit fire or not?"

"Oh! see the suds he makes!" cried Flask, dancing up and down--"What

a hump--Oh, DO pile on the beef--lays like a log! Oh! my lads, DO

spring--slap-jacks and quahogs for supper, you know, my lads--baked

clams and muffins--oh, DO, DO, spring,--he's a hundred barreller--don't

lose him now--don't oh, DON'T!--see that Yarman--Oh, won't ye pull for

your duff, my lads--such a sog! such a sogger! Don't ye love sperm?

There goes three thousand dollars, men!--a bank!--a whole bank! The bank

of England!--Oh, DO, DO, DO!--What's that Yarman about now?"

At this moment Derick was in the act of pitching his lamp-feeder at the

advancing boats, and also his oil-can; perhaps with the double view

of retarding his rivals' way, and at the same time economically

accelerating his own by the momentary impetus of the backward toss.

"The unmannerly Dutch dogger!" cried Stubb. "Pull now, men, like fifty

thousand line-of-battle-ship loads of red-haired devils. What d'ye say,

Tashtego; are you the man to snap your spine in two-and-twenty pieces

for the honour of old Gayhead? What d'ye say?"

"I say, pull like god-dam,"--cried the Indian.

Fiercely, but evenly incited by the taunts of the German, the Pequod's

three boats now began ranging almost abreast; and, so disposed,

momentarily neared him. In that fine, loose, chivalrous attitude of

the headsman when drawing near to his prey, the three mates stood up

proudly, occasionally backing the after oarsman with an exhilarating cry

of, "There she slides, now! Hurrah for the white-ash breeze! Down with

the Yarman! Sail over him!"

But so decided an original start had Derick had, that spite of all

their gallantry, he would have proved the victor in this race, had not

a righteous judgment descended upon him in a crab which caught the blade

of his midship oarsman. While this clumsy lubber was striving to free

his white-ash, and while, in consequence, Derick's boat was nigh to

capsizing, and he thundering away at his men in a mighty rage;--that was

a good time for Starbuck, Stubb, and Flask. With a shout, they took a

mortal start forwards, and slantingly ranged up on the German's quarter.

An instant more, and all four boats were diagonically in the whale's

immediate wake, while stretching from them, on both sides, was the

foaming swell that he made.

It was a terrific, most pitiable, and maddening sight. The whale was

now going head out, and sending his spout before him in a continual

tormented jet; while his one poor fin beat his side in an agony of

fright. Now to this hand, now to that, he yawed in his faltering flight,

and still at every billow that he broke, he spasmodically sank in the

sea, or sideways rolled towards the sky his one beating fin. So have I

seen a bird with clipped wing making affrighted broken circles in the

air, vainly striving to escape the piratical hawks. But the bird has a

voice, and with plaintive cries will make known her fear; but the fear

of this vast dumb brute of the sea, was chained up and enchanted in him;

he had no voice, save that choking respiration through his spiracle,

and this made the sight of him unspeakably pitiable; while still, in his

amazing bulk, portcullis jaw, and omnipotent tail, there was enough to

appal the stoutest man who so pitied.

Seeing now that but a very few moments more would give the Pequod's

boats the advantage, and rather than be thus foiled of his game, Derick

chose to hazard what to him must have seemed a most unusually long dart,

ere the last chance would for ever escape.

But no sooner did his harpooneer stand up for the stroke, than all three

tigers--Queequeg, Tashtego, Daggoo--instinctively sprang to their feet,

and standing in a diagonal row, simultaneously pointed their barbs; and

darted over the head of the German harpooneer, their three Nantucket

irons entered the whale. Blinding vapours of foam and white-fire! The

three boats, in the first fury of the whale's headlong rush, bumped

the German's aside with such force, that both Derick and his baffled

harpooneer were spilled out, and sailed over by the three flying keels.

"Don't be afraid, my butter-boxes," cried Stubb, casting a passing

glance upon them as he shot by; "ye'll be picked up presently--all

right--I saw some sharks astern--St. Bernard's dogs, you know--relieve

distressed travellers. Hurrah! this is the way to sail now. Every keel a

sunbeam! Hurrah!--Here we go like three tin kettles at the tail of a mad

cougar! This puts me in mind of fastening to an elephant in a tilbury on

a plain--makes the wheel-spokes fly, boys, when you fasten to him that

way; and there's danger of being pitched out too, when you strike a

hill. Hurrah! this is the way a fellow feels when he's going to Davy

Jones--all a rush down an endless inclined plane! Hurrah! this whale

carries the everlasting mail!"

But the monster's run was a brief one. Giving a sudden gasp, he

tumultuously sounded. With a grating rush, the three lines flew round

the loggerheads with such a force as to gouge deep grooves in them;

while so fearful were the harpooneers that this rapid sounding would

soon exhaust the lines, that using all their dexterous might, they

caught repeated smoking turns with the rope to hold on; till at

last--owing to the perpendicular strain from the lead-lined chocks of

the boats, whence the three ropes went straight down into the blue--the

gunwales of the bows were almost even with the water, while the three

sterns tilted high in the air. And the whale soon ceasing to sound,

for some time they remained in that attitude, fearful of expending more

line, though the position was a little ticklish. But though boats have

been taken down and lost in this way, yet it is this "holding on," as it

is called; this hooking up by the sharp barbs of his live flesh from

the back; this it is that often torments the Leviathan into soon rising

again to meet the sharp lance of his foes. Yet not to speak of the peril

of the thing, it is to be doubted whether this course is always the

best; for it is but reasonable to presume, that the longer the stricken

whale stays under water, the more he is exhausted. Because, owing to the

enormous surface of him--in a full grown sperm whale something less than

2000 square feet--the pressure of the water is immense. We all know

what an astonishing atmospheric weight we ourselves stand up under; even

here, above-ground, in the air; how vast, then, the burden of a whale,

bearing on his back a column of two hundred fathoms of ocean! It must at

least equal the weight of fifty atmospheres. One whaleman has estimated

it at the weight of twenty line-of-battle ships, with all their guns,

and stores, and men on board.

As the three boats lay there on that gently rolling sea, gazing down

into its eternal blue noon; and as not a single groan or cry of any

sort, nay, not so much as a ripple or a bubble came up from its depths;

what landsman would have thought, that beneath all that silence and

placidity, the utmost monster of the seas was writhing and wrenching in

agony! Not eight inches of perpendicular rope were visible at the bows.

Seems it credible that by three such thin threads the great Leviathan

was suspended like the big weight to an eight day clock. Suspended? and

to what? To three bits of board. Is this the creature of whom it was

once so triumphantly said--"Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons?

or his head with fish-spears? The sword of him that layeth at him cannot

hold, the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon: he esteemeth iron as

straw; the arrow cannot make him flee; darts are counted as stubble;

he laugheth at the shaking of a spear!" This the creature? this he? Oh!

that unfulfilments should follow the prophets. For with the strength

of a thousand thighs in his tail, Leviathan had run his head under the

mountains of the sea, to hide him from the Pequod's fish-spears!

In that sloping afternoon sunlight, the shadows that the three boats

sent down beneath the surface, must have been long enough and broad

enough to shade half Xerxes' army. Who can tell how appalling to the

wounded whale must have been such huge phantoms flitting over his head!

"Stand by, men; he stirs," cried Starbuck, as the three lines suddenly

vibrated in the water, distinctly conducting upwards to them, as by

magnetic wires, the life and death throbs of the whale, so that every

oarsman felt them in his seat. The next moment, relieved in great part

from the downward strain at the bows, the boats gave a sudden bounce

upwards, as a small icefield will, when a dense herd of white bears are

scared from it into the sea.

"Haul in! Haul in!" cried Starbuck again; "he's rising."

The lines, of which, hardly an instant before, not one hand's breadth

could have been gained, were now in long quick coils flung back all

dripping into the boats, and soon the whale broke water within two

ship's lengths of the hunters.

His motions plainly denoted his extreme exhaustion. In most land animals

there are certain valves or flood-gates in many of their veins, whereby

when wounded, the blood is in some degree at least instantly shut off in

certain directions. Not so with the whale; one of whose peculiarities

it is to have an entire non-valvular structure of the blood-vessels, so

that when pierced even by so small a point as a harpoon, a deadly

drain is at once begun upon his whole arterial system; and when this is

heightened by the extraordinary pressure of water at a great distance

below the surface, his life may be said to pour from him in incessant

streams. Yet so vast is the quantity of blood in him, and so distant

and numerous its interior fountains, that he will keep thus bleeding and

bleeding for a considerable period; even as in a drought a river will

flow, whose source is in the well-springs of far-off and undiscernible

hills. Even now, when the boats pulled upon this whale, and perilously

drew over his swaying flukes, and the lances were darted into him,

they were followed by steady jets from the new made wound, which kept

continually playing, while the natural spout-hole in his head was only

at intervals, however rapid, sending its affrighted moisture into the

air. From this last vent no blood yet came, because no vital part of him

had thus far been struck. His life, as they significantly call it, was

untouched.

As the boats now more closely surrounded him, the whole upper part of

his form, with much of it that is ordinarily submerged, was plainly

revealed. His eyes, or rather the places where his eyes had been, were

beheld. As strange misgrown masses gather in the knot-holes of the

noblest oaks when prostrate, so from the points which the whale's eyes

had once occupied, now protruded blind bulbs, horribly pitiable to see.

But pity there was none. For all his old age, and his one arm, and his

blind eyes, he must die the death and be murdered, in order to light the

gay bridals and other merry-makings of men, and also to illuminate the

solemn churches that preach unconditional inoffensiveness by all to all.

Still rolling in his blood, at last he partially disclosed a strangely

discoloured bunch or protuberance, the size of a bushel, low down on the

flank.

"A nice spot," cried Flask; "just let me prick him there once."

"Avast!" cried Starbuck, "there's no need of that!"

But humane Starbuck was too late. At the instant of the dart an

ulcerous jet shot from this cruel wound, and goaded by it into more than

sufferable anguish, the whale now spouting thick blood, with swift fury

blindly darted at the craft, bespattering them and their glorying crews

all over with showers of gore, capsizing Flask's boat and marring the

bows. It was his death stroke. For, by this time, so spent was he by

loss of blood, that he helplessly rolled away from the wreck he had

made; lay panting on his side, impotently flapped with his stumped fin,

then over and over slowly revolved like a waning world; turned up

the white secrets of his belly; lay like a log, and died. It was most

piteous, that last expiring spout. As when by unseen hands the water

is gradually drawn off from some mighty fountain, and with half-stifled

melancholy gurglings the spray-column lowers and lowers to the

ground--so the last long dying spout of the whale.

Soon, while the crews were awaiting the arrival of the ship, the body

showed symptoms of sinking with all its treasures unrifled. Immediately,

by Starbuck's orders, lines were secured to it at different points, so

that ere long every boat was a buoy; the sunken whale being suspended a

few inches beneath them by the cords. By very heedful management, when

the ship drew nigh, the whale was transferred to her side, and was

strongly secured there by the stiffest fluke-chains, for it was plain

that unless artificially upheld, the body would at once sink to the

bottom.

It so chanced that almost upon first cutting into him with the spade,

the entire length of a corroded harpoon was found imbedded in his flesh,

on the lower part of the bunch before described. But as the stumps of

harpoons are frequently found in the dead bodies of captured whales,

with the flesh perfectly healed around them, and no prominence of any

kind to denote their place; therefore, there must needs have been

some other unknown reason in the present case fully to account for

the ulceration alluded to. But still more curious was the fact of a

lance-head of stone being found in him, not far from the buried iron,

the flesh perfectly firm about it. Who had darted that stone lance? And

when? It might have been darted by some Nor' West Indian long before

America was discovered.

What other marvels might have been rummaged out of this monstrous

cabinet there is no telling. But a sudden stop was put to further

discoveries, by the ship's being unprecedentedly dragged over sideways

to the sea, owing to the body's immensely increasing tendency to sink.

However, Starbuck, who had the ordering of affairs, hung on to it to the

last; hung on to it so resolutely, indeed, that when at length the ship

would have been capsized, if still persisting in locking arms with the

body; then, when the command was given to break clear from it, such was

the immovable strain upon the timber-heads to which the fluke-chains and

cables were fastened, that it was impossible to cast them off. Meantime

everything in the Pequod was aslant. To cross to the other side of the

deck was like walking up the steep gabled roof of a house. The ship

groaned and gasped. Many of the ivory inlayings of her bulwarks and

cabins were started from their places, by the unnatural dislocation.

In vain handspikes and crows were brought to bear upon the immovable

fluke-chains, to pry them adrift from the timberheads; and so low

had the whale now settled that the submerged ends could not be at all

approached, while every moment whole tons of ponderosity seemed added to

the sinking bulk, and the ship seemed on the point of going over.

"Hold on, hold on, won't ye?" cried Stubb to the body, "don't be in such

a devil of a hurry to sink! By thunder, men, we must do something or go

for it. No use prying there; avast, I say with your handspikes, and run

one of ye for a prayer book and a pen-knife, and cut the big chains."

"Knife? Aye, aye," cried Queequeg, and seizing the carpenter's heavy

hatchet, he leaned out of a porthole, and steel to iron, began slashing

at the largest fluke-chains. But a few strokes, full of sparks, were

given, when the exceeding strain effected the rest. With a terrific

snap, every fastening went adrift; the ship righted, the carcase sank.

Now, this occasional inevitable sinking of the recently killed Sperm

Whale is a very curious thing; nor has any fisherman yet adequately

accounted for it. Usually the dead Sperm Whale floats with great

buoyancy, with its side or belly considerably elevated above the

surface. If the only whales that thus sank were old, meagre, and

broken-hearted creatures, their pads of lard diminished and all their

bones heavy and rheumatic; then you might with some reason assert that

this sinking is caused by an uncommon specific gravity in the fish so

sinking, consequent upon this absence of buoyant matter in him. But it

is not so. For young whales, in the highest health, and swelling with

noble aspirations, prematurely cut off in the warm flush and May of

life, with all their panting lard about them; even these brawny, buoyant

heroes do sometimes sink.

Be it said, however, that the Sperm Whale is far less liable to this

accident than any other species. Where one of that sort go down, twenty

Right Whales do. This difference in the species is no doubt imputable in

no small degree to the greater quantity of bone in the Right Whale;

his Venetian blinds alone sometimes weighing more than a ton; from this

incumbrance the Sperm Whale is wholly free. But there are instances

where, after the lapse of many hours or several days, the sunken whale

again rises, more buoyant than in life. But the reason of this

is obvious. Gases are generated in him; he swells to a prodigious

magnitude; becomes a sort of animal balloon. A line-of-battle ship could

hardly keep him under then. In the Shore Whaling, on soundings, among

the Bays of New Zealand, when a Right Whale gives token of sinking, they

fasten buoys to him, with plenty of rope; so that when the body has gone

down, they know where to look for it when it shall have ascended again.

It was not long after the sinking of the body that a cry was heard from

the Pequod's mast-heads, announcing that the Jungfrau was again lowering

her boats; though the only spout in sight was that of a Fin-Back,

belonging to the species of uncapturable whales, because of its

incredible power of swimming. Nevertheless, the Fin-Back's spout is so

similar to the Sperm Whale's, that by unskilful fishermen it is often

mistaken for it. And consequently Derick and all his host were now in

valiant chase of this unnearable brute. The Virgin crowding all sail,

made after her four young keels, and thus they all disappeared far to

leeward, still in bold, hopeful chase.

Oh! many are the Fin-Backs, and many are the Dericks, my friend.

CHAPTER 82. The Honour and Glory of Whaling.

There are some enterprises in which a careful disorderliness is the true

method.

The more I dive into this matter of whaling, and push my researches up

to the very spring-head of it so much the more am I impressed with its

great honourableness and antiquity; and especially when I find so many

great demi-gods and heroes, prophets of all sorts, who one way or other

have shed distinction upon it, I am transported with the reflection

that I myself belong, though but subordinately, to so emblazoned a

fraternity.

The gallant Perseus, a son of Jupiter, was the first whaleman; and

to the eternal honour of our calling be it said, that the first whale

attacked by our brotherhood was not killed with any sordid intent. Those

were the knightly days of our profession, when we only bore arms to

succor the distressed, and not to fill men's lamp-feeders. Every one

knows the fine story of Perseus and Andromeda; how the lovely Andromeda,

the daughter of a king, was tied to a rock on the sea-coast, and as

Leviathan was in the very act of carrying her off, Perseus, the prince

of whalemen, intrepidly advancing, harpooned the monster, and delivered

and married the maid. It was an admirable artistic exploit, rarely

achieved by the best harpooneers of the present day; inasmuch as this

Leviathan was slain at the very first dart. And let no man doubt this

Arkite story; for in the ancient Joppa, now Jaffa, on the Syrian coast,

in one of the Pagan temples, there stood for many ages the vast skeleton

of a whale, which the city's legends and all the inhabitants asserted to

be the identical bones of the monster that Perseus slew. When the Romans

took Joppa, the same skeleton was carried to Italy in triumph. What

seems most singular and suggestively important in this story, is this:

it was from Joppa that Jonah set sail.

Akin to the adventure of Perseus and Andromeda--indeed, by some supposed

to be indirectly derived from it--is that famous story of St. George and

the Dragon; which dragon I maintain to have been a whale; for in many

old chronicles whales and dragons are strangely jumbled together, and

often stand for each other. "Thou art as a lion of the waters, and as a

dragon of the sea," saith Ezekiel; hereby, plainly meaning a whale;

in truth, some versions of the Bible use that word itself. Besides, it

would much subtract from the glory of the exploit had St. George but

encountered a crawling reptile of the land, instead of doing battle

with the great monster of the deep. Any man may kill a snake, but only a

Perseus, a St. George, a Coffin, have the heart in them to march boldly

up to a whale.

Let not the modern paintings of this scene mislead us; for though

the creature encountered by that valiant whaleman of old is vaguely

represented of a griffin-like shape, and though the battle is depicted

on land and the saint on horseback, yet considering the great ignorance

of those times, when the true form of the whale was unknown to artists;

and considering that as in Perseus' case, St. George's whale might have

crawled up out of the sea on the beach; and considering that the animal

ridden by St. George might have been only a large seal, or sea-horse;

bearing all this in mind, it will not appear altogether incompatible

with the sacred legend and the ancientest draughts of the scene, to

hold this so-called dragon no other than the great Leviathan himself. In

fact, placed before the strict and piercing truth, this whole story will

fare like that fish, flesh, and fowl idol of the Philistines, Dagon by

name; who being planted before the ark of Israel, his horse's head and

both the palms of his hands fell off from him, and only the stump or

fishy part of him remained. Thus, then, one of our own noble stamp, even

a whaleman, is the tutelary guardian of England; and by good rights, we

harpooneers of Nantucket should be enrolled in the most noble order

of St. George. And therefore, let not the knights of that honourable

company (none of whom, I venture to say, have ever had to do with a

whale like their great patron), let them never eye a Nantucketer with

disdain, since even in our woollen frocks and tarred trowsers we are

much better entitled to St. George's decoration than they.

Whether to admit Hercules among us or not, concerning this I long

remained dubious: for though according to the Greek mythologies, that

antique Crockett and Kit Carson--that brawny doer of rejoicing good

deeds, was swallowed down and thrown up by a whale; still, whether

that strictly makes a whaleman of him, that might be mooted. It nowhere

appears that he ever actually harpooned his fish, unless, indeed,

from the inside. Nevertheless, he may be deemed a sort of involuntary

whaleman; at any rate the whale caught him, if he did not the whale. I

claim him for one of our clan.

But, by the best contradictory authorities, this Grecian story of

Hercules and the whale is considered to be derived from the still more

ancient Hebrew story of Jonah and the whale; and vice versa; certainly

they are very similar. If I claim the demigod then, why not the prophet?

Nor do heroes, saints, demigods, and prophets alone comprise the whole

roll of our order. Our grand master is still to be named; for like royal

kings of old times, we find the head waters of our fraternity in nothing

short of the great gods themselves. That wondrous oriental story is now

to be rehearsed from the Shaster, which gives us the dread Vishnoo, one

of the three persons in the godhead of the Hindoos; gives us this divine

Vishnoo himself for our Lord;--Vishnoo, who, by the first of his ten

earthly incarnations, has for ever set apart and sanctified the whale.

When Brahma, or the God of Gods, saith the Shaster, resolved to recreate

the world after one of its periodical dissolutions, he gave birth to

Vishnoo, to preside over the work; but the Vedas, or mystical books,

whose perusal would seem to have been indispensable to Vishnoo before

beginning the creation, and which therefore must have contained

something in the shape of practical hints to young architects, these

Vedas were lying at the bottom of the waters; so Vishnoo became

incarnate in a whale, and sounding down in him to the uttermost depths,

rescued the sacred volumes. Was not this Vishnoo a whaleman, then? even

as a man who rides a horse is called a horseman?

Perseus, St. George, Hercules, Jonah, and Vishnoo! there's a member-roll

for you! What club but the whaleman's can head off like that?

CHAPTER 83. Jonah Historically Regarded.

Reference was made to the historical story of Jonah and the whale in the

preceding chapter. Now some Nantucketers rather distrust this historical

story of Jonah and the whale. But then there were some sceptical Greeks

and Romans, who, standing out from the orthodox pagans of their times,

equally doubted the story of Hercules and the whale, and Arion and the

dolphin; and yet their doubting those traditions did not make those

traditions one whit the less facts, for all that.

One old Sag-Harbor whaleman's chief reason for questioning the Hebrew

story was this:--He had one of those quaint old-fashioned Bibles,

embellished with curious, unscientific plates; one of which represented

Jonah's whale with two spouts in his head--a peculiarity only true

with respect to a species of the Leviathan (the Right Whale, and the

varieties of that order), concerning which the fishermen have this

saying, "A penny roll would choke him"; his swallow is so very small.

But, to this, Bishop Jebb's anticipative answer is ready. It is not

necessary, hints the Bishop, that we consider Jonah as tombed in the

whale's belly, but as temporarily lodged in some part of his mouth. And

this seems reasonable enough in the good Bishop. For truly, the

Right Whale's mouth would accommodate a couple of whist-tables, and

comfortably seat all the players. Possibly, too, Jonah might have

ensconced himself in a hollow tooth; but, on second thoughts, the Right

Whale is toothless.

Another reason which Sag-Harbor (he went by that name) urged for his

want of faith in this matter of the prophet, was something obscurely in

reference to his incarcerated body and the whale's gastric juices. But

this objection likewise falls to the ground, because a German exegetist

supposes that Jonah must have taken refuge in the floating body of a

DEAD whale--even as the French soldiers in the Russian campaign turned

their dead horses into tents, and crawled into them. Besides, it has

been divined by other continental commentators, that when Jonah was

thrown overboard from the Joppa ship, he straightway effected his escape

to another vessel near by, some vessel with a whale for a figure-head;

and, I would add, possibly called "The Whale," as some craft are

nowadays christened the "Shark," the "Gull," the "Eagle." Nor have there

been wanting learned exegetists who have opined that the whale mentioned

in the book of Jonah merely meant a life-preserver--an inflated bag

of wind--which the endangered prophet swam to, and so was saved from a

watery doom. Poor Sag-Harbor, therefore, seems worsted all round. But

he had still another reason for his want of faith. It was this, if I

remember right: Jonah was swallowed by the whale in the Mediterranean

Sea, and after three days he was vomited up somewhere within three days'

journey of Nineveh, a city on the Tigris, very much more than three

days' journey across from the nearest point of the Mediterranean coast.

How is that?

But was there no other way for the whale to land the prophet within that

short distance of Nineveh? Yes. He might have carried him round by the

way of the Cape of Good Hope. But not to speak of the passage through

the whole length of the Mediterranean, and another passage up the

Persian Gulf and Red Sea, such a supposition would involve the complete

circumnavigation of all Africa in three days, not to speak of the Tigris

waters, near the site of Nineveh, being too shallow for any whale to

swim in. Besides, this idea of Jonah's weathering the Cape of Good Hope

at so early a day would wrest the honour of the discovery of that great

headland from Bartholomew Diaz, its reputed discoverer, and so make

modern history a liar.

But all these foolish arguments of old Sag-Harbor only evinced his

foolish pride of reason--a thing still more reprehensible in him, seeing

that he had but little learning except what he had picked up from the

sun and the sea. I say it only shows his foolish, impious pride, and

abominable, devilish rebellion against the reverend clergy. For by a

Portuguese Catholic priest, this very idea of Jonah's going to Nineveh

via the Cape of Good Hope was advanced as a signal magnification of

the general miracle. And so it was. Besides, to this day, the highly

enlightened Turks devoutly believe in the historical story of Jonah. And

some three centuries ago, an English traveller in old Harris's Voyages,

speaks of a Turkish Mosque built in honour of Jonah, in which Mosque was

a miraculous lamp that burnt without any oil.

CHAPTER 84. Pitchpoling.

To make them run easily and swiftly, the axles of carriages are

anointed; and for much the same purpose, some whalers perform an

analogous operation upon their boat; they grease the bottom. Nor is it

to be doubted that as such a procedure can do no harm, it may possibly

be of no contemptible advantage; considering that oil and water are

hostile; that oil is a sliding thing, and that the object in view is to

make the boat slide bravely. Queequeg believed strongly in anointing

his boat, and one morning not long after the German ship Jungfrau

disappeared, took more than customary pains in that occupation; crawling

under its bottom, where it hung over the side, and rubbing in the

unctuousness as though diligently seeking to insure a crop of hair from

the craft's bald keel. He seemed to be working in obedience to some

particular presentiment. Nor did it remain unwarranted by the event.

Towards noon whales were raised; but so soon as the ship sailed down to

them, they turned and fled with swift precipitancy; a disordered flight,

as of Cleopatra's barges from Actium.

Nevertheless, the boats pursued, and Stubb's was foremost. By great

exertion, Tashtego at last succeeded in planting one iron; but the

stricken whale, without at all sounding, still continued his horizontal

flight, with added fleetness. Such unintermitted strainings upon the

planted iron must sooner or later inevitably extract it. It became

imperative to lance the flying whale, or be content to lose him. But

to haul the boat up to his flank was impossible, he swam so fast and

furious. What then remained?

Of all the wondrous devices and dexterities, the sleights of hand and

countless subtleties, to which the veteran whaleman is so often forced,

none exceed that fine manoeuvre with the lance called pitchpoling. Small

sword, or broad sword, in all its exercises boasts nothing like it. It

is only indispensable with an inveterate running whale; its grand

fact and feature is the wonderful distance to which the long lance is

accurately darted from a violently rocking, jerking boat, under extreme

headway. Steel and wood included, the entire spear is some ten or twelve

feet in length; the staff is much slighter than that of the harpoon,

and also of a lighter material--pine. It is furnished with a small rope

called a warp, of considerable length, by which it can be hauled back to

the hand after darting.

But before going further, it is important to mention here, that though

the harpoon may be pitchpoled in the same way with the lance, yet it

is seldom done; and when done, is still less frequently successful,

on account of the greater weight and inferior length of the harpoon as

compared with the lance, which in effect become serious drawbacks. As a

general thing, therefore, you must first get fast to a whale, before any

pitchpoling comes into play.

Look now at Stubb; a man who from his humorous, deliberate coolness and

equanimity in the direst emergencies, was specially qualified to excel

in pitchpoling. Look at him; he stands upright in the tossed bow of the

flying boat; wrapt in fleecy foam, the towing whale is forty feet ahead.

Handling the long lance lightly, glancing twice or thrice along its

length to see if it be exactly straight, Stubb whistlingly gathers up

the coil of the warp in one hand, so as to secure its free end in his

grasp, leaving the rest unobstructed. Then holding the lance full before

his waistband's middle, he levels it at the whale; when, covering

him with it, he steadily depresses the butt-end in his hand, thereby

elevating the point till the weapon stands fairly balanced upon his

palm, fifteen feet in the air. He minds you somewhat of a juggler,

balancing a long staff on his chin. Next moment with a rapid, nameless

impulse, in a superb lofty arch the bright steel spans the foaming

distance, and quivers in the life spot of the whale. Instead of

sparkling water, he now spouts red blood.

"That drove the spigot out of him!" cried Stubb. "'Tis July's immortal

Fourth; all fountains must run wine today! Would now, it were old

Orleans whiskey, or old Ohio, or unspeakable old Monongahela! Then,

Tashtego, lad, I'd have ye hold a canakin to the jet, and we'd drink

round it! Yea, verily, hearts alive, we'd brew choice punch in the

spread of his spout-hole there, and from that live punch-bowl quaff the

living stuff."

Again and again to such gamesome talk, the dexterous dart is repeated,

the spear returning to its master like a greyhound held in skilful

leash. The agonized whale goes into his flurry; the tow-line is

slackened, and the pitchpoler dropping astern, folds his hands, and

mutely watches the monster die.

CHAPTER 85. The Fountain.

That for six thousand years--and no one knows how many millions of ages

before--the great whales should have been spouting all over the sea,

and sprinkling and mistifying the gardens of the deep, as with so

many sprinkling or mistifying pots; and that for some centuries back,

thousands of hunters should have been close by the fountain of the

whale, watching these sprinklings and spoutings--that all this should

be, and yet, that down to this blessed minute (fifteen and a quarter

minutes past one o'clock P.M. of this sixteenth day of December, A.D.

1851), it should still remain a problem, whether these spoutings

are, after all, really water, or nothing but vapour--this is surely a

noteworthy thing.

Let us, then, look at this matter, along with some interesting items

contingent. Every one knows that by the peculiar cunning of their

gills, the finny tribes in general breathe the air which at all times is

combined with the element in which they swim; hence, a herring or a cod

might live a century, and never once raise its head above the surface.

But owing to his marked internal structure which gives him regular

lungs, like a human being's, the whale can only live by inhaling the

disengaged air in the open atmosphere. Wherefore the necessity for

his periodical visits to the upper world. But he cannot in any degree

breathe through his mouth, for, in his ordinary attitude, the Sperm

Whale's mouth is buried at least eight feet beneath the surface; and

what is still more, his windpipe has no connexion with his mouth. No, he

breathes through his spiracle alone; and this is on the top of his head.

If I say, that in any creature breathing is only a function

indispensable to vitality, inasmuch as it withdraws from the air a

certain element, which being subsequently brought into contact with the

blood imparts to the blood its vivifying principle, I do not think I

shall err; though I may possibly use some superfluous scientific words.

Assume it, and it follows that if all the blood in a man could be

aerated with one breath, he might then seal up his nostrils and not

fetch another for a considerable time. That is to say, he would then

live without breathing. Anomalous as it may seem, this is precisely the

case with the whale, who systematically lives, by intervals, his full

hour and more (when at the bottom) without drawing a single breath, or

so much as in any way inhaling a particle of air; for, remember, he has

no gills. How is this? Between his ribs and on each side of his spine

he is supplied with a remarkable involved Cretan labyrinth of

vermicelli-like vessels, which vessels, when he quits the surface, are

completely distended with oxygenated blood. So that for an hour or more,

a thousand fathoms in the sea, he carries a surplus stock of vitality in

him, just as the camel crossing the waterless desert carries a surplus

supply of drink for future use in its four supplementary stomachs.

The anatomical fact of this labyrinth is indisputable; and that the

supposition founded upon it is reasonable and true, seems the more

cogent to me, when I consider the otherwise inexplicable obstinacy of

that leviathan in HAVING HIS SPOUTINGS OUT, as the fishermen phrase

it. This is what I mean. If unmolested, upon rising to the surface, the

Sperm Whale will continue there for a period of time exactly uniform

with all his other unmolested risings. Say he stays eleven minutes, and

jets seventy times, that is, respires seventy breaths; then whenever he

rises again, he will be sure to have his seventy breaths over again, to

a minute. Now, if after he fetches a few breaths you alarm him, so that

he sounds, he will be always dodging up again to make good his regular

allowance of air. And not till those seventy breaths are told, will he

finally go down to stay out his full term below. Remark, however, that

in different individuals these rates are different; but in any one

they are alike. Now, why should the whale thus insist upon having his

spoutings out, unless it be to replenish his reservoir of air, ere

descending for good? How obvious is it, too, that this necessity for the

whale's rising exposes him to all the fatal hazards of the chase. For

not by hook or by net could this vast leviathan be caught, when sailing

a thousand fathoms beneath the sunlight. Not so much thy skill, then, O

hunter, as the great necessities that strike the victory to thee!

In man, breathing is incessantly going on--one breath only serving

for two or three pulsations; so that whatever other business he has to

attend to, waking or sleeping, breathe he must, or die he will. But the

Sperm Whale only breathes about one seventh or Sunday of his time.

It has been said that the whale only breathes through his spout-hole; if

it could truthfully be added that his spouts are mixed with water, then

I opine we should be furnished with the reason why his sense of smell

seems obliterated in him; for the only thing about him that at all

answers to his nose is that identical spout-hole; and being so clogged

with two elements, it could not be expected to have the power of

smelling. But owing to the mystery of the spout--whether it be water or

whether it be vapour--no absolute certainty can as yet be arrived at on

this head. Sure it is, nevertheless, that the Sperm Whale has no proper

olfactories. But what does he want of them? No roses, no violets, no

Cologne-water in the sea.

Furthermore, as his windpipe solely opens into the tube of his spouting

canal, and as that long canal--like the grand Erie Canal--is furnished

with a sort of locks (that open and shut) for the downward retention of

air or the upward exclusion of water, therefore the whale has no voice;

unless you insult him by saying, that when he so strangely rumbles,

he talks through his nose. But then again, what has the whale to say?

Seldom have I known any profound being that had anything to say to

this world, unless forced to stammer out something by way of getting a

living. Oh! happy that the world is such an excellent listener!

Now, the spouting canal of the Sperm Whale, chiefly intended as it

is for the conveyance of air, and for several feet laid along,

horizontally, just beneath the upper surface of his head, and a little

to one side; this curious canal is very much like a gas-pipe laid down

in a city on one side of a street. But the question returns whether this

gas-pipe is also a water-pipe; in other words, whether the spout of the

Sperm Whale is the mere vapour of the exhaled breath, or whether that

exhaled breath is mixed with water taken in at the mouth, and

discharged through the spiracle. It is certain that the mouth indirectly

communicates with the spouting canal; but it cannot be proved that this

is for the purpose of discharging water through the spiracle. Because

the greatest necessity for so doing would seem to be, when in feeding he

accidentally takes in water. But the Sperm Whale's food is far beneath

the surface, and there he cannot spout even if he would. Besides, if

you regard him very closely, and time him with your watch, you will find

that when unmolested, there is an undeviating rhyme between the periods

of his jets and the ordinary periods of respiration.

But why pester one with all this reasoning on the subject? Speak out!

You have seen him spout; then declare what the spout is; can you not

tell water from air? My dear sir, in this world it is not so easy to

settle these plain things. I have ever found your plain things the

knottiest of all. And as for this whale spout, you might almost stand in

it, and yet be undecided as to what it is precisely.

The central body of it is hidden in the snowy sparkling mist enveloping

it; and how can you certainly tell whether any water falls from it,

when, always, when you are close enough to a whale to get a close view

of his spout, he is in a prodigious commotion, the water cascading

all around him. And if at such times you should think that you really

perceived drops of moisture in the spout, how do you know that they are

not merely condensed from its vapour; or how do you know that they

are not those identical drops superficially lodged in the spout-hole

fissure, which is countersunk into the summit of the whale's head? For

even when tranquilly swimming through the mid-day sea in a calm, with

his elevated hump sun-dried as a dromedary's in the desert; even then,

the whale always carries a small basin of water on his head, as under

a blazing sun you will sometimes see a cavity in a rock filled up with

rain.

Nor is it at all prudent for the hunter to be over curious touching the

precise nature of the whale spout. It will not do for him to be peering

into it, and putting his face in it. You cannot go with your pitcher to

this fountain and fill it, and bring it away. For even when coming into

slight contact with the outer, vapoury shreds of the jet, which will

often happen, your skin will feverishly smart, from the acridness of

the thing so touching it. And I know one, who coming into still closer

contact with the spout, whether with some scientific object in view,

or otherwise, I cannot say, the skin peeled off from his cheek and arm.

Wherefore, among whalemen, the spout is deemed poisonous; they try to

evade it. Another thing; I have heard it said, and I do not much doubt

it, that if the jet is fairly spouted into your eyes, it will blind you.

The wisest thing the investigator can do then, it seems to me, is to let

this deadly spout alone.

Still, we can hypothesize, even if we cannot prove and establish. My

hypothesis is this: that the spout is nothing but mist. And besides

other reasons, to this conclusion I am impelled, by considerations

touching the great inherent dignity and sublimity of the Sperm Whale;

I account him no common, shallow being, inasmuch as it is an undisputed

fact that he is never found on soundings, or near shores; all other

whales sometimes are. He is both ponderous and profound. And I am

convinced that from the heads of all ponderous profound beings, such as

Plato, Pyrrho, the Devil, Jupiter, Dante, and so on, there always goes

up a certain semi-visible steam, while in the act of thinking deep

thoughts. While composing a little treatise on Eternity, I had the

curiosity to place a mirror before me; and ere long saw reflected there,

a curious involved worming and undulation in the atmosphere over my

head. The invariable moisture of my hair, while plunged in deep thought,

after six cups of hot tea in my thin shingled attic, of an August noon;

this seems an additional argument for the above supposition.

And how nobly it raises our conceit of the mighty, misty monster, to

behold him solemnly sailing through a calm tropical sea; his vast, mild

head overhung by a canopy of vapour, engendered by his incommunicable

contemplations, and that vapour--as you will sometimes see it--glorified

by a rainbow, as if Heaven itself had put its seal upon his thoughts.

For, d'ye see, rainbows do not visit the clear air; they only irradiate

vapour. And so, through all the thick mists of the dim doubts in my

mind, divine intuitions now and then shoot, enkindling my fog with a

heavenly ray. And for this I thank God; for all have doubts; many deny;

but doubts or denials, few along with them, have intuitions. Doubts

of all things earthly, and intuitions of some things heavenly; this

combination makes neither believer nor infidel, but makes a man who

regards them both with equal eye.

CHAPTER 86. The Tail.

Other poets have warbled the praises of the soft eye of the antelope,

and the lovely plumage of the bird that never alights; less celestial, I

celebrate a tail.

Reckoning the largest sized Sperm Whale's tail to begin at that point of

the trunk where it tapers to about the girth of a man, it comprises

upon its upper surface alone, an area of at least fifty square feet. The

compact round body of its root expands into two broad, firm, flat palms

or flukes, gradually shoaling away to less than an inch in thickness.

At the crotch or junction, these flukes slightly overlap, then sideways

recede from each other like wings, leaving a wide vacancy between. In

no living thing are the lines of beauty more exquisitely defined than in

the crescentic borders of these flukes. At its utmost expansion in the

full grown whale, the tail will considerably exceed twenty feet across.

The entire member seems a dense webbed bed of welded sinews; but cut

into it, and you find that three distinct strata compose it:--upper,

middle, and lower. The fibres in the upper and lower layers, are

long and horizontal; those of the middle one, very short, and running

crosswise between the outside layers. This triune structure, as much as

anything else, imparts power to the tail. To the student of old Roman

walls, the middle layer will furnish a curious parallel to the thin

course of tiles always alternating with the stone in those wonderful

relics of the antique, and which undoubtedly contribute so much to the

great strength of the masonry.

But as if this vast local power in the tendinous tail were not enough,

the whole bulk of the leviathan is knit over with a warp and woof of

muscular fibres and filaments, which passing on either side the loins

and running down into the flukes, insensibly blend with them, and

largely contribute to their might; so that in the tail the confluent

measureless force of the whole whale seems concentrated to a point.

Could annihilation occur to matter, this were the thing to do it.

Nor does this--its amazing strength, at all tend to cripple the graceful

flexion of its motions; where infantileness of ease undulates through

a Titanism of power. On the contrary, those motions derive their most

appalling beauty from it. Real strength never impairs beauty or harmony,

but it often bestows it; and in everything imposingly beautiful,

strength has much to do with the magic. Take away the tied tendons that

all over seem bursting from the marble in the carved Hercules, and its

charm would be gone. As devout Eckerman lifted the linen sheet from the

naked corpse of Goethe, he was overwhelmed with the massive chest of the

man, that seemed as a Roman triumphal arch. When Angelo paints even God

the Father in human form, mark what robustness is there. And whatever

they may reveal of the divine love in the Son, the soft, curled,

hermaphroditical Italian pictures, in which his idea has been most

successfully embodied; these pictures, so destitute as they are of all

brawniness, hint nothing of any power, but the mere negative, feminine

one of submission and endurance, which on all hands it is conceded, form

the peculiar practical virtues of his teachings.

Such is the subtle elasticity of the organ I treat of, that whether

wielded in sport, or in earnest, or in anger, whatever be the mood it

be in, its flexions are invariably marked by exceeding grace. Therein no

fairy's arm can transcend it.

Five great motions are peculiar to it. First, when used as a fin for

progression; Second, when used as a mace in battle; Third, in sweeping;

Fourth, in lobtailing; Fifth, in peaking flukes.

First: Being horizontal in its position, the Leviathan's tail acts in

a different manner from the tails of all other sea creatures. It never

wriggles. In man or fish, wriggling is a sign of inferiority. To the

whale, his tail is the sole means of propulsion. Scroll-wise coiled

forwards beneath the body, and then rapidly sprung backwards, it is this

which gives that singular darting, leaping motion to the monster when

furiously swimming. His side-fins only serve to steer by.

Second: It is a little significant, that while one sperm whale only

fights another sperm whale with his head and jaw, nevertheless, in his

conflicts with man, he chiefly and contemptuously uses his tail. In

striking at a boat, he swiftly curves away his flukes from it, and the

blow is only inflicted by the recoil. If it be made in the unobstructed

air, especially if it descend to its mark, the stroke is then simply

irresistible. No ribs of man or boat can withstand it. Your only

salvation lies in eluding it; but if it comes sideways through the

opposing water, then partly owing to the light buoyancy of the whale

boat, and the elasticity of its materials, a cracked rib or a dashed

plank or two, a sort of stitch in the side, is generally the most

serious result. These submerged side blows are so often received in the

fishery, that they are accounted mere child's play. Some one strips off

a frock, and the hole is stopped.

Third: I cannot demonstrate it, but it seems to me, that in the whale

the sense of touch is concentrated in the tail; for in this respect

there is a delicacy in it only equalled by the daintiness of the

elephant's trunk. This delicacy is chiefly evinced in the action of

sweeping, when in maidenly gentleness the whale with a certain soft

slowness moves his immense flukes from side to side upon the surface

of the sea; and if he feel but a sailor's whisker, woe to that sailor,

whiskers and all. What tenderness there is in that preliminary touch!

Had this tail any prehensile power, I should straightway bethink me of

Darmonodes' elephant that so frequented the flower-market, and with

low salutations presented nosegays to damsels, and then caressed their

zones. On more accounts than one, a pity it is that the whale does not

possess this prehensile virtue in his tail; for I have heard of yet

another elephant, that when wounded in the fight, curved round his trunk

and extracted the dart.

Fourth: Stealing unawares upon the whale in the fancied security of the

middle of solitary seas, you find him unbent from the vast corpulence

of his dignity, and kitten-like, he plays on the ocean as if it were a

hearth. But still you see his power in his play. The broad palms of

his tail are flirted high into the air; then smiting the surface, the

thunderous concussion resounds for miles. You would almost think a great

gun had been discharged; and if you noticed the light wreath of vapour

from the spiracle at his other extremity, you would think that that was

the smoke from the touch-hole.

Fifth: As in the ordinary floating posture of the leviathan the flukes

lie considerably below the level of his back, they are then completely

out of sight beneath the surface; but when he is about to plunge into

the deeps, his entire flukes with at least thirty feet of his body are

tossed erect in the air, and so remain vibrating a moment, till they

downwards shoot out of view. Excepting the sublime BREACH--somewhere

else to be described--this peaking of the whale's flukes is perhaps the

grandest sight to be seen in all animated nature. Out of the bottomless

profundities the gigantic tail seems spasmodically snatching at the

highest heaven. So in dreams, have I seen majestic Satan thrusting forth

his tormented colossal claw from the flame Baltic of Hell. But in

gazing at such scenes, it is all in all what mood you are in; if in

the Dantean, the devils will occur to you; if in that of Isaiah, the

archangels. Standing at the mast-head of my ship during a sunrise that

crimsoned sky and sea, I once saw a large herd of whales in the east,

all heading towards the sun, and for a moment vibrating in concert with

peaked flukes. As it seemed to me at the time, such a grand embodiment

of adoration of the gods was never beheld, even in Persia, the home of

the fire worshippers. As Ptolemy Philopater testified of the African

elephant, I then testified of the whale, pronouncing him the most devout

of all beings. For according to King Juba, the military elephants of

antiquity often hailed the morning with their trunks uplifted in the

profoundest silence.

The chance comparison in this chapter, between the whale and the

elephant, so far as some aspects of the tail of the one and the trunk

of the other are concerned, should not tend to place those two

opposite organs on an equality, much less the creatures to which they

respectively belong. For as the mightiest elephant is but a terrier

to Leviathan, so, compared with Leviathan's tail, his trunk is but the

stalk of a lily. The most direful blow from the elephant's trunk were as

the playful tap of a fan, compared with the measureless crush and crash

of the sperm whale's ponderous flukes, which in repeated instances have

one after the other hurled entire boats with all their oars and crews

into the air, very much as an Indian juggler tosses his balls.\*

\*Though all comparison in the way of general bulk between the whale

and the elephant is preposterous, inasmuch as in that particular the

elephant stands in much the same respect to the whale that a dog does to

the elephant; nevertheless, there are not wanting some points of curious

similitude; among these is the spout. It is well known that the elephant

will often draw up water or dust in his trunk, and then elevating it,

jet it forth in a stream.

The more I consider this mighty tail, the more do I deplore my inability

to express it. At times there are gestures in it, which, though they

would well grace the hand of man, remain wholly inexplicable. In an

extensive herd, so remarkable, occasionally, are these mystic gestures,

that I have heard hunters who have declared them akin to Free-Mason

signs and symbols; that the whale, indeed, by these methods

intelligently conversed with the world. Nor are there wanting other

motions of the whale in his general body, full of strangeness, and

unaccountable to his most experienced assailant. Dissect him how I may,

then, I but go skin deep; I know him not, and never will. But if I know

not even the tail of this whale, how understand his head? much more,

how comprehend his face, when face he has none? Thou shalt see my back

parts, my tail, he seems to say, but my face shall not be seen. But I

cannot completely make out his back parts; and hint what he will about

his face, I say again he has no face.

CHAPTER 87. The Grand Armada.

The long and narrow peninsula of Malacca, extending south-eastward from

the territories of Birmah, forms the most southerly point of all Asia.

In a continuous line from that peninsula stretch the long islands of

Sumatra, Java, Bally, and Timor; which, with many others, form a

vast mole, or rampart, lengthwise connecting Asia with Australia,

and dividing the long unbroken Indian ocean from the thickly studded

oriental archipelagoes. This rampart is pierced by several sally-ports

for the convenience of ships and whales; conspicuous among which are the

straits of Sunda and Malacca. By the straits of Sunda, chiefly, vessels

bound to China from the west, emerge into the China seas.

Those narrow straits of Sunda divide Sumatra from Java; and standing

midway in that vast rampart of islands, buttressed by that bold green

promontory, known to seamen as Java Head; they not a little correspond

to the central gateway opening into some vast walled empire: and

considering the inexhaustible wealth of spices, and silks, and jewels,

and gold, and ivory, with which the thousand islands of that oriental

sea are enriched, it seems a significant provision of nature, that such

treasures, by the very formation of the land, should at least bear the

appearance, however ineffectual, of being guarded from the all-grasping

western world. The shores of the Straits of Sunda are unsupplied

with those domineering fortresses which guard the entrances to the

Mediterranean, the Baltic, and the Propontis. Unlike the Danes, these

Orientals do not demand the obsequious homage of lowered top-sails from

the endless procession of ships before the wind, which for centuries

past, by night and by day, have passed between the islands of Sumatra

and Java, freighted with the costliest cargoes of the east. But while

they freely waive a ceremonial like this, they do by no means renounce

their claim to more solid tribute.

Time out of mind the piratical proas of the Malays, lurking among

the low shaded coves and islets of Sumatra, have sallied out upon the

vessels sailing through the straits, fiercely demanding tribute at the

point of their spears. Though by the repeated bloody chastisements they

have received at the hands of European cruisers, the audacity of these

corsairs has of late been somewhat repressed; yet, even at the present

day, we occasionally hear of English and American vessels, which, in

those waters, have been remorselessly boarded and pillaged.

With a fair, fresh wind, the Pequod was now drawing nigh to these

straits; Ahab purposing to pass through them into the Javan sea, and

thence, cruising northwards, over waters known to be frequented here and

there by the Sperm Whale, sweep inshore by the Philippine Islands, and

gain the far coast of Japan, in time for the great whaling season there.

By these means, the circumnavigating Pequod would sweep almost all the

known Sperm Whale cruising grounds of the world, previous to descending

upon the Line in the Pacific; where Ahab, though everywhere else foiled

in his pursuit, firmly counted upon giving battle to Moby Dick, in the

sea he was most known to frequent; and at a season when he might most

reasonably be presumed to be haunting it.

But how now? in this zoned quest, does Ahab touch no land? does his crew

drink air? Surely, he will stop for water. Nay. For a long time, now,

the circus-running sun has raced within his fiery ring, and needs

no sustenance but what's in himself. So Ahab. Mark this, too, in the

whaler. While other hulls are loaded down with alien stuff, to be

transferred to foreign wharves; the world-wandering whale-ship carries

no cargo but herself and crew, their weapons and their wants. She has a

whole lake's contents bottled in her ample hold. She is ballasted with

utilities; not altogether with unusable pig-lead and kentledge. She

carries years' water in her. Clear old prime Nantucket water; which,

when three years afloat, the Nantucketer, in the Pacific, prefers to

drink before the brackish fluid, but yesterday rafted off in casks, from

the Peruvian or Indian streams. Hence it is, that, while other ships may

have gone to China from New York, and back again, touching at a score

of ports, the whale-ship, in all that interval, may not have sighted

one grain of soil; her crew having seen no man but floating seamen like

themselves. So that did you carry them the news that another flood had

come; they would only answer--"Well, boys, here's the ark!"

Now, as many Sperm Whales had been captured off the western coast of

Java, in the near vicinity of the Straits of Sunda; indeed, as most of

the ground, roundabout, was generally recognised by the fishermen as an

excellent spot for cruising; therefore, as the Pequod gained more

and more upon Java Head, the look-outs were repeatedly hailed, and

admonished to keep wide awake. But though the green palmy cliffs of the

land soon loomed on the starboard bow, and with delighted nostrils

the fresh cinnamon was snuffed in the air, yet not a single jet was

descried. Almost renouncing all thought of falling in with any game

hereabouts, the ship had well nigh entered the straits, when the

customary cheering cry was heard from aloft, and ere long a spectacle of

singular magnificence saluted us.

But here be it premised, that owing to the unwearied activity with which

of late they have been hunted over all four oceans, the Sperm Whales,

instead of almost invariably sailing in small detached companies, as in

former times, are now frequently met with in extensive herds, sometimes

embracing so great a multitude, that it would almost seem as if

numerous nations of them had sworn solemn league and covenant for mutual

assistance and protection. To this aggregation of the Sperm Whale into

such immense caravans, may be imputed the circumstance that even in the

best cruising grounds, you may now sometimes sail for weeks and months

together, without being greeted by a single spout; and then be suddenly

saluted by what sometimes seems thousands on thousands.

Broad on both bows, at the distance of some two or three miles, and

forming a great semicircle, embracing one half of the level horizon,

a continuous chain of whale-jets were up-playing and sparkling in the

noon-day air. Unlike the straight perpendicular twin-jets of the Right

Whale, which, dividing at top, fall over in two branches, like the cleft

drooping boughs of a willow, the single forward-slanting spout of the

Sperm Whale presents a thick curled bush of white mist, continually

rising and falling away to leeward.

Seen from the Pequod's deck, then, as she would rise on a high hill of

the sea, this host of vapoury spouts, individually curling up into the

air, and beheld through a blending atmosphere of bluish haze, showed

like the thousand cheerful chimneys of some dense metropolis, descried

of a balmy autumnal morning, by some horseman on a height.

As marching armies approaching an unfriendly defile in the mountains,

accelerate their march, all eagerness to place that perilous passage in

their rear, and once more expand in comparative security upon the plain;

even so did this vast fleet of whales now seem hurrying forward through

the straits; gradually contracting the wings of their semicircle, and

swimming on, in one solid, but still crescentic centre.

Crowding all sail the Pequod pressed after them; the harpooneers

handling their weapons, and loudly cheering from the heads of their

yet suspended boats. If the wind only held, little doubt had they, that

chased through these Straits of Sunda, the vast host would only deploy

into the Oriental seas to witness the capture of not a few of their

number. And who could tell whether, in that congregated caravan, Moby

Dick himself might not temporarily be swimming, like the worshipped

white-elephant in the coronation procession of the Siamese! So with

stun-sail piled on stun-sail, we sailed along, driving these leviathans

before us; when, of a sudden, the voice of Tashtego was heard, loudly

directing attention to something in our wake.

Corresponding to the crescent in our van, we beheld another in our rear.

It seemed formed of detached white vapours, rising and falling something

like the spouts of the whales; only they did not so completely come and

go; for they constantly hovered, without finally disappearing. Levelling

his glass at this sight, Ahab quickly revolved in his pivot-hole,

crying, "Aloft there, and rig whips and buckets to wet the

sails;--Malays, sir, and after us!"

As if too long lurking behind the headlands, till the Pequod should

fairly have entered the straits, these rascally Asiatics were now in hot

pursuit, to make up for their over-cautious delay. But when the swift

Pequod, with a fresh leading wind, was herself in hot chase; how very

kind of these tawny philanthropists to assist in speeding her on to

her own chosen pursuit,--mere riding-whips and rowels to her, that they

were. As with glass under arm, Ahab to-and-fro paced the deck; in his

forward turn beholding the monsters he chased, and in the after one the

bloodthirsty pirates chasing him; some such fancy as the above seemed

his. And when he glanced upon the green walls of the watery defile in

which the ship was then sailing, and bethought him that through that

gate lay the route to his vengeance, and beheld, how that through that

same gate he was now both chasing and being chased to his deadly end;

and not only that, but a herd of remorseless wild pirates and

inhuman atheistical devils were infernally cheering him on with their

curses;--when all these conceits had passed through his brain, Ahab's

brow was left gaunt and ribbed, like the black sand beach after some

stormy tide has been gnawing it, without being able to drag the firm

thing from its place.

But thoughts like these troubled very few of the reckless crew; and

when, after steadily dropping and dropping the pirates astern, the

Pequod at last shot by the vivid green Cockatoo Point on the Sumatra

side, emerging at last upon the broad waters beyond; then, the

harpooneers seemed more to grieve that the swift whales had been gaining

upon the ship, than to rejoice that the ship had so victoriously gained

upon the Malays. But still driving on in the wake of the whales, at

length they seemed abating their speed; gradually the ship neared them;

and the wind now dying away, word was passed to spring to the boats. But

no sooner did the herd, by some presumed wonderful instinct of the Sperm

Whale, become notified of the three keels that were after them,--though

as yet a mile in their rear,--than they rallied again, and forming

in close ranks and battalions, so that their spouts all looked like

flashing lines of stacked bayonets, moved on with redoubled velocity.

Stripped to our shirts and drawers, we sprang to the white-ash, and

after several hours' pulling were almost disposed to renounce the chase,

when a general pausing commotion among the whales gave animating

token that they were now at last under the influence of that strange

perplexity of inert irresolution, which, when the fishermen perceive

it in the whale, they say he is gallied. The compact martial columns

in which they had been hitherto rapidly and steadily swimming, were now

broken up in one measureless rout; and like King Porus' elephants in the

Indian battle with Alexander, they seemed going mad with consternation.

In all directions expanding in vast irregular circles, and aimlessly

swimming hither and thither, by their short thick spoutings, they

plainly betrayed their distraction of panic. This was still more

strangely evinced by those of their number, who, completely paralysed

as it were, helplessly floated like water-logged dismantled ships on the

sea. Had these Leviathans been but a flock of simple sheep, pursued over

the pasture by three fierce wolves, they could not possibly have evinced

such excessive dismay. But this occasional timidity is characteristic

of almost all herding creatures. Though banding together in tens of

thousands, the lion-maned buffaloes of the West have fled before a

solitary horseman. Witness, too, all human beings, how when herded

together in the sheepfold of a theatre's pit, they will, at the

slightest alarm of fire, rush helter-skelter for the outlets, crowding,

trampling, jamming, and remorselessly dashing each other to death. Best,

therefore, withhold any amazement at the strangely gallied whales

before us, for there is no folly of the beasts of the earth which is not

infinitely outdone by the madness of men.

Though many of the whales, as has been said, were in violent motion,

yet it is to be observed that as a whole the herd neither advanced nor

retreated, but collectively remained in one place. As is customary in

those cases, the boats at once separated, each making for some one

lone whale on the outskirts of the shoal. In about three minutes' time,

Queequeg's harpoon was flung; the stricken fish darted blinding spray

in our faces, and then running away with us like light, steered straight

for the heart of the herd. Though such a movement on the part of the

whale struck under such circumstances, is in no wise unprecedented; and

indeed is almost always more or less anticipated; yet does it present

one of the more perilous vicissitudes of the fishery. For as the swift

monster drags you deeper and deeper into the frantic shoal, you bid

adieu to circumspect life and only exist in a delirious throb.

As, blind and deaf, the whale plunged forward, as if by sheer power of

speed to rid himself of the iron leech that had fastened to him; as we

thus tore a white gash in the sea, on all sides menaced as we flew, by

the crazed creatures to and fro rushing about us; our beset boat was

like a ship mobbed by ice-isles in a tempest, and striving to steer

through their complicated channels and straits, knowing not at what

moment it may be locked in and crushed.

But not a bit daunted, Queequeg steered us manfully; now sheering off

from this monster directly across our route in advance; now edging away

from that, whose colossal flukes were suspended overhead, while all the

time, Starbuck stood up in the bows, lance in hand, pricking out of our

way whatever whales he could reach by short darts, for there was no time

to make long ones. Nor were the oarsmen quite idle, though their wonted

duty was now altogether dispensed with. They chiefly attended to the

shouting part of the business. "Out of the way, Commodore!" cried one,

to a great dromedary that of a sudden rose bodily to the surface,

and for an instant threatened to swamp us. "Hard down with your tail,

there!" cried a second to another, which, close to our gunwale, seemed

calmly cooling himself with his own fan-like extremity.

All whaleboats carry certain curious contrivances, originally invented

by the Nantucket Indians, called druggs. Two thick squares of wood

of equal size are stoutly clenched together, so that they cross each

other's grain at right angles; a line of considerable length is then

attached to the middle of this block, and the other end of the line

being looped, it can in a moment be fastened to a harpoon. It is chiefly

among gallied whales that this drugg is used. For then, more whales

are close round you than you can possibly chase at one time. But sperm

whales are not every day encountered; while you may, then, you must

kill all you can. And if you cannot kill them all at once, you must wing

them, so that they can be afterwards killed at your leisure. Hence it

is, that at times like these the drugg, comes into requisition. Our boat

was furnished with three of them. The first and second were successfully

darted, and we saw the whales staggeringly running off, fettered by the

enormous sidelong resistance of the towing drugg. They were cramped like

malefactors with the chain and ball. But upon flinging the third, in the

act of tossing overboard the clumsy wooden block, it caught under one

of the seats of the boat, and in an instant tore it out and carried it

away, dropping the oarsman in the boat's bottom as the seat slid from

under him. On both sides the sea came in at the wounded planks, but we

stuffed two or three drawers and shirts in, and so stopped the leaks for

the time.

It had been next to impossible to dart these drugged-harpoons, were

it not that as we advanced into the herd, our whale's way greatly

diminished; moreover, that as we went still further and further from the

circumference of commotion, the direful disorders seemed waning. So that

when at last the jerking harpoon drew out, and the towing whale sideways

vanished; then, with the tapering force of his parting momentum, we

glided between two whales into the innermost heart of the shoal, as if

from some mountain torrent we had slid into a serene valley lake. Here

the storms in the roaring glens between the outermost whales, were heard

but not felt. In this central expanse the sea presented that smooth

satin-like surface, called a sleek, produced by the subtle moisture

thrown off by the whale in his more quiet moods. Yes, we were now

in that enchanted calm which they say lurks at the heart of every

commotion. And still in the distracted distance we beheld the tumults of

the outer concentric circles, and saw successive pods of whales, eight

or ten in each, swiftly going round and round, like multiplied spans of

horses in a ring; and so closely shoulder to shoulder, that a Titanic

circus-rider might easily have over-arched the middle ones, and so have

gone round on their backs. Owing to the density of the crowd of reposing

whales, more immediately surrounding the embayed axis of the herd, no

possible chance of escape was at present afforded us. We must watch for

a breach in the living wall that hemmed us in; the wall that had only

admitted us in order to shut us up. Keeping at the centre of the lake,

we were occasionally visited by small tame cows and calves; the women

and children of this routed host.

Now, inclusive of the occasional wide intervals between the revolving

outer circles, and inclusive of the spaces between the various pods in

any one of those circles, the entire area at this juncture, embraced by

the whole multitude, must have contained at least two or three square

miles. At any rate--though indeed such a test at such a time might be

deceptive--spoutings might be discovered from our low boat that

seemed playing up almost from the rim of the horizon. I mention this

circumstance, because, as if the cows and calves had been purposely

locked up in this innermost fold; and as if the wide extent of the

herd had hitherto prevented them from learning the precise cause of its

stopping; or, possibly, being so young, unsophisticated, and every way

innocent and inexperienced; however it may have been, these smaller

whales--now and then visiting our becalmed boat from the margin of the

lake--evinced a wondrous fearlessness and confidence, or else a still

becharmed panic which it was impossible not to marvel at. Like household

dogs they came snuffling round us, right up to our gunwales, and

touching them; till it almost seemed that some spell had suddenly

domesticated them. Queequeg patted their foreheads; Starbuck scratched

their backs with his lance; but fearful of the consequences, for the

time refrained from darting it.

But far beneath this wondrous world upon the surface, another and still

stranger world met our eyes as we gazed over the side. For, suspended

in those watery vaults, floated the forms of the nursing mothers of the

whales, and those that by their enormous girth seemed shortly to

become mothers. The lake, as I have hinted, was to a considerable depth

exceedingly transparent; and as human infants while suckling will calmly

and fixedly gaze away from the breast, as if leading two different

lives at the time; and while yet drawing mortal nourishment, be still

spiritually feasting upon some unearthly reminiscence;--even so did the

young of these whales seem looking up towards us, but not at us, as if

we were but a bit of Gulfweed in their new-born sight. Floating on their

sides, the mothers also seemed quietly eyeing us. One of these little

infants, that from certain queer tokens seemed hardly a day old, might

have measured some fourteen feet in length, and some six feet in

girth. He was a little frisky; though as yet his body seemed scarce yet

recovered from that irksome position it had so lately occupied in the

maternal reticule; where, tail to head, and all ready for the final

spring, the unborn whale lies bent like a Tartar's bow. The delicate

side-fins, and the palms of his flukes, still freshly retained the

plaited crumpled appearance of a baby's ears newly arrived from foreign

parts.

"Line! line!" cried Queequeg, looking over the gunwale; "him fast! him

fast!--Who line him! Who struck?--Two whale; one big, one little!"

"What ails ye, man?" cried Starbuck.

"Look-e here," said Queequeg, pointing down.

As when the stricken whale, that from the tub has reeled out hundreds of

fathoms of rope; as, after deep sounding, he floats up again, and shows

the slackened curling line buoyantly rising and spiralling towards the

air; so now, Starbuck saw long coils of the umbilical cord of Madame

Leviathan, by which the young cub seemed still tethered to its dam. Not

seldom in the rapid vicissitudes of the chase, this natural line, with

the maternal end loose, becomes entangled with the hempen one, so that

the cub is thereby trapped. Some of the subtlest secrets of the seas

seemed divulged to us in this enchanted pond. We saw young Leviathan

amours in the deep.\*

\*The sperm whale, as with all other species of the Leviathan, but unlike

most other fish, breeds indifferently at all seasons; after a gestation

which may probably be set down at nine months, producing but one at a

time; though in some few known instances giving birth to an Esau and

Jacob:--a contingency provided for in suckling by two teats, curiously

situated, one on each side of the anus; but the breasts themselves

extend upwards from that. When by chance these precious parts in a

nursing whale are cut by the hunter's lance, the mother's pouring milk

and blood rivallingly discolour the sea for rods. The milk is very sweet

and rich; it has been tasted by man; it might do well with strawberries.

When overflowing with mutual esteem, the whales salute MORE HOMINUM.

And thus, though surrounded by circle upon circle of consternations

and affrights, did these inscrutable creatures at the centre freely and

fearlessly indulge in all peaceful concernments; yea, serenely revelled

in dalliance and delight. But even so, amid the tornadoed Atlantic of

my being, do I myself still for ever centrally disport in mute calm; and

while ponderous planets of unwaning woe revolve round me, deep down and

deep inland there I still bathe me in eternal mildness of joy.

Meanwhile, as we thus lay entranced, the occasional sudden frantic

spectacles in the distance evinced the activity of the other boats,

still engaged in drugging the whales on the frontier of the host; or

possibly carrying on the war within the first circle, where abundance of

room and some convenient retreats were afforded them. But the sight

of the enraged drugged whales now and then blindly darting to and fro

across the circles, was nothing to what at last met our eyes. It is

sometimes the custom when fast to a whale more than commonly powerful

and alert, to seek to hamstring him, as it were, by sundering or

maiming his gigantic tail-tendon. It is done by darting a short-handled

cutting-spade, to which is attached a rope for hauling it back again.

A whale wounded (as we afterwards learned) in this part, but not

effectually, as it seemed, had broken away from the boat, carrying along

with him half of the harpoon line; and in the extraordinary agony of

the wound, he was now dashing among the revolving circles like the lone

mounted desperado Arnold, at the battle of Saratoga, carrying dismay

wherever he went.

But agonizing as was the wound of this whale, and an appalling spectacle

enough, any way; yet the peculiar horror with which he seemed to

inspire the rest of the herd, was owing to a cause which at first the

intervening distance obscured from us. But at length we perceived that

by one of the unimaginable accidents of the fishery, this whale had

become entangled in the harpoon-line that he towed; he had also run

away with the cutting-spade in him; and while the free end of the rope

attached to that weapon, had permanently caught in the coils of the

harpoon-line round his tail, the cutting-spade itself had worked loose

from his flesh. So that tormented to madness, he was now churning

through the water, violently flailing with his flexible tail, and

tossing the keen spade about him, wounding and murdering his own

comrades.

This terrific object seemed to recall the whole herd from their

stationary fright. First, the whales forming the margin of our lake

began to crowd a little, and tumble against each other, as if lifted

by half spent billows from afar; then the lake itself began faintly to

heave and swell; the submarine bridal-chambers and nurseries vanished;

in more and more contracting orbits the whales in the more central

circles began to swim in thickening clusters. Yes, the long calm was

departing. A low advancing hum was soon heard; and then like to the

tumultuous masses of block-ice when the great river Hudson breaks up in

Spring, the entire host of whales came tumbling upon their inner centre,

as if to pile themselves up in one common mountain. Instantly Starbuck

and Queequeg changed places; Starbuck taking the stern.

"Oars! Oars!" he intensely whispered, seizing the helm--"gripe your

oars, and clutch your souls, now! My God, men, stand by! Shove him off,

you Queequeg--the whale there!--prick him!--hit him! Stand up--stand

up, and stay so! Spring, men--pull, men; never mind their backs--scrape

them!--scrape away!"

The boat was now all but jammed between two vast black bulks, leaving a

narrow Dardanelles between their long lengths. But by desperate endeavor

we at last shot into a temporary opening; then giving way rapidly,

and at the same time earnestly watching for another outlet. After many

similar hair-breadth escapes, we at last swiftly glided into what had

just been one of the outer circles, but now crossed by random whales,

all violently making for one centre. This lucky salvation was cheaply

purchased by the loss of Queequeg's hat, who, while standing in the bows

to prick the fugitive whales, had his hat taken clean from his head by

the air-eddy made by the sudden tossing of a pair of broad flukes close

by.

Riotous and disordered as the universal commotion now was, it soon

resolved itself into what seemed a systematic movement; for having

clumped together at last in one dense body, they then renewed their

onward flight with augmented fleetness. Further pursuit was useless; but

the boats still lingered in their wake to pick up what drugged whales

might be dropped astern, and likewise to secure one which Flask had

killed and waifed. The waif is a pennoned pole, two or three of which

are carried by every boat; and which, when additional game is at hand,

are inserted upright into the floating body of a dead whale, both to

mark its place on the sea, and also as token of prior possession, should

the boats of any other ship draw near.

The result of this lowering was somewhat illustrative of that sagacious

saying in the Fishery,--the more whales the less fish. Of all the

drugged whales only one was captured. The rest contrived to escape for

the time, but only to be taken, as will hereafter be seen, by some other

craft than the Pequod.

CHAPTER 88. Schools and Schoolmasters.

The previous chapter gave account of an immense body or herd of Sperm

Whales, and there was also then given the probable cause inducing those

vast aggregations.

Now, though such great bodies are at times encountered, yet, as must

have been seen, even at the present day, small detached bands are

occasionally observed, embracing from twenty to fifty individuals each.

Such bands are known as schools. They generally are of two sorts; those

composed almost entirely of females, and those mustering none but young

vigorous males, or bulls, as they are familiarly designated.

In cavalier attendance upon the school of females, you invariably see a

male of full grown magnitude, but not old; who, upon any alarm, evinces

his gallantry by falling in the rear and covering the flight of his

ladies. In truth, this gentleman is a luxurious Ottoman, swimming about

over the watery world, surroundingly accompanied by all the solaces

and endearments of the harem. The contrast between this Ottoman and

his concubines is striking; because, while he is always of the largest

leviathanic proportions, the ladies, even at full growth, are not

more than one-third of the bulk of an average-sized male. They are

comparatively delicate, indeed; I dare say, not to exceed half a dozen

yards round the waist. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied, that upon the

whole they are hereditarily entitled to EMBONPOINT.

It is very curious to watch this harem and its lord in their indolent

ramblings. Like fashionables, they are for ever on the move in leisurely

search of variety. You meet them on the Line in time for the full flower

of the Equatorial feeding season, having just returned, perhaps, from

spending the summer in the Northern seas, and so cheating summer of all

unpleasant weariness and warmth. By the time they have lounged up and

down the promenade of the Equator awhile, they start for the Oriental

waters in anticipation of the cool season there, and so evade the other

excessive temperature of the year.

When serenely advancing on one of these journeys, if any strange

suspicious sights are seen, my lord whale keeps a wary eye on his

interesting family. Should any unwarrantably pert young Leviathan coming

that way, presume to draw confidentially close to one of the ladies,

with what prodigious fury the Bashaw assails him, and chases him away!

High times, indeed, if unprincipled young rakes like him are to be

permitted to invade the sanctity of domestic bliss; though do what the

Bashaw will, he cannot keep the most notorious Lothario out of his bed;

for, alas! all fish bed in common. As ashore, the ladies often cause the

most terrible duels among their rival admirers; just so with the whales,

who sometimes come to deadly battle, and all for love. They fence with

their long lower jaws, sometimes locking them together, and so striving

for the supremacy like elks that warringly interweave their antlers. Not

a few are captured having the deep scars of these encounters,--furrowed

heads, broken teeth, scolloped fins; and in some instances, wrenched and

dislocated mouths.

But supposing the invader of domestic bliss to betake himself away at

the first rush of the harem's lord, then is it very diverting to watch

that lord. Gently he insinuates his vast bulk among them again and

revels there awhile, still in tantalizing vicinity to young Lothario,

like pious Solomon devoutly worshipping among his thousand concubines.

Granting other whales to be in sight, the fishermen will seldom give

chase to one of these Grand Turks; for these Grand Turks are too lavish

of their strength, and hence their unctuousness is small. As for the

sons and the daughters they beget, why, those sons and daughters must

take care of themselves; at least, with only the maternal help. For

like certain other omnivorous roving lovers that might be named, my Lord

Whale has no taste for the nursery, however much for the bower; and so,

being a great traveller, he leaves his anonymous babies all over the

world; every baby an exotic. In good time, nevertheless, as the ardour

of youth declines; as years and dumps increase; as reflection lends

her solemn pauses; in short, as a general lassitude overtakes the sated

Turk; then a love of ease and virtue supplants the love for maidens; our

Ottoman enters upon the impotent, repentant, admonitory stage of life,

forswears, disbands the harem, and grown to an exemplary, sulky old

soul, goes about all alone among the meridians and parallels saying his

prayers, and warning each young Leviathan from his amorous errors.

Now, as the harem of whales is called by the fishermen a school, so

is the lord and master of that school technically known as the

schoolmaster. It is therefore not in strict character, however admirably

satirical, that after going to school himself, he should then go abroad

inculcating not what he learned there, but the folly of it. His title,

schoolmaster, would very naturally seem derived from the name bestowed

upon the harem itself, but some have surmised that the man who first

thus entitled this sort of Ottoman whale, must have read the memoirs of

Vidocq, and informed himself what sort of a country-schoolmaster that

famous Frenchman was in his younger days, and what was the nature of

those occult lessons he inculcated into some of his pupils.

The same secludedness and isolation to which the schoolmaster whale

betakes himself in his advancing years, is true of all aged Sperm

Whales. Almost universally, a lone whale--as a solitary Leviathan is

called--proves an ancient one. Like venerable moss-bearded Daniel Boone,

he will have no one near him but Nature herself; and her he takes to

wife in the wilderness of waters, and the best of wives she is, though

she keeps so many moody secrets.

The schools composing none but young and vigorous males, previously

mentioned, offer a strong contrast to the harem schools. For while

those female whales are characteristically timid, the young males, or

forty-barrel-bulls, as they call them, are by far the most pugnacious

of all Leviathans, and proverbially the most dangerous to encounter;

excepting those wondrous grey-headed, grizzled whales, sometimes met,

and these will fight you like grim fiends exasperated by a penal gout.

The Forty-barrel-bull schools are larger than the harem schools. Like

a mob of young collegians, they are full of fight, fun, and wickedness,

tumbling round the world at such a reckless, rollicking rate, that no

prudent underwriter would insure them any more than he would a riotous

lad at Yale or Harvard. They soon relinquish this turbulence though,

and when about three-fourths grown, break up, and separately go about in

quest of settlements, that is, harems.

Another point of difference between the male and female schools is

still more characteristic of the sexes. Say you strike a

Forty-barrel-bull--poor devil! all his comrades quit him. But strike

a member of the harem school, and her companions swim around her with

every token of concern, sometimes lingering so near her and so long, as

themselves to fall a prey.

CHAPTER 89. Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish.

The allusion to the waif and waif-poles in the last chapter but one,

necessitates some account of the laws and regulations of the whale

fishery, of which the waif may be deemed the grand symbol and badge.

It frequently happens that when several ships are cruising in company,

a whale may be struck by one vessel, then escape, and be finally killed

and captured by another vessel; and herein are indirectly comprised

many minor contingencies, all partaking of this one grand feature. For

example,--after a weary and perilous chase and capture of a whale,

the body may get loose from the ship by reason of a violent storm; and

drifting far away to leeward, be retaken by a second whaler, who, in a

calm, snugly tows it alongside, without risk of life or line. Thus

the most vexatious and violent disputes would often arise between

the fishermen, were there not some written or unwritten, universal,

undisputed law applicable to all cases.

Perhaps the only formal whaling code authorized by legislative

enactment, was that of Holland. It was decreed by the States-General in

A.D. 1695. But though no other nation has ever had any written whaling

law, yet the American fishermen have been their own legislators and

lawyers in this matter. They have provided a system which for terse

comprehensiveness surpasses Justinian's Pandects and the By-laws of

the Chinese Society for the Suppression of Meddling with other People's

Business. Yes; these laws might be engraven on a Queen Anne's farthing,

or the barb of a harpoon, and worn round the neck, so small are they.

I. A Fast-Fish belongs to the party fast to it.

II. A Loose-Fish is fair game for anybody who can soonest catch it.

But what plays the mischief with this masterly code is the admirable

brevity of it, which necessitates a vast volume of commentaries to

expound it.

First: What is a Fast-Fish? Alive or dead a fish is technically fast,

when it is connected with an occupied ship or boat, by any medium at all

controllable by the occupant or occupants,--a mast, an oar, a nine-inch

cable, a telegraph wire, or a strand of cobweb, it is all the same.

Likewise a fish is technically fast when it bears a waif, or any other

recognised symbol of possession; so long as the party waifing it plainly

evince their ability at any time to take it alongside, as well as their

intention so to do.

These are scientific commentaries; but the commentaries of the whalemen

themselves sometimes consist in hard words and harder knocks--the

Coke-upon-Littleton of the fist. True, among the more upright and

honourable whalemen allowances are always made for peculiar cases,

where it would be an outrageous moral injustice for one party to claim

possession of a whale previously chased or killed by another party. But

others are by no means so scrupulous.

Some fifty years ago there was a curious case of whale-trover litigated

in England, wherein the plaintiffs set forth that after a hard chase of

a whale in the Northern seas; and when indeed they (the plaintiffs) had

succeeded in harpooning the fish; they were at last, through peril of

their lives, obliged to forsake not only their lines, but their boat

itself. Ultimately the defendants (the crew of another ship) came up

with the whale, struck, killed, seized, and finally appropriated it

before the very eyes of the plaintiffs. And when those defendants were

remonstrated with, their captain snapped his fingers in the plaintiffs'

teeth, and assured them that by way of doxology to the deed he had done,

he would now retain their line, harpoons, and boat, which had remained

attached to the whale at the time of the seizure. Wherefore the

plaintiffs now sued for the recovery of the value of their whale, line,

harpoons, and boat.

Mr. Erskine was counsel for the defendants; Lord Ellenborough was

the judge. In the course of the defence, the witty Erskine went on

to illustrate his position, by alluding to a recent crim. con.

case, wherein a gentleman, after in vain trying to bridle his wife's

viciousness, had at last abandoned her upon the seas of life; but in

the course of years, repenting of that step, he instituted an action to

recover possession of her. Erskine was on the other side; and he

then supported it by saying, that though the gentleman had originally

harpooned the lady, and had once had her fast, and only by reason of the

great stress of her plunging viciousness, had at last abandoned her; yet

abandon her he did, so that she became a loose-fish; and therefore

when a subsequent gentleman re-harpooned her, the lady then became that

subsequent gentleman's property, along with whatever harpoon might have

been found sticking in her.

Now in the present case Erskine contended that the examples of the whale

and the lady were reciprocally illustrative of each other.

These pleadings, and the counter pleadings, being duly heard, the very

learned Judge in set terms decided, to wit,--That as for the boat, he

awarded it to the plaintiffs, because they had merely abandoned it

to save their lives; but that with regard to the controverted whale,

harpoons, and line, they belonged to the defendants; the whale, because

it was a Loose-Fish at the time of the final capture; and the harpoons

and line because when the fish made off with them, it (the fish)

acquired a property in those articles; and hence anybody who afterwards

took the fish had a right to them. Now the defendants afterwards took

the fish; ergo, the aforesaid articles were theirs.

A common man looking at this decision of the very learned Judge, might

possibly object to it. But ploughed up to the primary rock of the

matter, the two great principles laid down in the twin whaling laws

previously quoted, and applied and elucidated by Lord Ellenborough in

the above cited case; these two laws touching Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish,

I say, will, on reflection, be found the fundamentals of all human

jurisprudence; for notwithstanding its complicated tracery of sculpture,

the Temple of the Law, like the Temple of the Philistines, has but two

props to stand on.

Is it not a saying in every one's mouth, Possession is half of the law:

that is, regardless of how the thing came into possession? But often

possession is the whole of the law. What are the sinews and souls of

Russian serfs and Republican slaves but Fast-Fish, whereof possession is

the whole of the law? What to the rapacious landlord is the widow's last

mite but a Fast-Fish? What is yonder undetected villain's marble mansion

with a door-plate for a waif; what is that but a Fast-Fish? What is the

ruinous discount which Mordecai, the broker, gets from poor Woebegone,

the bankrupt, on a loan to keep Woebegone's family from starvation;

what is that ruinous discount but a Fast-Fish? What is the Archbishop of

Savesoul's income of L100,000 seized from the scant bread and cheese

of hundreds of thousands of broken-backed laborers (all sure of heaven

without any of Savesoul's help) what is that globular L100,000 but a

Fast-Fish? What are the Duke of Dunder's hereditary towns and hamlets

but Fast-Fish? What to that redoubted harpooneer, John Bull, is poor

Ireland, but a Fast-Fish? What to that apostolic lancer, Brother

Jonathan, is Texas but a Fast-Fish? And concerning all these, is not

Possession the whole of the law?

But if the doctrine of Fast-Fish be pretty generally applicable,

the kindred doctrine of Loose-Fish is still more widely so. That is

internationally and universally applicable.

What was America in 1492 but a Loose-Fish, in which Columbus struck the

Spanish standard by way of waifing it for his royal master and mistress?

What was Poland to the Czar? What Greece to the Turk? What India

to England? What at last will Mexico be to the United States? All

Loose-Fish.

What are the Rights of Man and the Liberties of the World but

Loose-Fish? What all men's minds and opinions but Loose-Fish? What is

the principle of religious belief in them but a Loose-Fish? What to

the ostentatious smuggling verbalists are the thoughts of thinkers but

Loose-Fish? What is the great globe itself but a Loose-Fish? And what

are you, reader, but a Loose-Fish and a Fast-Fish, too?

CHAPTER 90. Heads or Tails.

"De balena vero sufficit, si rex habeat caput, et regina caudam."

BRACTON, L. 3, C. 3.

Latin from the books of the Laws of England, which taken along with the

context, means, that of all whales captured by anybody on the coast of

that land, the King, as Honourary Grand Harpooneer, must have the head,

and the Queen be respectfully presented with the tail. A division which,

in the whale, is much like halving an apple; there is no intermediate

remainder. Now as this law, under a modified form, is to this day in

force in England; and as it offers in various respects a strange anomaly

touching the general law of Fast and Loose-Fish, it is here treated of

in a separate chapter, on the same courteous principle that prompts

the English railways to be at the expense of a separate car, specially

reserved for the accommodation of royalty. In the first place, in

curious proof of the fact that the above-mentioned law is still in

force, I proceed to lay before you a circumstance that happened within

the last two years.

It seems that some honest mariners of Dover, or Sandwich, or some one

of the Cinque Ports, had after a hard chase succeeded in killing and

beaching a fine whale which they had originally descried afar off from

the shore. Now the Cinque Ports are partially or somehow under the

jurisdiction of a sort of policeman or beadle, called a Lord Warden.

Holding the office directly from the crown, I believe, all the royal

emoluments incident to the Cinque Port territories become by assignment

his. By some writers this office is called a sinecure. But not so.

Because the Lord Warden is busily employed at times in fobbing his

perquisites; which are his chiefly by virtue of that same fobbing of

them.

Now when these poor sun-burnt mariners, bare-footed, and with their

trowsers rolled high up on their eely legs, had wearily hauled their fat

fish high and dry, promising themselves a good L150 from the precious

oil and bone; and in fantasy sipping rare tea with their wives, and good

ale with their cronies, upon the strength of their respective shares; up

steps a very learned and most Christian and charitable gentleman, with

a copy of Blackstone under his arm; and laying it upon the whale's head,

he says--"Hands off! this fish, my masters, is a Fast-Fish. I seize it

as the Lord Warden's." Upon this the poor mariners in their respectful

consternation--so truly English--knowing not what to say, fall to

vigorously scratching their heads all round; meanwhile ruefully glancing

from the whale to the stranger. But that did in nowise mend the matter,

or at all soften the hard heart of the learned gentleman with the copy

of Blackstone. At length one of them, after long scratching about for

his ideas, made bold to speak,

"Please, sir, who is the Lord Warden?"

"The Duke."

"But the duke had nothing to do with taking this fish?"

"It is his."

"We have been at great trouble, and peril, and some expense, and is

all that to go to the Duke's benefit; we getting nothing at all for our

pains but our blisters?"

"It is his."

"Is the Duke so very poor as to be forced to this desperate mode of

getting a livelihood?"

"It is his."

"I thought to relieve my old bed-ridden mother by part of my share of

this whale."

"It is his."

"Won't the Duke be content with a quarter or a half?"

"It is his."

In a word, the whale was seized and sold, and his Grace the Duke of

Wellington received the money. Thinking that viewed in some particular

lights, the case might by a bare possibility in some small degree be

deemed, under the circumstances, a rather hard one, an honest clergyman

of the town respectfully addressed a note to his Grace, begging him to

take the case of those unfortunate mariners into full consideration. To

which my Lord Duke in substance replied (both letters were published)

that he had already done so, and received the money, and would be

obliged to the reverend gentleman if for the future he (the reverend

gentleman) would decline meddling with other people's business. Is

this the still militant old man, standing at the corners of the three

kingdoms, on all hands coercing alms of beggars?

It will readily be seen that in this case the alleged right of the

Duke to the whale was a delegated one from the Sovereign. We must needs

inquire then on what principle the Sovereign is originally invested with

that right. The law itself has already been set forth. But Plowdon gives

us the reason for it. Says Plowdon, the whale so caught belongs to

the King and Queen, "because of its superior excellence." And by the

soundest commentators this has ever been held a cogent argument in such

matters.

But why should the King have the head, and the Queen the tail? A reason

for that, ye lawyers!

In his treatise on "Queen-Gold," or Queen-pinmoney, an old King's Bench

author, one William Prynne, thus discourseth: "Ye tail is ye Queen's,

that ye Queen's wardrobe may be supplied with ye whalebone." Now this

was written at a time when the black limber bone of the Greenland or

Right whale was largely used in ladies' bodices. But this same bone

is not in the tail; it is in the head, which is a sad mistake for

a sagacious lawyer like Prynne. But is the Queen a mermaid, to be

presented with a tail? An allegorical meaning may lurk here.

There are two royal fish so styled by the English law writers--the whale

and the sturgeon; both royal property under certain limitations, and

nominally supplying the tenth branch of the crown's ordinary revenue.

I know not that any other author has hinted of the matter; but by

inference it seems to me that the sturgeon must be divided in the same

way as the whale, the King receiving the highly dense and elastic head

peculiar to that fish, which, symbolically regarded, may possibly be

humorously grounded upon some presumed congeniality. And thus there

seems a reason in all things, even in law.

CHAPTER 91. The Pequod Meets The Rose-Bud.

"In vain it was to rake for Ambergriese in the paunch of this Leviathan,

insufferable fetor denying not inquiry." SIR T. BROWNE, V.E.

It was a week or two after the last whaling scene recounted, and when we

were slowly sailing over a sleepy, vapoury, mid-day sea, that the many

noses on the Pequod's deck proved more vigilant discoverers than the

three pairs of eyes aloft. A peculiar and not very pleasant smell was

smelt in the sea.

"I will bet something now," said Stubb, "that somewhere hereabouts are

some of those drugged whales we tickled the other day. I thought they

would keel up before long."

Presently, the vapours in advance slid aside; and there in the distance

lay a ship, whose furled sails betokened that some sort of whale must be

alongside. As we glided nearer, the stranger showed French colours from

his peak; and by the eddying cloud of vulture sea-fowl that circled, and

hovered, and swooped around him, it was plain that the whale alongside

must be what the fishermen call a blasted whale, that is, a whale that

has died unmolested on the sea, and so floated an unappropriated corpse.

It may well be conceived, what an unsavory odor such a mass must

exhale; worse than an Assyrian city in the plague, when the living are

incompetent to bury the departed. So intolerable indeed is it regarded

by some, that no cupidity could persuade them to moor alongside of it.

Yet are there those who will still do it; notwithstanding the fact that

the oil obtained from such subjects is of a very inferior quality, and

by no means of the nature of attar-of-rose.

Coming still nearer with the expiring breeze, we saw that the Frenchman

had a second whale alongside; and this second whale seemed even more

of a nosegay than the first. In truth, it turned out to be one of

those problematical whales that seem to dry up and die with a sort

of prodigious dyspepsia, or indigestion; leaving their defunct bodies

almost entirely bankrupt of anything like oil. Nevertheless, in the

proper place we shall see that no knowing fisherman will ever turn

up his nose at such a whale as this, however much he may shun blasted

whales in general.

The Pequod had now swept so nigh to the stranger, that Stubb vowed

he recognised his cutting spade-pole entangled in the lines that were

knotted round the tail of one of these whales.

"There's a pretty fellow, now," he banteringly laughed, standing in the

ship's bows, "there's a jackal for ye! I well know that these Crappoes

of Frenchmen are but poor devils in the fishery; sometimes lowering

their boats for breakers, mistaking them for Sperm Whale spouts; yes,

and sometimes sailing from their port with their hold full of boxes of

tallow candles, and cases of snuffers, foreseeing that all the oil they

will get won't be enough to dip the Captain's wick into; aye, we all

know these things; but look ye, here's a Crappo that is content with our

leavings, the drugged whale there, I mean; aye, and is content too with

scraping the dry bones of that other precious fish he has there. Poor

devil! I say, pass round a hat, some one, and let's make him a present

of a little oil for dear charity's sake. For what oil he'll get from

that drugged whale there, wouldn't be fit to burn in a jail; no, not

in a condemned cell. And as for the other whale, why, I'll agree to get

more oil by chopping up and trying out these three masts of ours, than

he'll get from that bundle of bones; though, now that I think of it, it

may contain something worth a good deal more than oil; yes, ambergris.

I wonder now if our old man has thought of that. It's worth trying. Yes,

I'm for it;" and so saying he started for the quarter-deck.

By this time the faint air had become a complete calm; so that whether

or no, the Pequod was now fairly entrapped in the smell, with no hope of

escaping except by its breezing up again. Issuing from the cabin, Stubb

now called his boat's crew, and pulled off for the stranger. Drawing

across her bow, he perceived that in accordance with the fanciful French

taste, the upper part of her stem-piece was carved in the likeness of a

huge drooping stalk, was painted green, and for thorns had copper

spikes projecting from it here and there; the whole terminating in a

symmetrical folded bulb of a bright red colour. Upon her head boards, in

large gilt letters, he read "Bouton de Rose,"--Rose-button, or Rose-bud;

and this was the romantic name of this aromatic ship.

Though Stubb did not understand the BOUTON part of the inscription, yet

the word ROSE, and the bulbous figure-head put together, sufficiently

explained the whole to him.

"A wooden rose-bud, eh?" he cried with his hand to his nose, "that will

do very well; but how like all creation it smells!"

Now in order to hold direct communication with the people on deck, he

had to pull round the bows to the starboard side, and thus come close to

the blasted whale; and so talk over it.

Arrived then at this spot, with one hand still to his nose, he

bawled--"Bouton-de-Rose, ahoy! are there any of you Bouton-de-Roses that

speak English?"

"Yes," rejoined a Guernsey-man from the bulwarks, who turned out to be

the chief-mate.

"Well, then, my Bouton-de-Rose-bud, have you seen the White Whale?"

"WHAT whale?"

"The WHITE Whale--a Sperm Whale--Moby Dick, have ye seen him?

"Never heard of such a whale. Cachalot Blanche! White Whale--no."

"Very good, then; good bye now, and I'll call again in a minute."

Then rapidly pulling back towards the Pequod, and seeing Ahab leaning

over the quarter-deck rail awaiting his report, he moulded his two hands

into a trumpet and shouted--"No, Sir! No!" Upon which Ahab retired, and

Stubb returned to the Frenchman.

He now perceived that the Guernsey-man, who had just got into the

chains, and was using a cutting-spade, had slung his nose in a sort of

bag.

"What's the matter with your nose, there?" said Stubb. "Broke it?"

"I wish it was broken, or that I didn't have any nose at all!" answered

the Guernsey-man, who did not seem to relish the job he was at very

much. "But what are you holding YOURS for?"

"Oh, nothing! It's a wax nose; I have to hold it on. Fine day, ain't it?

Air rather gardenny, I should say; throw us a bunch of posies, will ye,

Bouton-de-Rose?"

"What in the devil's name do you want here?" roared the Guernseyman,

flying into a sudden passion.

"Oh! keep cool--cool? yes, that's the word! why don't you pack those

whales in ice while you're working at 'em? But joking aside, though; do

you know, Rose-bud, that it's all nonsense trying to get any oil out of

such whales? As for that dried up one, there, he hasn't a gill in his

whole carcase."

"I know that well enough; but, d'ye see, the Captain here won't believe

it; this is his first voyage; he was a Cologne manufacturer before. But

come aboard, and mayhap he'll believe you, if he won't me; and so I'll

get out of this dirty scrape."

"Anything to oblige ye, my sweet and pleasant fellow," rejoined Stubb,

and with that he soon mounted to the deck. There a queer scene presented

itself. The sailors, in tasselled caps of red worsted, were getting the

heavy tackles in readiness for the whales. But they worked rather slow

and talked very fast, and seemed in anything but a good humor. All their

noses upwardly projected from their faces like so many jib-booms.

Now and then pairs of them would drop their work, and run up to the

mast-head to get some fresh air. Some thinking they would catch the

plague, dipped oakum in coal-tar, and at intervals held it to their

nostrils. Others having broken the stems of their pipes almost short

off at the bowl, were vigorously puffing tobacco-smoke, so that it

constantly filled their olfactories.

Stubb was struck by a shower of outcries and anathemas proceeding from

the Captain's round-house abaft; and looking in that direction saw a

fiery face thrust from behind the door, which was held ajar from within.

This was the tormented surgeon, who, after in vain remonstrating

against the proceedings of the day, had betaken himself to the Captain's

round-house (CABINET he called it) to avoid the pest; but still, could

not help yelling out his entreaties and indignations at times.

Marking all this, Stubb argued well for his scheme, and turning to the

Guernsey-man had a little chat with him, during which the stranger mate

expressed his detestation of his Captain as a conceited ignoramus,

who had brought them all into so unsavory and unprofitable a pickle.

Sounding him carefully, Stubb further perceived that the Guernsey-man

had not the slightest suspicion concerning the ambergris. He therefore

held his peace on that head, but otherwise was quite frank and

confidential with him, so that the two quickly concocted a little plan

for both circumventing and satirizing the Captain, without his at all

dreaming of distrusting their sincerity. According to this little plan

of theirs, the Guernsey-man, under cover of an interpreter's office, was

to tell the Captain what he pleased, but as coming from Stubb; and as

for Stubb, he was to utter any nonsense that should come uppermost in

him during the interview.

By this time their destined victim appeared from his cabin. He was a

small and dark, but rather delicate looking man for a sea-captain, with

large whiskers and moustache, however; and wore a red cotton velvet vest

with watch-seals at his side. To this gentleman, Stubb was now politely

introduced by the Guernsey-man, who at once ostentatiously put on the

aspect of interpreting between them.

"What shall I say to him first?" said he.

"Why," said Stubb, eyeing the velvet vest and the watch and seals, "you

may as well begin by telling him that he looks a sort of babyish to me,

though I don't pretend to be a judge."

"He says, Monsieur," said the Guernsey-man, in French, turning to his

captain, "that only yesterday his ship spoke a vessel, whose captain

and chief-mate, with six sailors, had all died of a fever caught from a

blasted whale they had brought alongside."

Upon this the captain started, and eagerly desired to know more.

"What now?" said the Guernsey-man to Stubb.

"Why, since he takes it so easy, tell him that now I have eyed him

carefully, I'm quite certain that he's no more fit to command a

whale-ship than a St. Jago monkey. In fact, tell him from me he's a

baboon."

"He vows and declares, Monsieur, that the other whale, the dried one, is

far more deadly than the blasted one; in fine, Monsieur, he conjures us,

as we value our lives, to cut loose from these fish."

Instantly the captain ran forward, and in a loud voice commanded his

crew to desist from hoisting the cutting-tackles, and at once cast loose

the cables and chains confining the whales to the ship.

"What now?" said the Guernsey-man, when the Captain had returned to

them.

"Why, let me see; yes, you may as well tell him now that--that--in

fact, tell him I've diddled him, and (aside to himself) perhaps somebody

else."

"He says, Monsieur, that he's very happy to have been of any service to

us."

Hearing this, the captain vowed that they were the grateful parties

(meaning himself and mate) and concluded by inviting Stubb down into his

cabin to drink a bottle of Bordeaux.

"He wants you to take a glass of wine with him," said the interpreter.

"Thank him heartily; but tell him it's against my principles to drink

with the man I've diddled. In fact, tell him I must go."

"He says, Monsieur, that his principles won't admit of his drinking; but

that if Monsieur wants to live another day to drink, then Monsieur had

best drop all four boats, and pull the ship away from these whales, for

it's so calm they won't drift."

By this time Stubb was over the side, and getting into his boat, hailed

the Guernsey-man to this effect,--that having a long tow-line in his

boat, he would do what he could to help them, by pulling out the lighter

whale of the two from the ship's side. While the Frenchman's boats,

then, were engaged in towing the ship one way, Stubb benevolently towed

away at his whale the other way, ostentatiously slacking out a most

unusually long tow-line.

Presently a breeze sprang up; Stubb feigned to cast off from the whale;

hoisting his boats, the Frenchman soon increased his distance, while the

Pequod slid in between him and Stubb's whale. Whereupon Stubb quickly

pulled to the floating body, and hailing the Pequod to give notice of

his intentions, at once proceeded to reap the fruit of his unrighteous

cunning. Seizing his sharp boat-spade, he commenced an excavation in the

body, a little behind the side fin. You would almost have thought he was

digging a cellar there in the sea; and when at length his spade struck

against the gaunt ribs, it was like turning up old Roman tiles and

pottery buried in fat English loam. His boat's crew were all in high

excitement, eagerly helping their chief, and looking as anxious as

gold-hunters.

And all the time numberless fowls were diving, and ducking, and

screaming, and yelling, and fighting around them. Stubb was beginning

to look disappointed, especially as the horrible nosegay increased, when

suddenly from out the very heart of this plague, there stole a faint

stream of perfume, which flowed through the tide of bad smells without

being absorbed by it, as one river will flow into and then along with

another, without at all blending with it for a time.

"I have it, I have it," cried Stubb, with delight, striking something in

the subterranean regions, "a purse! a purse!"

Dropping his spade, he thrust both hands in, and drew out handfuls

of something that looked like ripe Windsor soap, or rich mottled old

cheese; very unctuous and savory withal. You might easily dent it with

your thumb; it is of a hue between yellow and ash colour. And this, good

friends, is ambergris, worth a gold guinea an ounce to any druggist.

Some six handfuls were obtained; but more was unavoidably lost in the

sea, and still more, perhaps, might have been secured were it not for

impatient Ahab's loud command to Stubb to desist, and come on board,

else the ship would bid them good bye.

CHAPTER 92. Ambergris.

Now this ambergris is a very curious substance, and so important as

an article of commerce, that in 1791 a certain Nantucket-born Captain

Coffin was examined at the bar of the English House of Commons on that

subject. For at that time, and indeed until a comparatively late day,

the precise origin of ambergris remained, like amber itself, a problem

to the learned. Though the word ambergris is but the French compound for

grey amber, yet the two substances are quite distinct. For amber, though

at times found on the sea-coast, is also dug up in some far inland

soils, whereas ambergris is never found except upon the sea. Besides,

amber is a hard, transparent, brittle, odorless substance, used for

mouth-pieces to pipes, for beads and ornaments; but ambergris is soft,

waxy, and so highly fragrant and spicy, that it is largely used in

perfumery, in pastiles, precious candles, hair-powders, and pomatum.

The Turks use it in cooking, and also carry it to Mecca, for the same

purpose that frankincense is carried to St. Peter's in Rome. Some wine

merchants drop a few grains into claret, to flavor it.

Who would think, then, that such fine ladies and gentlemen should regale

themselves with an essence found in the inglorious bowels of a sick

whale! Yet so it is. By some, ambergris is supposed to be the cause, and

by others the effect, of the dyspepsia in the whale. How to cure such

a dyspepsia it were hard to say, unless by administering three or four

boat loads of Brandreth's pills, and then running out of harm's way, as

laborers do in blasting rocks.

I have forgotten to say that there were found in this ambergris, certain

hard, round, bony plates, which at first Stubb thought might be sailors'

trowsers buttons; but it afterwards turned out that they were nothing

more than pieces of small squid bones embalmed in that manner.

Now that the incorruption of this most fragrant ambergris should be

found in the heart of such decay; is this nothing? Bethink thee of that

saying of St. Paul in Corinthians, about corruption and incorruption;

how that we are sown in dishonour, but raised in glory. And likewise

call to mind that saying of Paracelsus about what it is that maketh

the best musk. Also forget not the strange fact that of all things of

ill-savor, Cologne-water, in its rudimental manufacturing stages, is the

worst.

I should like to conclude the chapter with the above appeal, but cannot,

owing to my anxiety to repel a charge often made against whalemen,

and which, in the estimation of some already biased minds, might be

considered as indirectly substantiated by what has been said of

the Frenchman's two whales. Elsewhere in this volume the slanderous

aspersion has been disproved, that the vocation of whaling is throughout

a slatternly, untidy business. But there is another thing to rebut. They

hint that all whales always smell bad. Now how did this odious stigma

originate?

I opine, that it is plainly traceable to the first arrival of the

Greenland whaling ships in London, more than two centuries ago. Because

those whalemen did not then, and do not now, try out their oil at sea as

the Southern ships have always done; but cutting up the fresh blubber in

small bits, thrust it through the bung holes of large casks, and carry

it home in that manner; the shortness of the season in those Icy Seas,

and the sudden and violent storms to which they are exposed, forbidding

any other course. The consequence is, that upon breaking into the hold,

and unloading one of these whale cemeteries, in the Greenland dock, a

savor is given forth somewhat similar to that arising from excavating an

old city grave-yard, for the foundations of a Lying-in-Hospital.

I partly surmise also, that this wicked charge against whalers may be

likewise imputed to the existence on the coast of Greenland, in former

times, of a Dutch village called Schmerenburgh or Smeerenberg, which

latter name is the one used by the learned Fogo Von Slack, in his great

work on Smells, a text-book on that subject. As its name imports (smeer,

fat; berg, to put up), this village was founded in order to afford a

place for the blubber of the Dutch whale fleet to be tried out, without

being taken home to Holland for that purpose. It was a collection of

furnaces, fat-kettles, and oil sheds; and when the works were in full

operation certainly gave forth no very pleasant savor. But all this is

quite different with a South Sea Sperm Whaler; which in a voyage of four

years perhaps, after completely filling her hold with oil, does not,

perhaps, consume fifty days in the business of boiling out; and in the

state that it is casked, the oil is nearly scentless. The truth is, that

living or dead, if but decently treated, whales as a species are by

no means creatures of ill odor; nor can whalemen be recognised, as the

people of the middle ages affected to detect a Jew in the company, by

the nose. Nor indeed can the whale possibly be otherwise than fragrant,

when, as a general thing, he enjoys such high health; taking abundance

of exercise; always out of doors; though, it is true, seldom in the

open air. I say, that the motion of a Sperm Whale's flukes above water

dispenses a perfume, as when a musk-scented lady rustles her dress in a

warm parlor. What then shall I liken the Sperm Whale to for fragrance,

considering his magnitude? Must it not be to that famous elephant, with

jewelled tusks, and redolent with myrrh, which was led out of an Indian

town to do honour to Alexander the Great?

CHAPTER 93. The Castaway.

It was but some few days after encountering the Frenchman, that a most

significant event befell the most insignificant of the Pequod's crew; an

event most lamentable; and which ended in providing the sometimes

madly merry and predestinated craft with a living and ever accompanying

prophecy of whatever shattered sequel might prove her own.

Now, in the whale ship, it is not every one that goes in the boats. Some

few hands are reserved called ship-keepers, whose province it is to work

the vessel while the boats are pursuing the whale. As a general thing,

these ship-keepers are as hardy fellows as the men comprising the boats'

crews. But if there happen to be an unduly slender, clumsy, or timorous

wight in the ship, that wight is certain to be made a ship-keeper. It

was so in the Pequod with the little negro Pippin by nick-name, Pip by

abbreviation. Poor Pip! ye have heard of him before; ye must remember

his tambourine on that dramatic midnight, so gloomy-jolly.

In outer aspect, Pip and Dough-Boy made a match, like a black pony and a

white one, of equal developments, though of dissimilar colour, driven in

one eccentric span. But while hapless Dough-Boy was by nature dull and

torpid in his intellects, Pip, though over tender-hearted, was at bottom

very bright, with that pleasant, genial, jolly brightness peculiar to

his tribe; a tribe, which ever enjoy all holidays and festivities with

finer, freer relish than any other race. For blacks, the year's calendar

should show naught but three hundred and sixty-five Fourth of Julys and

New Year's Days. Nor smile so, while I write that this little black was

brilliant, for even blackness has its brilliancy; behold yon lustrous

ebony, panelled in king's cabinets. But Pip loved life, and all life's

peaceable securities; so that the panic-striking business in which he

had somehow unaccountably become entrapped, had most sadly blurred his

brightness; though, as ere long will be seen, what was thus temporarily

subdued in him, in the end was destined to be luridly illumined by

strange wild fires, that fictitiously showed him off to ten times the

natural lustre with which in his native Tolland County in Connecticut,

he had once enlivened many a fiddler's frolic on the green; and at

melodious even-tide, with his gay ha-ha! had turned the round horizon

into one star-belled tambourine. So, though in the clear air of day,

suspended against a blue-veined neck, the pure-watered diamond drop

will healthful glow; yet, when the cunning jeweller would show you

the diamond in its most impressive lustre, he lays it against a gloomy

ground, and then lights it up, not by the sun, but by some unnatural

gases. Then come out those fiery effulgences, infernally superb; then

the evil-blazing diamond, once the divinest symbol of the crystal skies,

looks like some crown-jewel stolen from the King of Hell. But let us to

the story.

It came to pass, that in the ambergris affair Stubb's after-oarsman

chanced so to sprain his hand, as for a time to become quite maimed;

and, temporarily, Pip was put into his place.

The first time Stubb lowered with him, Pip evinced much nervousness;

but happily, for that time, escaped close contact with the whale; and

therefore came off not altogether discreditably; though Stubb observing

him, took care, afterwards, to exhort him to cherish his courageousness

to the utmost, for he might often find it needful.

Now upon the second lowering, the boat paddled upon the whale; and as

the fish received the darted iron, it gave its customary rap, which

happened, in this instance, to be right under poor Pip's seat. The

involuntary consternation of the moment caused him to leap, paddle in

hand, out of the boat; and in such a way, that part of the slack whale

line coming against his chest, he breasted it overboard with him, so as

to become entangled in it, when at last plumping into the water. That

instant the stricken whale started on a fierce run, the line swiftly

straightened; and presto! poor Pip came all foaming up to the chocks

of the boat, remorselessly dragged there by the line, which had taken

several turns around his chest and neck.

Tashtego stood in the bows. He was full of the fire of the hunt. He

hated Pip for a poltroon. Snatching the boat-knife from its sheath,

he suspended its sharp edge over the line, and turning towards Stubb,

exclaimed interrogatively, "Cut?" Meantime Pip's blue, choked face

plainly looked, Do, for God's sake! All passed in a flash. In less than

half a minute, this entire thing happened.

"Damn him, cut!" roared Stubb; and so the whale was lost and Pip was

saved.

So soon as he recovered himself, the poor little negro was assailed

by yells and execrations from the crew. Tranquilly permitting these

irregular cursings to evaporate, Stubb then in a plain, business-like,

but still half humorous manner, cursed Pip officially; and that done,

unofficially gave him much wholesome advice. The substance was, Never

jump from a boat, Pip, except--but all the rest was indefinite, as the

soundest advice ever is. Now, in general, STICK TO THE BOAT, is your

true motto in whaling; but cases will sometimes happen when LEAP FROM

THE BOAT, is still better. Moreover, as if perceiving at last that if he

should give undiluted conscientious advice to Pip, he would be leaving

him too wide a margin to jump in for the future; Stubb suddenly dropped

all advice, and concluded with a peremptory command, "Stick to the boat,

Pip, or by the Lord, I won't pick you up if you jump; mind that. We

can't afford to lose whales by the likes of you; a whale would sell for

thirty times what you would, Pip, in Alabama. Bear that in mind, and

don't jump any more." Hereby perhaps Stubb indirectly hinted, that

though man loved his fellow, yet man is a money-making animal, which

propensity too often interferes with his benevolence.

But we are all in the hands of the Gods; and Pip jumped again. It was

under very similar circumstances to the first performance; but this time

he did not breast out the line; and hence, when the whale started to

run, Pip was left behind on the sea, like a hurried traveller's trunk.

Alas! Stubb was but too true to his word. It was a beautiful, bounteous,

blue day; the spangled sea calm and cool, and flatly stretching away,

all round, to the horizon, like gold-beater's skin hammered out to the

extremest. Bobbing up and down in that sea, Pip's ebon head showed

like a head of cloves. No boat-knife was lifted when he fell so rapidly

astern. Stubb's inexorable back was turned upon him; and the whale was

winged. In three minutes, a whole mile of shoreless ocean was between

Pip and Stubb. Out from the centre of the sea, poor Pip turned his

crisp, curling, black head to the sun, another lonely castaway, though

the loftiest and the brightest.

Now, in calm weather, to swim in the open ocean is as easy to the

practised swimmer as to ride in a spring-carriage ashore. But the awful

lonesomeness is intolerable. The intense concentration of self in the

middle of such a heartless immensity, my God! who can tell it? Mark, how

when sailors in a dead calm bathe in the open sea--mark how closely they

hug their ship and only coast along her sides.

But had Stubb really abandoned the poor little negro to his fate? No; he

did not mean to, at least. Because there were two boats in his wake,

and he supposed, no doubt, that they would of course come up to Pip very

quickly, and pick him up; though, indeed, such considerations towards

oarsmen jeopardized through their own timidity, is not always manifested

by the hunters in all similar instances; and such instances not

unfrequently occur; almost invariably in the fishery, a coward, so

called, is marked with the same ruthless detestation peculiar to

military navies and armies.

But it so happened, that those boats, without seeing Pip, suddenly

spying whales close to them on one side, turned, and gave chase; and

Stubb's boat was now so far away, and he and all his crew so intent

upon his fish, that Pip's ringed horizon began to expand around him

miserably. By the merest chance the ship itself at last rescued him; but

from that hour the little negro went about the deck an idiot; such, at

least, they said he was. The sea had jeeringly kept his finite body

up, but drowned the infinite of his soul. Not drowned entirely, though.

Rather carried down alive to wondrous depths, where strange shapes of

the unwarped primal world glided to and fro before his passive eyes;

and the miser-merman, Wisdom, revealed his hoarded heaps; and among the

joyous, heartless, ever-juvenile eternities, Pip saw the multitudinous,

God-omnipresent, coral insects, that out of the firmament of waters

heaved the colossal orbs. He saw God's foot upon the treadle of the

loom, and spoke it; and therefore his shipmates called him mad. So man's

insanity is heaven's sense; and wandering from all mortal reason, man

comes at last to that celestial thought, which, to reason, is absurd and

frantic; and weal or woe, feels then uncompromised, indifferent as his

God.

For the rest, blame not Stubb too hardly. The thing is common in that

fishery; and in the sequel of the narrative, it will then be seen what

like abandonment befell myself.

CHAPTER 94. A Squeeze of the Hand.

That whale of Stubb's, so dearly purchased, was duly brought to

the Pequod's side, where all those cutting and hoisting operations

previously detailed, were regularly gone through, even to the baling of

the Heidelburgh Tun, or Case.

While some were occupied with this latter duty, others were employed

in dragging away the larger tubs, so soon as filled with the sperm; and

when the proper time arrived, this same sperm was carefully manipulated

ere going to the try-works, of which anon.

It had cooled and crystallized to such a degree, that when, with several

others, I sat down before a large Constantine's bath of it, I found

it strangely concreted into lumps, here and there rolling about in the

liquid part. It was our business to squeeze these lumps back into fluid.

A sweet and unctuous duty! No wonder that in old times this sperm was

such a favourite cosmetic. Such a clearer! such a sweetener! such a

softener! such a delicious molifier! After having my hands in it for

only a few minutes, my fingers felt like eels, and began, as it were, to

serpentine and spiralise.

As I sat there at my ease, cross-legged on the deck; after the bitter

exertion at the windlass; under a blue tranquil sky; the ship under

indolent sail, and gliding so serenely along; as I bathed my hands among

those soft, gentle globules of infiltrated tissues, woven almost within

the hour; as they richly broke to my fingers, and discharged all their

opulence, like fully ripe grapes their wine; as I snuffed up that

uncontaminated aroma,--literally and truly, like the smell of spring

violets; I declare to you, that for the time I lived as in a musky

meadow; I forgot all about our horrible oath; in that inexpressible

sperm, I washed my hands and my heart of it; I almost began to credit

the old Paracelsan superstition that sperm is of rare virtue in allaying

the heat of anger; while bathing in that bath, I felt divinely free from

all ill-will, or petulance, or malice, of any sort whatsoever.

Squeeze! squeeze! squeeze! all the morning long; I squeezed that sperm

till I myself almost melted into it; I squeezed that sperm till a

strange sort of insanity came over me; and I found myself unwittingly

squeezing my co-laborers' hands in it, mistaking their hands for the

gentle globules. Such an abounding, affectionate, friendly, loving

feeling did this avocation beget; that at last I was continually

squeezing their hands, and looking up into their eyes sentimentally; as

much as to say,--Oh! my dear fellow beings, why should we longer cherish

any social acerbities, or know the slightest ill-humor or envy! Come;

let us squeeze hands all round; nay, let us all squeeze ourselves into

each other; let us squeeze ourselves universally into the very milk and

sperm of kindness.

Would that I could keep squeezing that sperm for ever! For now, since by

many prolonged, repeated experiences, I have perceived that in all cases

man must eventually lower, or at least shift, his conceit of attainable

felicity; not placing it anywhere in the intellect or the fancy; but in

the wife, the heart, the bed, the table, the saddle, the fireside, the

country; now that I have perceived all this, I am ready to squeeze case

eternally. In thoughts of the visions of the night, I saw long rows of

angels in paradise, each with his hands in a jar of spermaceti.

Now, while discoursing of sperm, it behooves to speak of other things

akin to it, in the business of preparing the sperm whale for the

try-works.

First comes white-horse, so called, which is obtained from the tapering

part of the fish, and also from the thicker portions of his flukes. It

is tough with congealed tendons--a wad of muscle--but still contains

some oil. After being severed from the whale, the white-horse is first

cut into portable oblongs ere going to the mincer. They look much like

blocks of Berkshire marble.

Plum-pudding is the term bestowed upon certain fragmentary parts of the

whale's flesh, here and there adhering to the blanket of blubber, and

often participating to a considerable degree in its unctuousness. It is

a most refreshing, convivial, beautiful object to behold. As its name

imports, it is of an exceedingly rich, mottled tint, with a bestreaked

snowy and golden ground, dotted with spots of the deepest crimson and

purple. It is plums of rubies, in pictures of citron. Spite of reason,

it is hard to keep yourself from eating it. I confess, that once I stole

behind the foremast to try it. It tasted something as I should conceive

a royal cutlet from the thigh of Louis le Gros might have tasted,

supposing him to have been killed the first day after the venison

season, and that particular venison season contemporary with an

unusually fine vintage of the vineyards of Champagne.

There is another substance, and a very singular one, which turns up in

the course of this business, but which I feel it to be very puzzling

adequately to describe. It is called slobgollion; an appellation

original with the whalemen, and even so is the nature of the substance.

It is an ineffably oozy, stringy affair, most frequently found in the

tubs of sperm, after a prolonged squeezing, and subsequent decanting.

I hold it to be the wondrously thin, ruptured membranes of the case,

coalescing.

Gurry, so called, is a term properly belonging to right whalemen, but

sometimes incidentally used by the sperm fishermen. It designates the

dark, glutinous substance which is scraped off the back of the Greenland

or right whale, and much of which covers the decks of those inferior

souls who hunt that ignoble Leviathan.

Nippers. Strictly this word is not indigenous to the whale's vocabulary.

But as applied by whalemen, it becomes so. A whaleman's nipper is

a short firm strip of tendinous stuff cut from the tapering part of

Leviathan's tail: it averages an inch in thickness, and for the rest, is

about the size of the iron part of a hoe. Edgewise moved along the

oily deck, it operates like a leathern squilgee; and by nameless

blandishments, as of magic, allures along with it all impurities.

But to learn all about these recondite matters, your best way is at once

to descend into the blubber-room, and have a long talk with its inmates.

This place has previously been mentioned as the receptacle for the

blanket-pieces, when stript and hoisted from the whale. When the proper

time arrives for cutting up its contents, this apartment is a scene of

terror to all tyros, especially by night. On one side, lit by a dull

lantern, a space has been left clear for the workmen. They generally

go in pairs,--a pike-and-gaffman and a spade-man. The whaling-pike is

similar to a frigate's boarding-weapon of the same name. The gaff is

something like a boat-hook. With his gaff, the gaffman hooks on to a

sheet of blubber, and strives to hold it from slipping, as the ship

pitches and lurches about. Meanwhile, the spade-man stands on the sheet

itself, perpendicularly chopping it into the portable horse-pieces. This

spade is sharp as hone can make it; the spademan's feet are shoeless;

the thing he stands on will sometimes irresistibly slide away from

him, like a sledge. If he cuts off one of his own toes, or one of his

assistants', would you be very much astonished? Toes are scarce among

veteran blubber-room men.

CHAPTER 95. The Cassock.

Had you stepped on board the Pequod at a certain juncture of this

post-mortemizing of the whale; and had you strolled forward nigh the

windlass, pretty sure am I that you would have scanned with no small

curiosity a very strange, enigmatical object, which you would have seen

there, lying along lengthwise in the lee scuppers. Not the wondrous

cistern in the whale's huge head; not the prodigy of his unhinged lower

jaw; not the miracle of his symmetrical tail; none of these would so

surprise you, as half a glimpse of that unaccountable cone,--longer than

a Kentuckian is tall, nigh a foot in diameter at the base, and jet-black

as Yojo, the ebony idol of Queequeg. And an idol, indeed, it is; or,

rather, in old times, its likeness was. Such an idol as that found in

the secret groves of Queen Maachah in Judea; and for worshipping which,

King Asa, her son, did depose her, and destroyed the idol, and burnt it

for an abomination at the brook Kedron, as darkly set forth in the 15th

chapter of the First Book of Kings.

Look at the sailor, called the mincer, who now comes along, and assisted

by two allies, heavily backs the grandissimus, as the mariners call it,

and with bowed shoulders, staggers off with it as if he were a grenadier

carrying a dead comrade from the field. Extending it upon the forecastle

deck, he now proceeds cylindrically to remove its dark pelt, as an

African hunter the pelt of a boa. This done he turns the pelt inside

out, like a pantaloon leg; gives it a good stretching, so as almost to

double its diameter; and at last hangs it, well spread, in the rigging,

to dry. Ere long, it is taken down; when removing some three feet of it,

towards the pointed extremity, and then cutting two slits for arm-holes

at the other end, he lengthwise slips himself bodily into it. The mincer

now stands before you invested in the full canonicals of his calling.

Immemorial to all his order, this investiture alone will adequately

protect him, while employed in the peculiar functions of his office.

That office consists in mincing the horse-pieces of blubber for the

pots; an operation which is conducted at a curious wooden horse, planted

endwise against the bulwarks, and with a capacious tub beneath it, into

which the minced pieces drop, fast as the sheets from a rapt orator's

desk. Arrayed in decent black; occupying a conspicuous pulpit; intent

on bible leaves; what a candidate for an archbishopric, what a lad for a

Pope were this mincer!\*

\*Bible leaves! Bible leaves! This is the invariable cry from the mates

to the mincer. It enjoins him to be careful, and cut his work into as

thin slices as possible, inasmuch as by so doing the business of

boiling out the oil is much accelerated, and its quantity considerably

increased, besides perhaps improving it in quality.

CHAPTER 96. The Try-Works.

Besides her hoisted boats, an American whaler is outwardly distinguished

by her try-works. She presents the curious anomaly of the most solid

masonry joining with oak and hemp in constituting the completed ship.

It is as if from the open field a brick-kiln were transported to her

planks.

The try-works are planted between the foremast and mainmast, the most

roomy part of the deck. The timbers beneath are of a peculiar strength,

fitted to sustain the weight of an almost solid mass of brick and

mortar, some ten feet by eight square, and five in height. The

foundation does not penetrate the deck, but the masonry is firmly

secured to the surface by ponderous knees of iron bracing it on all

sides, and screwing it down to the timbers. On the flanks it is cased

with wood, and at top completely covered by a large, sloping, battened

hatchway. Removing this hatch we expose the great try-pots, two in

number, and each of several barrels' capacity. When not in use, they are

kept remarkably clean. Sometimes they are polished with soapstone

and sand, till they shine within like silver punch-bowls. During the

night-watches some cynical old sailors will crawl into them and coil

themselves away there for a nap. While employed in polishing them--one

man in each pot, side by side--many confidential communications

are carried on, over the iron lips. It is a place also for profound

mathematical meditation. It was in the left hand try-pot of the Pequod,

with the soapstone diligently circling round me, that I was first

indirectly struck by the remarkable fact, that in geometry all bodies

gliding along the cycloid, my soapstone for example, will descend from

any point in precisely the same time.

Removing the fire-board from the front of the try-works, the bare

masonry of that side is exposed, penetrated by the two iron mouths of

the furnaces, directly underneath the pots. These mouths are fitted

with heavy doors of iron. The intense heat of the fire is prevented

from communicating itself to the deck, by means of a shallow reservoir

extending under the entire inclosed surface of the works. By a tunnel

inserted at the rear, this reservoir is kept replenished with water as

fast as it evaporates. There are no external chimneys; they open direct

from the rear wall. And here let us go back for a moment.

It was about nine o'clock at night that the Pequod's try-works were

first started on this present voyage. It belonged to Stubb to oversee

the business.

"All ready there? Off hatch, then, and start her. You cook, fire the

works." This was an easy thing, for the carpenter had been thrusting his

shavings into the furnace throughout the passage. Here be it said that

in a whaling voyage the first fire in the try-works has to be fed for a

time with wood. After that no wood is used, except as a means of quick

ignition to the staple fuel. In a word, after being tried out, the

crisp, shrivelled blubber, now called scraps or fritters, still contains

considerable of its unctuous properties. These fritters feed the flames.

Like a plethoric burning martyr, or a self-consuming misanthrope, once

ignited, the whale supplies his own fuel and burns by his own body.

Would that he consumed his own smoke! for his smoke is horrible to

inhale, and inhale it you must, and not only that, but you must live in

it for the time. It has an unspeakable, wild, Hindoo odor about it, such

as may lurk in the vicinity of funereal pyres. It smells like the left

wing of the day of judgment; it is an argument for the pit.

By midnight the works were in full operation. We were clear from the

carcase; sail had been made; the wind was freshening; the wild ocean

darkness was intense. But that darkness was licked up by the fierce

flames, which at intervals forked forth from the sooty flues, and

illuminated every lofty rope in the rigging, as with the famed Greek

fire. The burning ship drove on, as if remorselessly commissioned to

some vengeful deed. So the pitch and sulphur-freighted brigs of the

bold Hydriote, Canaris, issuing from their midnight harbors, with broad

sheets of flame for sails, bore down upon the Turkish frigates, and

folded them in conflagrations.

The hatch, removed from the top of the works, now afforded a wide hearth

in front of them. Standing on this were the Tartarean shapes of the

pagan harpooneers, always the whale-ship's stokers. With huge pronged

poles they pitched hissing masses of blubber into the scalding pots, or

stirred up the fires beneath, till the snaky flames darted, curling, out

of the doors to catch them by the feet. The smoke rolled away in sullen

heaps. To every pitch of the ship there was a pitch of the boiling oil,

which seemed all eagerness to leap into their faces. Opposite the mouth

of the works, on the further side of the wide wooden hearth, was the

windlass. This served for a sea-sofa. Here lounged the watch, when not

otherwise employed, looking into the red heat of the fire, till their

eyes felt scorched in their heads. Their tawny features, now all

begrimed with smoke and sweat, their matted beards, and the contrasting

barbaric brilliancy of their teeth, all these were strangely revealed in

the capricious emblazonings of the works. As they narrated to each other

their unholy adventures, their tales of terror told in words of mirth;

as their uncivilized laughter forked upwards out of them, like the

flames from the furnace; as to and fro, in their front, the harpooneers

wildly gesticulated with their huge pronged forks and dippers; as the

wind howled on, and the sea leaped, and the ship groaned and dived, and

yet steadfastly shot her red hell further and further into the blackness

of the sea and the night, and scornfully champed the white bone in

her mouth, and viciously spat round her on all sides; then the rushing

Pequod, freighted with savages, and laden with fire, and burning

a corpse, and plunging into that blackness of darkness, seemed the

material counterpart of her monomaniac commander's soul.

So seemed it to me, as I stood at her helm, and for long hours silently

guided the way of this fire-ship on the sea. Wrapped, for that interval,

in darkness myself, I but the better saw the redness, the madness, the

ghastliness of others. The continual sight of the fiend shapes before

me, capering half in smoke and half in fire, these at last begat kindred

visions in my soul, so soon as I began to yield to that unaccountable

drowsiness which ever would come over me at a midnight helm.

But that night, in particular, a strange (and ever since inexplicable)

thing occurred to me. Starting from a brief standing sleep, I was

horribly conscious of something fatally wrong. The jaw-bone tiller smote

my side, which leaned against it; in my ears was the low hum of sails,

just beginning to shake in the wind; I thought my eyes were open; I

was half conscious of putting my fingers to the lids and mechanically

stretching them still further apart. But, spite of all this, I could see

no compass before me to steer by; though it seemed but a minute since I

had been watching the card, by the steady binnacle lamp illuminating it.

Nothing seemed before me but a jet gloom, now and then made ghastly by

flashes of redness. Uppermost was the impression, that whatever swift,

rushing thing I stood on was not so much bound to any haven ahead as

rushing from all havens astern. A stark, bewildered feeling, as of

death, came over me. Convulsively my hands grasped the tiller, but with

the crazy conceit that the tiller was, somehow, in some enchanted way,

inverted. My God! what is the matter with me? thought I. Lo! in my brief

sleep I had turned myself about, and was fronting the ship's stern, with

my back to her prow and the compass. In an instant I faced back, just

in time to prevent the vessel from flying up into the wind, and very

probably capsizing her. How glad and how grateful the relief from this

unnatural hallucination of the night, and the fatal contingency of being

brought by the lee!

Look not too long in the face of the fire, O man! Never dream with thy

hand on the helm! Turn not thy back to the compass; accept the first

hint of the hitching tiller; believe not the artificial fire, when its

redness makes all things look ghastly. To-morrow, in the natural sun,

the skies will be bright; those who glared like devils in the forking

flames, the morn will show in far other, at least gentler, relief; the

glorious, golden, glad sun, the only true lamp--all others but liars!

Nevertheless the sun hides not Virginia's Dismal Swamp, nor Rome's

accursed Campagna, nor wide Sahara, nor all the millions of miles of

deserts and of griefs beneath the moon. The sun hides not the ocean,

which is the dark side of this earth, and which is two thirds of this

earth. So, therefore, that mortal man who hath more of joy than sorrow

in him, that mortal man cannot be true--not true, or undeveloped. With

books the same. The truest of all men was the Man of Sorrows, and the

truest of all books is Solomon's, and Ecclesiastes is the fine hammered

steel of woe. "All is vanity." ALL. This wilful world hath not got hold

of unchristian Solomon's wisdom yet. But he who dodges hospitals and

jails, and walks fast crossing graveyards, and would rather talk of

operas than hell; calls Cowper, Young, Pascal, Rousseau, poor devils all

of sick men; and throughout a care-free lifetime swears by Rabelais as

passing wise, and therefore jolly;--not that man is fitted to sit

down on tomb-stones, and break the green damp mould with unfathomably

wondrous Solomon.

But even Solomon, he says, "the man that wandereth out of the way

of understanding shall remain" (I.E., even while living) "in the

congregation of the dead." Give not thyself up, then, to fire, lest it

invert thee, deaden thee; as for the time it did me. There is a wisdom

that is woe; but there is a woe that is madness. And there is a Catskill

eagle in some souls that can alike dive down into the blackest gorges,

and soar out of them again and become invisible in the sunny spaces.

And even if he for ever flies within the gorge, that gorge is in the

mountains; so that even in his lowest swoop the mountain eagle is still

higher than other birds upon the plain, even though they soar.

CHAPTER 97. The Lamp.

Had you descended from the Pequod's try-works to the Pequod's

forecastle, where the off duty watch were sleeping, for one single

moment you would have almost thought you were standing in some

illuminated shrine of canonized kings and counsellors. There they lay

in their triangular oaken vaults, each mariner a chiselled muteness; a

score of lamps flashing upon his hooded eyes.

In merchantmen, oil for the sailor is more scarce than the milk of

queens. To dress in the dark, and eat in the dark, and stumble in

darkness to his pallet, this is his usual lot. But the whaleman, as he

seeks the food of light, so he lives in light. He makes his berth an

Aladdin's lamp, and lays him down in it; so that in the pitchiest night

the ship's black hull still houses an illumination.

See with what entire freedom the whaleman takes his handful of

lamps--often but old bottles and vials, though--to the copper cooler at

the try-works, and replenishes them there, as mugs of ale at a vat. He

burns, too, the purest of oil, in its unmanufactured, and, therefore,

unvitiated state; a fluid unknown to solar, lunar, or astral

contrivances ashore. It is sweet as early grass butter in April. He

goes and hunts for his oil, so as to be sure of its freshness and

genuineness, even as the traveller on the prairie hunts up his own

supper of game.

CHAPTER 98. Stowing Down and Clearing Up.

Already has it been related how the great leviathan is afar off

descried from the mast-head; how he is chased over the watery moors, and

slaughtered in the valleys of the deep; how he is then towed alongside

and beheaded; and how (on the principle which entitled the headsman of

old to the garments in which the beheaded was killed) his great padded

surtout becomes the property of his executioner; how, in due time, he

is condemned to the pots, and, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, his

spermaceti, oil, and bone pass unscathed through the fire;--but now it

remains to conclude the last chapter of this part of the description by

rehearsing--singing, if I may--the romantic proceeding of decanting off

his oil into the casks and striking them down into the hold, where

once again leviathan returns to his native profundities, sliding along

beneath the surface as before; but, alas! never more to rise and blow.

While still warm, the oil, like hot punch, is received into the

six-barrel casks; and while, perhaps, the ship is pitching and rolling

this way and that in the midnight sea, the enormous casks are slewed

round and headed over, end for end, and sometimes perilously scoot

across the slippery deck, like so many land slides, till at last

man-handled and stayed in their course; and all round the hoops, rap,

rap, go as many hammers as can play upon them, for now, EX OFFICIO,

every sailor is a cooper.

At length, when the last pint is casked, and all is cool, then the great

hatchways are unsealed, the bowels of the ship are thrown open, and down

go the casks to their final rest in the sea. This done, the hatches are

replaced, and hermetically closed, like a closet walled up.

In the sperm fishery, this is perhaps one of the most remarkable

incidents in all the business of whaling. One day the planks stream with

freshets of blood and oil; on the sacred quarter-deck enormous masses of

the whale's head are profanely piled; great rusty casks lie about, as

in a brewery yard; the smoke from the try-works has besooted all the

bulwarks; the mariners go about suffused with unctuousness; the entire

ship seems great leviathan himself; while on all hands the din is

deafening.

But a day or two after, you look about you, and prick your ears in this

self-same ship; and were it not for the tell-tale boats and try-works,

you would all but swear you trod some silent merchant vessel, with a

most scrupulously neat commander. The unmanufactured sperm oil possesses

a singularly cleansing virtue. This is the reason why the decks never

look so white as just after what they call an affair of oil. Besides,

from the ashes of the burned scraps of the whale, a potent lye is

readily made; and whenever any adhesiveness from the back of the whale

remains clinging to the side, that lye quickly exterminates it. Hands

go diligently along the bulwarks, and with buckets of water and rags

restore them to their full tidiness. The soot is brushed from the lower

rigging. All the numerous implements which have been in use are likewise

faithfully cleansed and put away. The great hatch is scrubbed and placed

upon the try-works, completely hiding the pots; every cask is out of

sight; all tackles are coiled in unseen nooks; and when by the combined

and simultaneous industry of almost the entire ship's company, the

whole of this conscientious duty is at last concluded, then the crew

themselves proceed to their own ablutions; shift themselves from top to

toe; and finally issue to the immaculate deck, fresh and all aglow, as

bridegrooms new-leaped from out the daintiest Holland.

Now, with elated step, they pace the planks in twos and threes, and

humorously discourse of parlors, sofas, carpets, and fine cambrics;

propose to mat the deck; think of having hanging to the top; object not

to taking tea by moonlight on the piazza of the forecastle. To hint to

such musked mariners of oil, and bone, and blubber, were little short

of audacity. They know not the thing you distantly allude to. Away, and

bring us napkins!

But mark: aloft there, at the three mast heads, stand three men intent

on spying out more whales, which, if caught, infallibly will again

soil the old oaken furniture, and drop at least one small grease-spot

somewhere. Yes; and many is the time, when, after the severest

uninterrupted labors, which know no night; continuing straight through

for ninety-six hours; when from the boat, where they have swelled their

wrists with all day rowing on the Line,--they only step to the deck to

carry vast chains, and heave the heavy windlass, and cut and slash, yea,

and in their very sweatings to be smoked and burned anew by the combined

fires of the equatorial sun and the equatorial try-works; when, on the

heel of all this, they have finally bestirred themselves to cleanse the

ship, and make a spotless dairy room of it; many is the time the poor

fellows, just buttoning the necks of their clean frocks, are startled by

the cry of "There she blows!" and away they fly to fight another whale,

and go through the whole weary thing again. Oh! my friends, but this

is man-killing! Yet this is life. For hardly have we mortals by long

toilings extracted from this world's vast bulk its small but valuable

sperm; and then, with weary patience, cleansed ourselves from its

defilements, and learned to live here in clean tabernacles of the soul;

hardly is this done, when--THERE SHE BLOWS!--the ghost is spouted up,

and away we sail to fight some other world, and go through young life's

old routine again.

Oh! the metempsychosis! Oh! Pythagoras, that in bright Greece, two

thousand years ago, did die, so good, so wise, so mild; I sailed with

thee along the Peruvian coast last voyage--and, foolish as I am, taught

thee, a green simple boy, how to splice a rope!

CHAPTER 99. The Doubloon.

Ere now it has been related how Ahab was wont to pace his quarter-deck,

taking regular turns at either limit, the binnacle and mainmast; but

in the multiplicity of other things requiring narration it has not been

added how that sometimes in these walks, when most plunged in his mood,

he was wont to pause in turn at each spot, and stand there strangely

eyeing the particular object before him. When he halted before the

binnacle, with his glance fastened on the pointed needle in the compass,

that glance shot like a javelin with the pointed intensity of his

purpose; and when resuming his walk he again paused before the mainmast,

then, as the same riveted glance fastened upon the riveted gold coin

there, he still wore the same aspect of nailed firmness, only dashed

with a certain wild longing, if not hopefulness.

But one morning, turning to pass the doubloon, he seemed to be newly

attracted by the strange figures and inscriptions stamped on it, as

though now for the first time beginning to interpret for himself in

some monomaniac way whatever significance might lurk in them. And some

certain significance lurks in all things, else all things are little

worth, and the round world itself but an empty cipher, except to sell by

the cartload, as they do hills about Boston, to fill up some morass in

the Milky Way.

Now this doubloon was of purest, virgin gold, raked somewhere out of the

heart of gorgeous hills, whence, east and west, over golden sands, the

head-waters of many a Pactolus flows. And though now nailed amidst all

the rustiness of iron bolts and the verdigris of copper spikes, yet,

untouchable and immaculate to any foulness, it still preserved its Quito

glow. Nor, though placed amongst a ruthless crew and every hour passed

by ruthless hands, and through the livelong nights shrouded with thick

darkness which might cover any pilfering approach, nevertheless every

sunrise found the doubloon where the sunset left it last. For it was

set apart and sanctified to one awe-striking end; and however wanton

in their sailor ways, one and all, the mariners revered it as the white

whale's talisman. Sometimes they talked it over in the weary watch by

night, wondering whose it was to be at last, and whether he would ever

live to spend it.

Now those noble golden coins of South America are as medals of the sun

and tropic token-pieces. Here palms, alpacas, and volcanoes; sun's disks

and stars; ecliptics, horns-of-plenty, and rich banners waving, are in

luxuriant profusion stamped; so that the precious gold seems almost to

derive an added preciousness and enhancing glories, by passing through

those fancy mints, so Spanishly poetic.

It so chanced that the doubloon of the Pequod was a most wealthy example

of these things. On its round border it bore the letters, REPUBLICA DEL

ECUADOR: QUITO. So this bright coin came from a country planted in the

middle of the world, and beneath the great equator, and named after it;

and it had been cast midway up the Andes, in the unwaning clime that

knows no autumn. Zoned by those letters you saw the likeness of three

Andes' summits; from one a flame; a tower on another; on the third a

crowing cock; while arching over all was a segment of the partitioned

zodiac, the signs all marked with their usual cabalistics, and the

keystone sun entering the equinoctial point at Libra.

Before this equatorial coin, Ahab, not unobserved by others, was now

pausing.

"There's something ever egotistical in mountain-tops and towers, and

all other grand and lofty things; look here,--three peaks as proud as

Lucifer. The firm tower, that is Ahab; the volcano, that is Ahab; the

courageous, the undaunted, and victorious fowl, that, too, is Ahab; all

are Ahab; and this round gold is but the image of the rounder globe,

which, like a magician's glass, to each and every man in turn but

mirrors back his own mysterious self. Great pains, small gains for those

who ask the world to solve them; it cannot solve itself. Methinks now

this coined sun wears a ruddy face; but see! aye, he enters the sign

of storms, the equinox! and but six months before he wheeled out of a

former equinox at Aries! From storm to storm! So be it, then. Born in

throes, 't is fit that man should live in pains and die in pangs! So be

it, then! Here's stout stuff for woe to work on. So be it, then."

"No fairy fingers can have pressed the gold, but devil's claws must

have left their mouldings there since yesterday," murmured Starbuck

to himself, leaning against the bulwarks. "The old man seems to read

Belshazzar's awful writing. I have never marked the coin inspectingly.

He goes below; let me read. A dark valley between three mighty,

heaven-abiding peaks, that almost seem the Trinity, in some faint

earthly symbol. So in this vale of Death, God girds us round; and over

all our gloom, the sun of Righteousness still shines a beacon and a

hope. If we bend down our eyes, the dark vale shows her mouldy soil;

but if we lift them, the bright sun meets our glance half way, to cheer.

Yet, oh, the great sun is no fixture; and if, at midnight, we would fain

snatch some sweet solace from him, we gaze for him in vain! This coin

speaks wisely, mildly, truly, but still sadly to me. I will quit it,

lest Truth shake me falsely."

"There now's the old Mogul," soliloquized Stubb by the try-works, "he's

been twigging it; and there goes Starbuck from the same, and both with

faces which I should say might be somewhere within nine fathoms long.

And all from looking at a piece of gold, which did I have it now on

Negro Hill or in Corlaer's Hook, I'd not look at it very long ere

spending it. Humph! in my poor, insignificant opinion, I regard this as

queer. I have seen doubloons before now in my voyagings; your doubloons

of old Spain, your doubloons of Peru, your doubloons of Chili, your

doubloons of Bolivia, your doubloons of Popayan; with plenty of gold

moidores and pistoles, and joes, and half joes, and quarter joes. What

then should there be in this doubloon of the Equator that is so killing

wonderful? By Golconda! let me read it once. Halloa! here's signs and

wonders truly! That, now, is what old Bowditch in his Epitome calls the

zodiac, and what my almanac below calls ditto. I'll get the almanac and

as I have heard devils can be raised with Daboll's arithmetic, I'll try

my hand at raising a meaning out of these queer curvicues here with

the Massachusetts calendar. Here's the book. Let's see now. Signs and

wonders; and the sun, he's always among 'em. Hem, hem, hem; here they

are--here they go--all alive:--Aries, or the Ram; Taurus, or the Bull

and Jimimi! here's Gemini himself, or the Twins. Well; the sun he

wheels among 'em. Aye, here on the coin he's just crossing the threshold

between two of twelve sitting-rooms all in a ring. Book! you lie there;

the fact is, you books must know your places. You'll do to give us the

bare words and facts, but we come in to supply the thoughts. That's my

small experience, so far as the Massachusetts calendar, and Bowditch's

navigator, and Daboll's arithmetic go. Signs and wonders, eh? Pity if

there is nothing wonderful in signs, and significant in wonders! There's

a clue somewhere; wait a bit; hist--hark! By Jove, I have it! Look you,

Doubloon, your zodiac here is the life of man in one round chapter;

and now I'll read it off, straight out of the book. Come, Almanack! To

begin: there's Aries, or the Ram--lecherous dog, he begets us; then,

Taurus, or the Bull--he bumps us the first thing; then Gemini, or the

Twins--that is, Virtue and Vice; we try to reach Virtue, when lo! comes

Cancer the Crab, and drags us back; and here, going from Virtue, Leo,

a roaring Lion, lies in the path--he gives a few fierce bites and surly

dabs with his paw; we escape, and hail Virgo, the Virgin! that's our

first love; we marry and think to be happy for aye, when pop comes

Libra, or the Scales--happiness weighed and found wanting; and while we

are very sad about that, Lord! how we suddenly jump, as Scorpio, or the

Scorpion, stings us in the rear; we are curing the wound, when whang

come the arrows all round; Sagittarius, or the Archer, is amusing

himself. As we pluck out the shafts, stand aside! here's the

battering-ram, Capricornus, or the Goat; full tilt, he comes rushing,

and headlong we are tossed; when Aquarius, or the Water-bearer, pours

out his whole deluge and drowns us; and to wind up with Pisces, or the

Fishes, we sleep. There's a sermon now, writ in high heaven, and the

sun goes through it every year, and yet comes out of it all alive and

hearty. Jollily he, aloft there, wheels through toil and trouble; and

so, alow here, does jolly Stubb. Oh, jolly's the word for aye! Adieu,

Doubloon! But stop; here comes little King-Post; dodge round the

try-works, now, and let's hear what he'll have to say. There; he's

before it; he'll out with something presently. So, so; he's beginning."

"I see nothing here, but a round thing made of gold, and whoever raises

a certain whale, this round thing belongs to him. So, what's all this

staring been about? It is worth sixteen dollars, that's true; and at

two cents the cigar, that's nine hundred and sixty cigars. I won't smoke

dirty pipes like Stubb, but I like cigars, and here's nine hundred and

sixty of them; so here goes Flask aloft to spy 'em out."

"Shall I call that wise or foolish, now; if it be really wise it has a

foolish look to it; yet, if it be really foolish, then has it a sort

of wiseish look to it. But, avast; here comes our old Manxman--the old

hearse-driver, he must have been, that is, before he took to the sea. He

luffs up before the doubloon; halloa, and goes round on the other side

of the mast; why, there's a horse-shoe nailed on that side; and now he's

back again; what does that mean? Hark! he's muttering--voice like an old

worn-out coffee-mill. Prick ears, and listen!"

"If the White Whale be raised, it must be in a month and a day, when

the sun stands in some one of these signs. I've studied signs, and know

their marks; they were taught me two score years ago, by the old witch

in Copenhagen. Now, in what sign will the sun then be? The horse-shoe

sign; for there it is, right opposite the gold. And what's the

horse-shoe sign? The lion is the horse-shoe sign--the roaring and

devouring lion. Ship, old ship! my old head shakes to think of thee."

"There's another rendering now; but still one text. All sorts of men

in one kind of world, you see. Dodge again! here comes Queequeg--all

tattooing--looks like the signs of the Zodiac himself. What says the

Cannibal? As I live he's comparing notes; looking at his thigh bone;

thinks the sun is in the thigh, or in the calf, or in the bowels, I

suppose, as the old women talk Surgeon's Astronomy in the back country.

And by Jove, he's found something there in the vicinity of his thigh--I

guess it's Sagittarius, or the Archer. No: he don't know what to make

of the doubloon; he takes it for an old button off some king's trowsers.

But, aside again! here comes that ghost-devil, Fedallah; tail coiled out

of sight as usual, oakum in the toes of his pumps as usual. What does he

say, with that look of his? Ah, only makes a sign to the sign and bows

himself; there is a sun on the coin--fire worshipper, depend upon it.

Ho! more and more. This way comes Pip--poor boy! would he had died,

or I; he's half horrible to me. He too has been watching all of these

interpreters--myself included--and look now, he comes to read, with that

unearthly idiot face. Stand away again and hear him. Hark!"

"I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look."

"Upon my soul, he's been studying Murray's Grammar! Improving his mind,

poor fellow! But what's that he says now--hist!"

"I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look."

"Why, he's getting it by heart--hist! again."

"I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look."

"Well, that's funny."

"And I, you, and he; and we, ye, and they, are all bats; and I'm a crow,

especially when I stand a'top of this pine tree here. Caw! caw! caw!

caw! caw! caw! Ain't I a crow? And where's the scare-crow? There he

stands; two bones stuck into a pair of old trowsers, and two more poked

into the sleeves of an old jacket."

"Wonder if he means me?--complimentary!--poor lad!--I could go hang

myself. Any way, for the present, I'll quit Pip's vicinity. I can stand

the rest, for they have plain wits; but he's too crazy-witty for my

sanity. So, so, I leave him muttering."

"Here's the ship's navel, this doubloon here, and they are all on fire

to unscrew it. But, unscrew your navel, and what's the consequence? Then

again, if it stays here, that is ugly, too, for when aught's nailed to

the mast it's a sign that things grow desperate. Ha, ha! old Ahab!

the White Whale; he'll nail ye! This is a pine tree. My father, in old

Tolland county, cut down a pine tree once, and found a silver ring grown

over in it; some old darkey's wedding ring. How did it get there? And

so they'll say in the resurrection, when they come to fish up this old

mast, and find a doubloon lodged in it, with bedded oysters for the

shaggy bark. Oh, the gold! the precious, precious, gold! the green

miser'll hoard ye soon! Hish! hish! God goes 'mong the worlds

blackberrying. Cook! ho, cook! and cook us! Jenny! hey, hey, hey, hey,

hey, Jenny, Jenny! and get your hoe-cake done!"

CHAPTER 100. Leg and Arm.

The Pequod, of Nantucket, Meets the Samuel Enderby, of London.

"Ship, ahoy! Hast seen the White Whale?"

So cried Ahab, once more hailing a ship showing English colours, bearing

down under the stern. Trumpet to mouth, the old man was standing in his

hoisted quarter-boat, his ivory leg plainly revealed to the stranger

captain, who was carelessly reclining in his own boat's bow. He was

a darkly-tanned, burly, good-natured, fine-looking man, of sixty or

thereabouts, dressed in a spacious roundabout, that hung round him in

festoons of blue pilot-cloth; and one empty arm of this jacket streamed

behind him like the broidered arm of a hussar's surcoat.

"Hast seen the White Whale!"

"See you this?" and withdrawing it from the folds that had hidden it,

he held up a white arm of sperm whale bone, terminating in a wooden head

like a mallet.

"Man my boat!" cried Ahab, impetuously, and tossing about the oars near

him--"Stand by to lower!"

In less than a minute, without quitting his little craft, he and his

crew were dropped to the water, and were soon alongside of the stranger.

But here a curious difficulty presented itself. In the excitement of the

moment, Ahab had forgotten that since the loss of his leg he had never

once stepped on board of any vessel at sea but his own, and then it was

always by an ingenious and very handy mechanical contrivance peculiar to

the Pequod, and a thing not to be rigged and shipped in any other

vessel at a moment's warning. Now, it is no very easy matter

for anybody--except those who are almost hourly used to it, like

whalemen--to clamber up a ship's side from a boat on the open sea; for

the great swells now lift the boat high up towards the bulwarks, and

then instantaneously drop it half way down to the kelson. So, deprived

of one leg, and the strange ship of course being altogether unsupplied

with the kindly invention, Ahab now found himself abjectly reduced to a

clumsy landsman again; hopelessly eyeing the uncertain changeful height

he could hardly hope to attain.

It has before been hinted, perhaps, that every little untoward

circumstance that befell him, and which indirectly sprang from his

luckless mishap, almost invariably irritated or exasperated Ahab. And

in the present instance, all this was heightened by the sight of the

two officers of the strange ship, leaning over the side, by the

perpendicular ladder of nailed cleets there, and swinging towards him a

pair of tastefully-ornamented man-ropes; for at first they did not seem

to bethink them that a one-legged man must be too much of a cripple to

use their sea bannisters. But this awkwardness only lasted a minute,

because the strange captain, observing at a glance how affairs stood,

cried out, "I see, I see!--avast heaving there! Jump, boys, and swing

over the cutting-tackle."

As good luck would have it, they had had a whale alongside a day or two

previous, and the great tackles were still aloft, and the massive curved

blubber-hook, now clean and dry, was still attached to the end. This

was quickly lowered to Ahab, who at once comprehending it all, slid his

solitary thigh into the curve of the hook (it was like sitting in the

fluke of an anchor, or the crotch of an apple tree), and then giving the

word, held himself fast, and at the same time also helped to hoist his

own weight, by pulling hand-over-hand upon one of the running parts of

the tackle. Soon he was carefully swung inside the high bulwarks, and

gently landed upon the capstan head. With his ivory arm frankly thrust

forth in welcome, the other captain advanced, and Ahab, putting out his

ivory leg, and crossing the ivory arm (like two sword-fish blades)

cried out in his walrus way, "Aye, aye, hearty! let us shake bones

together!--an arm and a leg!--an arm that never can shrink, d'ye

see; and a leg that never can run. Where did'st thou see the White

Whale?--how long ago?"

"The White Whale," said the Englishman, pointing his ivory arm towards

the East, and taking a rueful sight along it, as if it had been a

telescope; "there I saw him, on the Line, last season."

"And he took that arm off, did he?" asked Ahab, now sliding down from

the capstan, and resting on the Englishman's shoulder, as he did so.

"Aye, he was the cause of it, at least; and that leg, too?"

"Spin me the yarn," said Ahab; "how was it?"

"It was the first time in my life that I ever cruised on the Line,"

began the Englishman. "I was ignorant of the White Whale at that time.

Well, one day we lowered for a pod of four or five whales, and my boat

fastened to one of them; a regular circus horse he was, too, that went

milling and milling round so, that my boat's crew could only trim dish,

by sitting all their sterns on the outer gunwale. Presently up breaches

from the bottom of the sea a bouncing great whale, with a milky-white

head and hump, all crows' feet and wrinkles."

"It was he, it was he!" cried Ahab, suddenly letting out his suspended

breath.

"And harpoons sticking in near his starboard fin."

"Aye, aye--they were mine--MY irons," cried Ahab, exultingly--"but on!"

"Give me a chance, then," said the Englishman, good-humoredly. "Well,

this old great-grandfather, with the white head and hump, runs all afoam

into the pod, and goes to snapping furiously at my fast-line!

"Aye, I see!--wanted to part it; free the fast-fish--an old trick--I

know him."

"How it was exactly," continued the one-armed commander, "I do not know;

but in biting the line, it got foul of his teeth, caught there somehow;

but we didn't know it then; so that when we afterwards pulled on the

line, bounce we came plump on to his hump! instead of the other whale's;

that went off to windward, all fluking. Seeing how matters stood, and

what a noble great whale it was--the noblest and biggest I ever saw,

sir, in my life--I resolved to capture him, spite of the boiling rage

he seemed to be in. And thinking the hap-hazard line would get loose, or

the tooth it was tangled to might draw (for I have a devil of a boat's

crew for a pull on a whale-line); seeing all this, I say, I jumped

into my first mate's boat--Mr. Mounttop's here (by the way,

Captain--Mounttop; Mounttop--the captain);--as I was saying, I jumped

into Mounttop's boat, which, d'ye see, was gunwale and gunwale

with mine, then; and snatching the first harpoon, let this old

great-grandfather have it. But, Lord, look you, sir--hearts and souls

alive, man--the next instant, in a jiff, I was blind as a bat--both

eyes out--all befogged and bedeadened with black foam--the whale's tail

looming straight up out of it, perpendicular in the air, like a marble

steeple. No use sterning all, then; but as I was groping at midday, with

a blinding sun, all crown-jewels; as I was groping, I say, after the

second iron, to toss it overboard--down comes the tail like a Lima

tower, cutting my boat in two, leaving each half in splinters; and,

flukes first, the white hump backed through the wreck, as though it was

all chips. We all struck out. To escape his terrible flailings, I seized

hold of my harpoon-pole sticking in him, and for a moment clung to that

like a sucking fish. But a combing sea dashed me off, and at the same

instant, the fish, taking one good dart forwards, went down like a

flash; and the barb of that cursed second iron towing along near me

caught me here" (clapping his hand just below his shoulder); "yes,

caught me just here, I say, and bore me down to Hell's flames, I was

thinking; when, when, all of a sudden, thank the good God, the barb ript

its way along the flesh--clear along the whole length of my arm--came

out nigh my wrist, and up I floated;--and that gentleman there will tell

you the rest (by the way, captain--Dr. Bunger, ship's surgeon: Bunger,

my lad,--the captain). Now, Bunger boy, spin your part of the yarn."

The professional gentleman thus familiarly pointed out, had been all the

time standing near them, with nothing specific visible, to denote his

gentlemanly rank on board. His face was an exceedingly round but sober

one; he was dressed in a faded blue woollen frock or shirt, and patched

trowsers; and had thus far been dividing his attention between a

marlingspike he held in one hand, and a pill-box held in the other,

occasionally casting a critical glance at the ivory limbs of the two

crippled captains. But, at his superior's introduction of him to Ahab,

he politely bowed, and straightway went on to do his captain's bidding.

"It was a shocking bad wound," began the whale-surgeon; "and, taking my

advice, Captain Boomer here, stood our old Sammy--"

"Samuel Enderby is the name of my ship," interrupted the one-armed

captain, addressing Ahab; "go on, boy."

"Stood our old Sammy off to the northward, to get out of the blazing hot

weather there on the Line. But it was no use--I did all I could; sat up

with him nights; was very severe with him in the matter of diet--"

"Oh, very severe!" chimed in the patient himself; then suddenly altering

his voice, "Drinking hot rum toddies with me every night, till he

couldn't see to put on the bandages; and sending me to bed, half seas

over, about three o'clock in the morning. Oh, ye stars! he sat up with

me indeed, and was very severe in my diet. Oh! a great watcher, and very

dietetically severe, is Dr. Bunger. (Bunger, you dog, laugh out! why

don't ye? You know you're a precious jolly rascal.) But, heave ahead,

boy, I'd rather be killed by you than kept alive by any other man."

"My captain, you must have ere this perceived, respected sir"--said the

imperturbable godly-looking Bunger, slightly bowing to Ahab--"is apt to

be facetious at times; he spins us many clever things of that sort. But

I may as well say--en passant, as the French remark--that I myself--that

is to say, Jack Bunger, late of the reverend clergy--am a strict total

abstinence man; I never drink--"

"Water!" cried the captain; "he never drinks it; it's a sort of fits to

him; fresh water throws him into the hydrophobia; but go on--go on with

the arm story."

"Yes, I may as well," said the surgeon, coolly. "I was about observing,

sir, before Captain Boomer's facetious interruption, that spite of my

best and severest endeavors, the wound kept getting worse and worse; the

truth was, sir, it was as ugly gaping wound as surgeon ever saw; more

than two feet and several inches long. I measured it with the lead line.

In short, it grew black; I knew what was threatened, and off it came.

But I had no hand in shipping that ivory arm there; that thing is

against all rule"--pointing at it with the marlingspike--"that is the

captain's work, not mine; he ordered the carpenter to make it; he had

that club-hammer there put to the end, to knock some one's brains

out with, I suppose, as he tried mine once. He flies into diabolical

passions sometimes. Do ye see this dent, sir"--removing his hat, and

brushing aside his hair, and exposing a bowl-like cavity in his skull,

but which bore not the slightest scarry trace, or any token of ever

having been a wound--"Well, the captain there will tell you how that

came here; he knows."

"No, I don't," said the captain, "but his mother did; he was born with

it. Oh, you solemn rogue, you--you Bunger! was there ever such another

Bunger in the watery world? Bunger, when you die, you ought to die in

pickle, you dog; you should be preserved to future ages, you rascal."

"What became of the White Whale?" now cried Ahab, who thus far had been

impatiently listening to this by-play between the two Englishmen.

"Oh!" cried the one-armed captain, "oh, yes! Well; after he sounded,

we didn't see him again for some time; in fact, as I before hinted, I

didn't then know what whale it was that had served me such a trick, till

some time afterwards, when coming back to the Line, we heard about Moby

Dick--as some call him--and then I knew it was he."

"Did'st thou cross his wake again?"

"Twice."

"But could not fasten?"

"Didn't want to try to: ain't one limb enough? What should I do without

this other arm? And I'm thinking Moby Dick doesn't bite so much as he

swallows."

"Well, then," interrupted Bunger, "give him your left arm for bait to

get the right. Do you know, gentlemen"--very gravely and mathematically

bowing to each Captain in succession--"Do you know, gentlemen, that the

digestive organs of the whale are so inscrutably constructed by Divine

Providence, that it is quite impossible for him to completely digest

even a man's arm? And he knows it too. So that what you take for the

White Whale's malice is only his awkwardness. For he never means

to swallow a single limb; he only thinks to terrify by feints. But

sometimes he is like the old juggling fellow, formerly a patient of mine

in Ceylon, that making believe swallow jack-knives, once upon a time let

one drop into him in good earnest, and there it stayed for a twelvemonth

or more; when I gave him an emetic, and he heaved it up in small tacks,

d'ye see. No possible way for him to digest that jack-knife, and fully

incorporate it into his general bodily system. Yes, Captain Boomer, if

you are quick enough about it, and have a mind to pawn one arm for the

sake of the privilege of giving decent burial to the other, why in that

case the arm is yours; only let the whale have another chance at you

shortly, that's all."

"No, thank ye, Bunger," said the English Captain, "he's welcome to the

arm he has, since I can't help it, and didn't know him then; but not to

another one. No more White Whales for me; I've lowered for him once, and

that has satisfied me. There would be great glory in killing him, I know

that; and there is a ship-load of precious sperm in him, but, hark ye,

he's best let alone; don't you think so, Captain?"--glancing at the

ivory leg.

"He is. But he will still be hunted, for all that. What is best let

alone, that accursed thing is not always what least allures. He's all a

magnet! How long since thou saw'st him last? Which way heading?"

"Bless my soul, and curse the foul fiend's," cried Bunger, stoopingly

walking round Ahab, and like a dog, strangely snuffing; "this man's

blood--bring the thermometer!--it's at the boiling point!--his pulse

makes these planks beat!--sir!"--taking a lancet from his pocket, and

drawing near to Ahab's arm.

"Avast!" roared Ahab, dashing him against the bulwarks--"Man the boat!

Which way heading?"

"Good God!" cried the English Captain, to whom the question was put.

"What's the matter? He was heading east, I think.--Is your Captain

crazy?" whispering Fedallah.

But Fedallah, putting a finger on his lip, slid over the bulwarks to

take the boat's steering oar, and Ahab, swinging the cutting-tackle

towards him, commanded the ship's sailors to stand by to lower.

In a moment he was standing in the boat's stern, and the Manilla men

were springing to their oars. In vain the English Captain hailed him.

With back to the stranger ship, and face set like a flint to his own,

Ahab stood upright till alongside of the Pequod.

CHAPTER 101. The Decanter.

Ere the English ship fades from sight, be it set down here, that

she hailed from London, and was named after the late Samuel Enderby,

merchant of that city, the original of the famous whaling house of

Enderby & Sons; a house which in my poor whaleman's opinion, comes not

far behind the united royal houses of the Tudors and Bourbons, in point

of real historical interest. How long, prior to the year of our

Lord 1775, this great whaling house was in existence, my numerous

fish-documents do not make plain; but in that year (1775) it fitted

out the first English ships that ever regularly hunted the Sperm Whale;

though for some score of years previous (ever since 1726) our valiant

Coffins and Maceys of Nantucket and the Vineyard had in large fleets

pursued that Leviathan, but only in the North and South Atlantic: not

elsewhere. Be it distinctly recorded here, that the Nantucketers were

the first among mankind to harpoon with civilized steel the great Sperm

Whale; and that for half a century they were the only people of the

whole globe who so harpooned him.

In 1778, a fine ship, the Amelia, fitted out for the express purpose,

and at the sole charge of the vigorous Enderbys, boldly rounded Cape

Horn, and was the first among the nations to lower a whale-boat of any

sort in the great South Sea. The voyage was a skilful and lucky one;

and returning to her berth with her hold full of the precious sperm, the

Amelia's example was soon followed by other ships, English and American,

and thus the vast Sperm Whale grounds of the Pacific were thrown open.

But not content with this good deed, the indefatigable house again

bestirred itself: Samuel and all his Sons--how many, their mother only

knows--and under their immediate auspices, and partly, I think, at their

expense, the British government was induced to send the sloop-of-war

Rattler on a whaling voyage of discovery into the South Sea. Commanded

by a naval Post-Captain, the Rattler made a rattling voyage of it, and

did some service; how much does not appear. But this is not all. In

1819, the same house fitted out a discovery whale ship of their own, to

go on a tasting cruise to the remote waters of Japan. That ship--well

called the "Syren"--made a noble experimental cruise; and it was thus

that the great Japanese Whaling Ground first became generally known.

The Syren in this famous voyage was commanded by a Captain Coffin, a

Nantucketer.

All honour to the Enderbies, therefore, whose house, I think, exists to

the present day; though doubtless the original Samuel must long ago have

slipped his cable for the great South Sea of the other world.

The ship named after him was worthy of the honour, being a very fast

sailer and a noble craft every way. I boarded her once at midnight

somewhere off the Patagonian coast, and drank good flip down in the

forecastle. It was a fine gam we had, and they were all trumps--every

soul on board. A short life to them, and a jolly death. And that fine

gam I had--long, very long after old Ahab touched her planks with his

ivory heel--it minds me of the noble, solid, Saxon hospitality of that

ship; and may my parson forget me, and the devil remember me, if I ever

lose sight of it. Flip? Did I say we had flip? Yes, and we flipped it

at the rate of ten gallons the hour; and when the squall came (for it's

squally off there by Patagonia), and all hands--visitors and all--were

called to reef topsails, we were so top-heavy that we had to swing each

other aloft in bowlines; and we ignorantly furled the skirts of our

jackets into the sails, so that we hung there, reefed fast in the

howling gale, a warning example to all drunken tars. However, the masts

did not go overboard; and by and by we scrambled down, so sober, that we

had to pass the flip again, though the savage salt spray bursting down

the forecastle scuttle, rather too much diluted and pickled it to my

taste.

The beef was fine--tough, but with body in it. They said it was

bull-beef; others, that it was dromedary beef; but I do not know, for

certain, how that was. They had dumplings too; small, but substantial,

symmetrically globular, and indestructible dumplings. I fancied that you

could feel them, and roll them about in you after they were swallowed.

If you stooped over too far forward, you risked their pitching out

of you like billiard-balls. The bread--but that couldn't be helped;

besides, it was an anti-scorbutic; in short, the bread contained the

only fresh fare they had. But the forecastle was not very light, and it

was very easy to step over into a dark corner when you ate it. But all

in all, taking her from truck to helm, considering the dimensions of the

cook's boilers, including his own live parchment boilers; fore and aft,

I say, the Samuel Enderby was a jolly ship; of good fare and plenty;

fine flip and strong; crack fellows all, and capital from boot heels to

hat-band.

But why was it, think ye, that the Samuel Enderby, and some other

English whalers I know of--not all though--were such famous, hospitable

ships; that passed round the beef, and the bread, and the can, and the

joke; and were not soon weary of eating, and drinking, and laughing?

I will tell you. The abounding good cheer of these English whalers

is matter for historical research. Nor have I been at all sparing of

historical whale research, when it has seemed needed.

The English were preceded in the whale fishery by the Hollanders,

Zealanders, and Danes; from whom they derived many terms still extant

in the fishery; and what is yet more, their fat old fashions,

touching plenty to eat and drink. For, as a general thing, the English

merchant-ship scrimps her crew; but not so the English whaler. Hence, in

the English, this thing of whaling good cheer is not normal and natural,

but incidental and particular; and, therefore, must have some special

origin, which is here pointed out, and will be still further elucidated.

During my researches in the Leviathanic histories, I stumbled upon an

ancient Dutch volume, which, by the musty whaling smell of it, I

knew must be about whalers. The title was, "Dan Coopman," wherefore I

concluded that this must be the invaluable memoirs of some Amsterdam

cooper in the fishery, as every whale ship must carry its cooper. I was

reinforced in this opinion by seeing that it was the production of one

"Fitz Swackhammer." But my friend Dr. Snodhead, a very learned man,

professor of Low Dutch and High German in the college of Santa Claus and

St. Pott's, to whom I handed the work for translation, giving him a box

of sperm candles for his trouble--this same Dr. Snodhead, so soon as he

spied the book, assured me that "Dan Coopman" did not mean "The Cooper,"

but "The Merchant." In short, this ancient and learned Low Dutch book

treated of the commerce of Holland; and, among other subjects, contained

a very interesting account of its whale fishery. And in this chapter it

was, headed, "Smeer," or "Fat," that I found a long detailed list of the

outfits for the larders and cellars of 180 sail of Dutch whalemen; from

which list, as translated by Dr. Snodhead, I transcribe the following:

400,000 lbs. of beef. 60,000 lbs. Friesland pork. 150,000 lbs. of stock

fish. 550,000 lbs. of biscuit. 72,000 lbs. of soft bread. 2,800 firkins

of butter. 20,000 lbs. Texel & Leyden cheese. 144,000 lbs. cheese

(probably an inferior article). 550 ankers of Geneva. 10,800 barrels of

beer.

Most statistical tables are parchingly dry in the reading; not so in

the present case, however, where the reader is flooded with whole pipes,

barrels, quarts, and gills of good gin and good cheer.

At the time, I devoted three days to the studious digesting of all

this beer, beef, and bread, during which many profound thoughts were

incidentally suggested to me, capable of a transcendental and Platonic

application; and, furthermore, I compiled supplementary tables of my

own, touching the probable quantity of stock-fish, etc., consumed by

every Low Dutch harpooneer in that ancient Greenland and Spitzbergen

whale fishery. In the first place, the amount of butter, and Texel and

Leyden cheese consumed, seems amazing. I impute it, though, to their

naturally unctuous natures, being rendered still more unctuous by the

nature of their vocation, and especially by their pursuing their game

in those frigid Polar Seas, on the very coasts of that Esquimaux country

where the convivial natives pledge each other in bumpers of train oil.

The quantity of beer, too, is very large, 10,800 barrels. Now, as those

polar fisheries could only be prosecuted in the short summer of that

climate, so that the whole cruise of one of these Dutch whalemen,

including the short voyage to and from the Spitzbergen sea, did not much

exceed three months, say, and reckoning 30 men to each of their fleet

of 180 sail, we have 5,400 Low Dutch seamen in all; therefore, I say,

we have precisely two barrels of beer per man, for a twelve weeks'

allowance, exclusive of his fair proportion of that 550 ankers of gin.

Now, whether these gin and beer harpooneers, so fuddled as one might

fancy them to have been, were the right sort of men to stand up in

a boat's head, and take good aim at flying whales; this would seem

somewhat improbable. Yet they did aim at them, and hit them too. But

this was very far North, be it remembered, where beer agrees well with

the constitution; upon the Equator, in our southern fishery, beer would

be apt to make the harpooneer sleepy at the mast-head and boozy in his

boat; and grievous loss might ensue to Nantucket and New Bedford.

But no more; enough has been said to show that the old Dutch whalers

of two or three centuries ago were high livers; and that the English

whalers have not neglected so excellent an example. For, say they, when

cruising in an empty ship, if you can get nothing better out of the

world, get a good dinner out of it, at least. And this empties the

decanter.

CHAPTER 102. A Bower in the Arsacides.

Hitherto, in descriptively treating of the Sperm Whale, I have chiefly

dwelt upon the marvels of his outer aspect; or separately and in detail

upon some few interior structural features. But to a large and thorough

sweeping comprehension of him, it behooves me now to unbutton him still

further, and untagging the points of his hose, unbuckling his garters,

and casting loose the hooks and the eyes of the joints of his innermost

bones, set him before you in his ultimatum; that is to say, in his

unconditional skeleton.

But how now, Ishmael? How is it, that you, a mere oarsman in the

fishery, pretend to know aught about the subterranean parts of the

whale? Did erudite Stubb, mounted upon your capstan, deliver lectures

on the anatomy of the Cetacea; and by help of the windlass, hold up a

specimen rib for exhibition? Explain thyself, Ishmael. Can you land

a full-grown whale on your deck for examination, as a cook dishes a

roast-pig? Surely not. A veritable witness have you hitherto been,

Ishmael; but have a care how you seize the privilege of Jonah alone;

the privilege of discoursing upon the joists and beams; the rafters,

ridge-pole, sleepers, and under-pinnings, making up the frame-work of

leviathan; and belike of the tallow-vats, dairy-rooms, butteries, and

cheeseries in his bowels.

I confess, that since Jonah, few whalemen have penetrated very far

beneath the skin of the adult whale; nevertheless, I have been blessed

with an opportunity to dissect him in miniature. In a ship I belonged

to, a small cub Sperm Whale was once bodily hoisted to the deck for his

poke or bag, to make sheaths for the barbs of the harpoons, and for the

heads of the lances. Think you I let that chance go, without using my

boat-hatchet and jack-knife, and breaking the seal and reading all the

contents of that young cub?

And as for my exact knowledge of the bones of the leviathan in their

gigantic, full grown development, for that rare knowledge I am indebted

to my late royal friend Tranquo, king of Tranque, one of the Arsacides.

For being at Tranque, years ago, when attached to the trading-ship Dey

of Algiers, I was invited to spend part of the Arsacidean holidays with

the lord of Tranque, at his retired palm villa at Pupella; a sea-side

glen not very far distant from what our sailors called Bamboo-Town, his

capital.

Among many other fine qualities, my royal friend Tranquo, being gifted

with a devout love for all matters of barbaric vertu, had brought

together in Pupella whatever rare things the more ingenious of his

people could invent; chiefly carved woods of wonderful devices,

chiselled shells, inlaid spears, costly paddles, aromatic canoes;

and all these distributed among whatever natural wonders, the

wonder-freighted, tribute-rendering waves had cast upon his shores.

Chief among these latter was a great Sperm Whale, which, after an

unusually long raging gale, had been found dead and stranded, with his

head against a cocoa-nut tree, whose plumage-like, tufted droopings

seemed his verdant jet. When the vast body had at last been stripped of

its fathom-deep enfoldings, and the bones become dust dry in the sun,

then the skeleton was carefully transported up the Pupella glen, where a

grand temple of lordly palms now sheltered it.

The ribs were hung with trophies; the vertebrae were carved with

Arsacidean annals, in strange hieroglyphics; in the skull, the priests

kept up an unextinguished aromatic flame, so that the mystic head

again sent forth its vapoury spout; while, suspended from a bough, the

terrific lower jaw vibrated over all the devotees, like the hair-hung

sword that so affrighted Damocles.

It was a wondrous sight. The wood was green as mosses of the Icy

Glen; the trees stood high and haughty, feeling their living sap; the

industrious earth beneath was as a weaver's loom, with a gorgeous carpet

on it, whereof the ground-vine tendrils formed the warp and woof, and

the living flowers the figures. All the trees, with all their laden

branches; all the shrubs, and ferns, and grasses; the message-carrying

air; all these unceasingly were active. Through the lacings of the

leaves, the great sun seemed a flying shuttle weaving the unwearied

verdure. Oh, busy weaver! unseen weaver!--pause!--one word!--whither

flows the fabric? what palace may it deck? wherefore all these ceaseless

toilings? Speak, weaver!--stay thy hand!--but one single word with

thee! Nay--the shuttle flies--the figures float from forth the loom; the

freshet-rushing carpet for ever slides away. The weaver-god, he weaves;

and by that weaving is he deafened, that he hears no mortal voice; and

by that humming, we, too, who look on the loom are deafened; and only

when we escape it shall we hear the thousand voices that speak through

it. For even so it is in all material factories. The spoken words that

are inaudible among the flying spindles; those same words are plainly

heard without the walls, bursting from the opened casements. Thereby

have villainies been detected. Ah, mortal! then, be heedful; for so, in

all this din of the great world's loom, thy subtlest thinkings may be

overheard afar.

Now, amid the green, life-restless loom of that Arsacidean wood, the

great, white, worshipped skeleton lay lounging--a gigantic idler! Yet,

as the ever-woven verdant warp and woof intermixed and hummed around

him, the mighty idler seemed the cunning weaver; himself all woven

over with the vines; every month assuming greener, fresher verdure; but

himself a skeleton. Life folded Death; Death trellised Life; the grim

god wived with youthful Life, and begat him curly-headed glories.

Now, when with royal Tranquo I visited this wondrous whale, and saw the

skull an altar, and the artificial smoke ascending from where the real

jet had issued, I marvelled that the king should regard a chapel as

an object of vertu. He laughed. But more I marvelled that the priests

should swear that smoky jet of his was genuine. To and fro I paced

before this skeleton--brushed the vines aside--broke through the

ribs--and with a ball of Arsacidean twine, wandered, eddied long amid

its many winding, shaded colonnades and arbours. But soon my line was

out; and following it back, I emerged from the opening where I entered.

I saw no living thing within; naught was there but bones.

Cutting me a green measuring-rod, I once more dived within the skeleton.

From their arrow-slit in the skull, the priests perceived me taking the

altitude of the final rib, "How now!" they shouted; "Dar'st thou measure

this our god! That's for us." "Aye, priests--well, how long do ye make

him, then?" But hereupon a fierce contest rose among them, concerning

feet and inches; they cracked each other's sconces with their

yard-sticks--the great skull echoed--and seizing that lucky chance, I

quickly concluded my own admeasurements.

These admeasurements I now propose to set before you. But first, be

it recorded, that, in this matter, I am not free to utter any fancied

measurement I please. Because there are skeleton authorities you can

refer to, to test my accuracy. There is a Leviathanic Museum, they tell

me, in Hull, England, one of the whaling ports of that country, where

they have some fine specimens of fin-backs and other whales. Likewise, I

have heard that in the museum of Manchester, in New Hampshire, they have

what the proprietors call "the only perfect specimen of a Greenland or

River Whale in the United States." Moreover, at a place in Yorkshire,

England, Burton Constable by name, a certain Sir Clifford Constable has

in his possession the skeleton of a Sperm Whale, but of moderate size,

by no means of the full-grown magnitude of my friend King Tranquo's.

In both cases, the stranded whales to which these two skeletons

belonged, were originally claimed by their proprietors upon similar

grounds. King Tranquo seizing his because he wanted it; and Sir

Clifford, because he was lord of the seignories of those parts. Sir

Clifford's whale has been articulated throughout; so that, like a

great chest of drawers, you can open and shut him, in all his bony

cavities--spread out his ribs like a gigantic fan--and swing all day

upon his lower jaw. Locks are to be put upon some of his trap-doors and

shutters; and a footman will show round future visitors with a bunch of

keys at his side. Sir Clifford thinks of charging twopence for a peep at

the whispering gallery in the spinal column; threepence to hear the echo

in the hollow of his cerebellum; and sixpence for the unrivalled view

from his forehead.

The skeleton dimensions I shall now proceed to set down are copied

verbatim from my right arm, where I had them tattooed; as in my wild

wanderings at that period, there was no other secure way of preserving

such valuable statistics. But as I was crowded for space, and wished

the other parts of my body to remain a blank page for a poem I was

then composing--at least, what untattooed parts might remain--I did not

trouble myself with the odd inches; nor, indeed, should inches at all

enter into a congenial admeasurement of the whale.

CHAPTER 103. Measurement of The Whale's Skeleton.

In the first place, I wish to lay before you a particular, plain

statement, touching the living bulk of this leviathan, whose skeleton we

are briefly to exhibit. Such a statement may prove useful here.

According to a careful calculation I have made, and which I partly base

upon Captain Scoresby's estimate, of seventy tons for the largest

sized Greenland whale of sixty feet in length; according to my careful

calculation, I say, a Sperm Whale of the largest magnitude, between

eighty-five and ninety feet in length, and something less than forty

feet in its fullest circumference, such a whale will weigh at least

ninety tons; so that, reckoning thirteen men to a ton, he would

considerably outweigh the combined population of a whole village of one

thousand one hundred inhabitants.

Think you not then that brains, like yoked cattle, should be put to this

leviathan, to make him at all budge to any landsman's imagination?

Having already in various ways put before you his skull, spout-hole,

jaw, teeth, tail, forehead, fins, and divers other parts, I shall now

simply point out what is most interesting in the general bulk of his

unobstructed bones. But as the colossal skull embraces so very large

a proportion of the entire extent of the skeleton; as it is by far the

most complicated part; and as nothing is to be repeated concerning it in

this chapter, you must not fail to carry it in your mind, or under your

arm, as we proceed, otherwise you will not gain a complete notion of the

general structure we are about to view.

In length, the Sperm Whale's skeleton at Tranque measured seventy-two

Feet; so that when fully invested and extended in life, he must have

been ninety feet long; for in the whale, the skeleton loses about one

fifth in length compared with the living body. Of this seventy-two feet,

his skull and jaw comprised some twenty feet, leaving some fifty feet of

plain back-bone. Attached to this back-bone, for something less than a

third of its length, was the mighty circular basket of ribs which once

enclosed his vitals.

To me this vast ivory-ribbed chest, with the long, unrelieved spine,

extending far away from it in a straight line, not a little resembled

the hull of a great ship new-laid upon the stocks, when only some twenty

of her naked bow-ribs are inserted, and the keel is otherwise, for the

time, but a long, disconnected timber.

The ribs were ten on a side. The first, to begin from the neck,

was nearly six feet long; the second, third, and fourth were each

successively longer, till you came to the climax of the fifth, or one

of the middle ribs, which measured eight feet and some inches. From

that part, the remaining ribs diminished, till the tenth and last only

spanned five feet and some inches. In general thickness, they all bore

a seemly correspondence to their length. The middle ribs were the most

arched. In some of the Arsacides they are used for beams whereon to lay

footpath bridges over small streams.

In considering these ribs, I could not but be struck anew with the

circumstance, so variously repeated in this book, that the skeleton of

the whale is by no means the mould of his invested form. The largest of

the Tranque ribs, one of the middle ones, occupied that part of the fish

which, in life, is greatest in depth. Now, the greatest depth of the

invested body of this particular whale must have been at least sixteen

feet; whereas, the corresponding rib measured but little more than eight

feet. So that this rib only conveyed half of the true notion of the

living magnitude of that part. Besides, for some way, where I now saw

but a naked spine, all that had been once wrapped round with tons of

added bulk in flesh, muscle, blood, and bowels. Still more, for the

ample fins, I here saw but a few disordered joints; and in place of the

weighty and majestic, but boneless flukes, an utter blank!

How vain and foolish, then, thought I, for timid untravelled man to try

to comprehend aright this wondrous whale, by merely poring over his dead

attenuated skeleton, stretched in this peaceful wood. No. Only in the

heart of quickest perils; only when within the eddyings of his angry

flukes; only on the profound unbounded sea, can the fully invested whale

be truly and livingly found out.

But the spine. For that, the best way we can consider it is, with a

crane, to pile its bones high up on end. No speedy enterprise. But now

it's done, it looks much like Pompey's Pillar.

There are forty and odd vertebrae in all, which in the skeleton are

not locked together. They mostly lie like the great knobbed blocks on

a Gothic spire, forming solid courses of heavy masonry. The largest,

a middle one, is in width something less than three feet, and in depth

more than four. The smallest, where the spine tapers away into the

tail, is only two inches in width, and looks something like a white

billiard-ball. I was told that there were still smaller ones, but they

had been lost by some little cannibal urchins, the priest's children,

who had stolen them to play marbles with. Thus we see how that the

spine of even the hugest of living things tapers off at last into simple

child's play.

CHAPTER 104. The Fossil Whale.

From his mighty bulk the whale affords a most congenial theme whereon

to enlarge, amplify, and generally expatiate. Would you, you could not

compress him. By good rights he should only be treated of in imperial

folio. Not to tell over again his furlongs from spiracle to tail,

and the yards he measures about the waist; only think of the gigantic

involutions of his intestines, where they lie in him like great

cables and hawsers coiled away in the subterranean orlop-deck of a

line-of-battle-ship.

Since I have undertaken to manhandle this Leviathan, it behooves me

to approve myself omnisciently exhaustive in the enterprise; not

overlooking the minutest seminal germs of his blood, and spinning him

out to the uttermost coil of his bowels. Having already described him

in most of his present habitatory and anatomical peculiarities, it

now remains to magnify him in an archaeological, fossiliferous, and

antediluvian point of view. Applied to any other creature than the

Leviathan--to an ant or a flea--such portly terms might justly be deemed

unwarrantably grandiloquent. But when Leviathan is the text, the case is

altered. Fain am I to stagger to this emprise under the weightiest

words of the dictionary. And here be it said, that whenever it has been

convenient to consult one in the course of these dissertations, I have

invariably used a huge quarto edition of Johnson, expressly purchased

for that purpose; because that famous lexicographer's uncommon personal

bulk more fitted him to compile a lexicon to be used by a whale author

like me.

One often hears of writers that rise and swell with their subject,

though it may seem but an ordinary one. How, then, with me, writing

of this Leviathan? Unconsciously my chirography expands into placard

capitals. Give me a condor's quill! Give me Vesuvius' crater for an

inkstand! Friends, hold my arms! For in the mere act of penning my

thoughts of this Leviathan, they weary me, and make me faint with their

outreaching comprehensiveness of sweep, as if to include the whole

circle of the sciences, and all the generations of whales, and men, and

mastodons, past, present, and to come, with all the revolving panoramas

of empire on earth, and throughout the whole universe, not excluding its

suburbs. Such, and so magnifying, is the virtue of a large and liberal

theme! We expand to its bulk. To produce a mighty book, you must choose

a mighty theme. No great and enduring volume can ever be written on the

flea, though many there be who have tried it.

Ere entering upon the subject of Fossil Whales, I present my credentials

as a geologist, by stating that in my miscellaneous time I have been

a stone-mason, and also a great digger of ditches, canals and wells,

wine-vaults, cellars, and cisterns of all sorts. Likewise, by way of

preliminary, I desire to remind the reader, that while in the earlier

geological strata there are found the fossils of monsters now almost

completely extinct; the subsequent relics discovered in what are called

the Tertiary formations seem the connecting, or at any rate intercepted

links, between the antichronical creatures, and those whose remote

posterity are said to have entered the Ark; all the Fossil Whales

hitherto discovered belong to the Tertiary period, which is the last

preceding the superficial formations. And though none of them

precisely answer to any known species of the present time, they are yet

sufficiently akin to them in general respects, to justify their taking

rank as Cetacean fossils.

Detached broken fossils of pre-adamite whales, fragments of their bones

and skeletons, have within thirty years past, at various intervals, been

found at the base of the Alps, in Lombardy, in France, in England, in

Scotland, and in the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

Among the more curious of such remains is part of a skull, which in the

year 1779 was disinterred in the Rue Dauphine in Paris, a short street

opening almost directly upon the palace of the Tuileries; and bones

disinterred in excavating the great docks of Antwerp, in Napoleon's

time. Cuvier pronounced these fragments to have belonged to some utterly

unknown Leviathanic species.

But by far the most wonderful of all Cetacean relics was the almost

complete vast skeleton of an extinct monster, found in the year 1842, on

the plantation of Judge Creagh, in Alabama. The awe-stricken credulous

slaves in the vicinity took it for the bones of one of the fallen

angels. The Alabama doctors declared it a huge reptile, and bestowed

upon it the name of Basilosaurus. But some specimen bones of it being

taken across the sea to Owen, the English Anatomist, it turned out

that this alleged reptile was a whale, though of a departed species. A

significant illustration of the fact, again and again repeated in this

book, that the skeleton of the whale furnishes but little clue to the

shape of his fully invested body. So Owen rechristened the monster

Zeuglodon; and in his paper read before the London Geological Society,

pronounced it, in substance, one of the most extraordinary creatures

which the mutations of the globe have blotted out of existence.

When I stand among these mighty Leviathan skeletons, skulls, tusks,

jaws, ribs, and vertebrae, all characterized by partial resemblances to

the existing breeds of sea-monsters; but at the same time bearing on

the other hand similar affinities to the annihilated antichronical

Leviathans, their incalculable seniors; I am, by a flood, borne back

to that wondrous period, ere time itself can be said to have begun;

for time began with man. Here Saturn's grey chaos rolls over me, and I

obtain dim, shuddering glimpses into those Polar eternities; when wedged

bastions of ice pressed hard upon what are now the Tropics; and in

all the 25,000 miles of this world's circumference, not an inhabitable

hand's breadth of land was visible. Then the whole world was the

whale's; and, king of creation, he left his wake along the present lines

of the Andes and the Himmalehs. Who can show a pedigree like Leviathan?

Ahab's harpoon had shed older blood than the Pharaoh's. Methuselah seems

a school-boy. I look round to shake hands with Shem. I am horror-struck

at this antemosaic, unsourced existence of the unspeakable terrors of

the whale, which, having been before all time, must needs exist after

all humane ages are over.

But not alone has this Leviathan left his pre-adamite traces in the

stereotype plates of nature, and in limestone and marl bequeathed his

ancient bust; but upon Egyptian tablets, whose antiquity seems to claim

for them an almost fossiliferous character, we find the unmistakable

print of his fin. In an apartment of the great temple of Denderah,

some fifty years ago, there was discovered upon the granite ceiling a

sculptured and painted planisphere, abounding in centaurs, griffins, and

dolphins, similar to the grotesque figures on the celestial globe of the

moderns. Gliding among them, old Leviathan swam as of yore; was there

swimming in that planisphere, centuries before Solomon was cradled.

Nor must there be omitted another strange attestation of the antiquity

of the whale, in his own osseous post-diluvian reality, as set down by

the venerable John Leo, the old Barbary traveller.

"Not far from the Sea-side, they have a Temple, the Rafters and Beams

of which are made of Whale-Bones; for Whales of a monstrous size are

oftentimes cast up dead upon that shore. The Common People imagine, that

by a secret Power bestowed by God upon the temple, no Whale can pass it

without immediate death. But the truth of the Matter is, that on either

side of the Temple, there are Rocks that shoot two Miles into the Sea,

and wound the Whales when they light upon 'em. They keep a Whale's Rib

of an incredible length for a Miracle, which lying upon the Ground with

its convex part uppermost, makes an Arch, the Head of which cannot be

reached by a Man upon a Camel's Back. This Rib (says John Leo) is said

to have layn there a hundred Years before I saw it. Their Historians

affirm, that a Prophet who prophesy'd of Mahomet, came from this Temple,

and some do not stand to assert, that the Prophet Jonas was cast forth

by the Whale at the Base of the Temple."

In this Afric Temple of the Whale I leave you, reader, and if you be a

Nantucketer, and a whaleman, you will silently worship there.

CHAPTER 105. Does the Whale's Magnitude Diminish?--Will He Perish?

Inasmuch, then, as this Leviathan comes floundering down upon us from

the head-waters of the Eternities, it may be fitly inquired, whether,

in the long course of his generations, he has not degenerated from the

original bulk of his sires.

But upon investigation we find, that not only are the whales of the

present day superior in magnitude to those whose fossil remains are

found in the Tertiary system (embracing a distinct geological period

prior to man), but of the whales found in that Tertiary system, those

belonging to its latter formations exceed in size those of its earlier

ones.

Of all the pre-adamite whales yet exhumed, by far the largest is the

Alabama one mentioned in the last chapter, and that was less than

seventy feet in length in the skeleton. Whereas, we have already seen,

that the tape-measure gives seventy-two feet for the skeleton of a large

sized modern whale. And I have heard, on whalemen's authority, that

Sperm Whales have been captured near a hundred feet long at the time of

capture.

But may it not be, that while the whales of the present hour are an

advance in magnitude upon those of all previous geological periods; may

it not be, that since Adam's time they have degenerated?

Assuredly, we must conclude so, if we are to credit the accounts of such

gentlemen as Pliny, and the ancient naturalists generally. For Pliny

tells us of Whales that embraced acres of living bulk, and Aldrovandus

of others which measured eight hundred feet in length--Rope Walks and

Thames Tunnels of Whales! And even in the days of Banks and Solander,

Cooke's naturalists, we find a Danish member of the Academy of Sciences

setting down certain Iceland Whales (reydan-siskur, or Wrinkled Bellies)

at one hundred and twenty yards; that is, three hundred and sixty feet.

And Lacepede, the French naturalist, in his elaborate history of whales,

in the very beginning of his work (page 3), sets down the Right Whale at

one hundred metres, three hundred and twenty-eight feet. And this work

was published so late as A.D. 1825.

But will any whaleman believe these stories? No. The whale of to-day is

as big as his ancestors in Pliny's time. And if ever I go where Pliny

is, I, a whaleman (more than he was), will make bold to tell him so.

Because I cannot understand how it is, that while the Egyptian mummies

that were buried thousands of years before even Pliny was born, do not

measure so much in their coffins as a modern Kentuckian in his socks;

and while the cattle and other animals sculptured on the oldest Egyptian

and Nineveh tablets, by the relative proportions in which they are

drawn, just as plainly prove that the high-bred, stall-fed, prize cattle

of Smithfield, not only equal, but far exceed in magnitude the fattest

of Pharaoh's fat kine; in the face of all this, I will not admit that of

all animals the whale alone should have degenerated.

But still another inquiry remains; one often agitated by the more

recondite Nantucketers. Whether owing to the almost omniscient look-outs

at the mast-heads of the whaleships, now penetrating even through

Behring's straits, and into the remotest secret drawers and lockers

of the world; and the thousand harpoons and lances darted along all

continental coasts; the moot point is, whether Leviathan can long endure

so wide a chase, and so remorseless a havoc; whether he must not at last

be exterminated from the waters, and the last whale, like the last man,

smoke his last pipe, and then himself evaporate in the final puff.

Comparing the humped herds of whales with the humped herds of buffalo,

which, not forty years ago, overspread by tens of thousands the prairies

of Illinois and Missouri, and shook their iron manes and scowled with

their thunder-clotted brows upon the sites of populous river-capitals,

where now the polite broker sells you land at a dollar an inch; in such

a comparison an irresistible argument would seem furnished, to show that

the hunted whale cannot now escape speedy extinction.

But you must look at this matter in every light. Though so short a

period ago--not a good lifetime--the census of the buffalo in Illinois

exceeded the census of men now in London, and though at the present day

not one horn or hoof of them remains in all that region; and though the

cause of this wondrous extermination was the spear of man; yet the far

different nature of the whale-hunt peremptorily forbids so inglorious an

end to the Leviathan. Forty men in one ship hunting the Sperm Whales for

forty-eight months think they have done extremely well, and thank God,

if at last they carry home the oil of forty fish. Whereas, in the days

of the old Canadian and Indian hunters and trappers of the West, when

the far west (in whose sunset suns still rise) was a wilderness and

a virgin, the same number of moccasined men, for the same number of

months, mounted on horse instead of sailing in ships, would have slain

not forty, but forty thousand and more buffaloes; a fact that, if need

were, could be statistically stated.

Nor, considered aright, does it seem any argument in favour of the

gradual extinction of the Sperm Whale, for example, that in former years

(the latter part of the last century, say) these Leviathans, in

small pods, were encountered much oftener than at present, and, in

consequence, the voyages were not so prolonged, and were also much more

remunerative. Because, as has been elsewhere noticed, those whales,

influenced by some views to safety, now swim the seas in immense

caravans, so that to a large degree the scattered solitaries, yokes, and

pods, and schools of other days are now aggregated into vast but widely

separated, unfrequent armies. That is all. And equally fallacious seems

the conceit, that because the so-called whale-bone whales no longer

haunt many grounds in former years abounding with them, hence that

species also is declining. For they are only being driven from

promontory to cape; and if one coast is no longer enlivened with

their jets, then, be sure, some other and remoter strand has been very

recently startled by the unfamiliar spectacle.

Furthermore: concerning these last mentioned Leviathans, they have two

firm fortresses, which, in all human probability, will for ever remain

impregnable. And as upon the invasion of their valleys, the frosty Swiss

have retreated to their mountains; so, hunted from the savannas and

glades of the middle seas, the whale-bone whales can at last resort to

their Polar citadels, and diving under the ultimate glassy barriers and

walls there, come up among icy fields and floes; and in a charmed circle

of everlasting December, bid defiance to all pursuit from man.

But as perhaps fifty of these whale-bone whales are harpooned for one

cachalot, some philosophers of the forecastle have concluded that this

positive havoc has already very seriously diminished their battalions.

But though for some time past a number of these whales, not less than

13,000, have been annually slain on the nor'-west coast by the Americans

alone; yet there are considerations which render even this circumstance

of little or no account as an opposing argument in this matter.

Natural as it is to be somewhat incredulous concerning the populousness

of the more enormous creatures of the globe, yet what shall we say to

Harto, the historian of Goa, when he tells us that at one hunting the

King of Siam took 4,000 elephants; that in those regions elephants are

numerous as droves of cattle in the temperate climes. And there seems no

reason to doubt that if these elephants, which have now been hunted for

thousands of years, by Semiramis, by Porus, by Hannibal, and by all the

successive monarchs of the East--if they still survive there in great

numbers, much more may the great whale outlast all hunting, since he

has a pasture to expatiate in, which is precisely twice as large as all

Asia, both Americas, Europe and Africa, New Holland, and all the Isles

of the sea combined.

Moreover: we are to consider, that from the presumed great longevity

of whales, their probably attaining the age of a century and more,

therefore at any one period of time, several distinct adult generations

must be contemporary. And what that is, we may soon gain some idea

of, by imagining all the grave-yards, cemeteries, and family vaults of

creation yielding up the live bodies of all the men, women, and children

who were alive seventy-five years ago; and adding this countless host to

the present human population of the globe.

Wherefore, for all these things, we account the whale immortal in his

species, however perishable in his individuality. He swam the seas

before the continents broke water; he once swam over the site of the

Tuileries, and Windsor Castle, and the Kremlin. In Noah's flood he

despised Noah's Ark; and if ever the world is to be again flooded, like

the Netherlands, to kill off its rats, then the eternal whale will still

survive, and rearing upon the topmost crest of the equatorial flood,

spout his frothed defiance to the skies.

CHAPTER 106. Ahab's Leg.

The precipitating manner in which Captain Ahab had quitted the Samuel

Enderby of London, had not been unattended with some small violence to

his own person. He had lighted with such energy upon a thwart of his

boat that his ivory leg had received a half-splintering shock. And

when after gaining his own deck, and his own pivot-hole there, he so

vehemently wheeled round with an urgent command to the steersman (it

was, as ever, something about his not steering inflexibly enough); then,

the already shaken ivory received such an additional twist and wrench,

that though it still remained entire, and to all appearances lusty, yet

Ahab did not deem it entirely trustworthy.

And, indeed, it seemed small matter for wonder, that for all his

pervading, mad recklessness, Ahab did at times give careful heed to the

condition of that dead bone upon which he partly stood. For it had not

been very long prior to the Pequod's sailing from Nantucket, that he

had been found one night lying prone upon the ground, and insensible;

by some unknown, and seemingly inexplicable, unimaginable casualty, his

ivory limb having been so violently displaced, that it had stake-wise

smitten, and all but pierced his groin; nor was it without extreme

difficulty that the agonizing wound was entirely cured.

Nor, at the time, had it failed to enter his monomaniac mind, that all

the anguish of that then present suffering was but the direct issue of a

former woe; and he too plainly seemed to see, that as the most poisonous

reptile of the marsh perpetuates his kind as inevitably as the sweetest

songster of the grove; so, equally with every felicity, all miserable

events do naturally beget their like. Yea, more than equally, thought

Ahab; since both the ancestry and posterity of Grief go further than the

ancestry and posterity of Joy. For, not to hint of this: that it is

an inference from certain canonic teachings, that while some natural

enjoyments here shall have no children born to them for the other world,

but, on the contrary, shall be followed by the joy-childlessness of

all hell's despair; whereas, some guilty mortal miseries shall still

fertilely beget to themselves an eternally progressive progeny of griefs

beyond the grave; not at all to hint of this, there still seems an

inequality in the deeper analysis of the thing. For, thought Ahab, while

even the highest earthly felicities ever have a certain unsignifying

pettiness lurking in them, but, at bottom, all heartwoes, a mystic

significance, and, in some men, an archangelic grandeur; so do their

diligent tracings-out not belie the obvious deduction. To trail the

genealogies of these high mortal miseries, carries us at last among the

sourceless primogenitures of the gods; so that, in the face of all the

glad, hay-making suns, and soft cymballing, round harvest-moons, we must

needs give in to this: that the gods themselves are not for ever glad.

The ineffaceable, sad birth-mark in the brow of man, is but the stamp of

sorrow in the signers.

Unwittingly here a secret has been divulged, which perhaps might more

properly, in set way, have been disclosed before. With many other

particulars concerning Ahab, always had it remained a mystery to some,

why it was, that for a certain period, both before and after the sailing

of the Pequod, he had hidden himself away with such Grand-Lama-like

exclusiveness; and, for that one interval, sought speechless refuge, as

it were, among the marble senate of the dead. Captain Peleg's bruited

reason for this thing appeared by no means adequate; though, indeed,

as touching all Ahab's deeper part, every revelation partook more of

significant darkness than of explanatory light. But, in the end, it all

came out; this one matter did, at least. That direful mishap was at

the bottom of his temporary recluseness. And not only this, but to that

ever-contracting, dropping circle ashore, who, for any reason, possessed

the privilege of a less banned approach to him; to that timid circle the

above hinted casualty--remaining, as it did, moodily unaccounted for by

Ahab--invested itself with terrors, not entirely underived from the land

of spirits and of wails. So that, through their zeal for him, they had

all conspired, so far as in them lay, to muffle up the knowledge of

this thing from others; and hence it was, that not till a considerable

interval had elapsed, did it transpire upon the Pequod's decks.

But be all this as it may; let the unseen, ambiguous synod in the air,

or the vindictive princes and potentates of fire, have to do or not

with earthly Ahab, yet, in this present matter of his leg, he took plain

practical procedures;--he called the carpenter.

And when that functionary appeared before him, he bade him without delay

set about making a new leg, and directed the mates to see him supplied

with all the studs and joists of jaw-ivory (Sperm Whale) which had thus

far been accumulated on the voyage, in order that a careful selection

of the stoutest, clearest-grained stuff might be secured. This done, the

carpenter received orders to have the leg completed that night; and to

provide all the fittings for it, independent of those pertaining to

the distrusted one in use. Moreover, the ship's forge was ordered to be

hoisted out of its temporary idleness in the hold; and, to accelerate

the affair, the blacksmith was commanded to proceed at once to the

forging of whatever iron contrivances might be needed.

CHAPTER 107. The Carpenter.

Seat thyself sultanically among the moons of Saturn, and take high

abstracted man alone; and he seems a wonder, a grandeur, and a woe. But

from the same point, take mankind in mass, and for the most part, they

seem a mob of unnecessary duplicates, both contemporary and hereditary.

But most humble though he was, and far from furnishing an example of

the high, humane abstraction; the Pequod's carpenter was no duplicate;

hence, he now comes in person on this stage.

Like all sea-going ship carpenters, and more especially those belonging

to whaling vessels, he was, to a certain off-handed, practical extent,

alike experienced in numerous trades and callings collateral to his own;

the carpenter's pursuit being the ancient and outbranching trunk of all

those numerous handicrafts which more or less have to do with wood as an

auxiliary material. But, besides the application to him of the generic

remark above, this carpenter of the Pequod was singularly efficient in

those thousand nameless mechanical emergencies continually recurring

in a large ship, upon a three or four years' voyage, in uncivilized

and far-distant seas. For not to speak of his readiness in ordinary

duties:--repairing stove boats, sprung spars, reforming the shape of

clumsy-bladed oars, inserting bull's eyes in the deck, or new tree-nails

in the side planks, and other miscellaneous matters more directly

pertaining to his special business; he was moreover unhesitatingly

expert in all manner of conflicting aptitudes, both useful and

capricious.

The one grand stage where he enacted all his various parts so manifold,

was his vice-bench; a long rude ponderous table furnished with several

vices, of different sizes, and both of iron and of wood. At all times

except when whales were alongside, this bench was securely lashed

athwartships against the rear of the Try-works.

A belaying pin is found too large to be easily inserted into its hole:

the carpenter claps it into one of his ever-ready vices, and straightway

files it smaller. A lost land-bird of strange plumage strays on board,

and is made a captive: out of clean shaved rods of right-whale bone, and

cross-beams of sperm whale ivory, the carpenter makes a pagoda-looking

cage for it. An oarsman sprains his wrist: the carpenter concocts a

soothing lotion. Stubb longed for vermillion stars to be painted upon

the blade of his every oar; screwing each oar in his big vice of wood,

the carpenter symmetrically supplies the constellation. A sailor takes

a fancy to wear shark-bone ear-rings: the carpenter drills his ears.

Another has the toothache: the carpenter out pincers, and clapping

one hand upon his bench bids him be seated there; but the poor fellow

unmanageably winces under the unconcluded operation; whirling round the

handle of his wooden vice, the carpenter signs him to clap his jaw in

that, if he would have him draw the tooth.

Thus, this carpenter was prepared at all points, and alike indifferent

and without respect in all. Teeth he accounted bits of ivory; heads he

deemed but top-blocks; men themselves he lightly held for capstans. But

while now upon so wide a field thus variously accomplished and with such

liveliness of expertness in him, too; all this would seem to argue some

uncommon vivacity of intelligence. But not precisely so. For nothing was

this man more remarkable, than for a certain impersonal stolidity as

it were; impersonal, I say; for it so shaded off into the surrounding

infinite of things, that it seemed one with the general stolidity

discernible in the whole visible world; which while pauselessly active

in uncounted modes, still eternally holds its peace, and ignores you,

though you dig foundations for cathedrals. Yet was this half-horrible

stolidity in him, involving, too, as it appeared, an all-ramifying

heartlessness;--yet was it oddly dashed at times, with an old,

crutch-like, antediluvian, wheezing humorousness, not unstreaked now

and then with a certain grizzled wittiness; such as might have served

to pass the time during the midnight watch on the bearded forecastle

of Noah's ark. Was it that this old carpenter had been a life-long

wanderer, whose much rolling, to and fro, not only had gathered no moss;

but what is more, had rubbed off whatever small outward clingings

might have originally pertained to him? He was a stript abstract; an

unfractioned integral; uncompromised as a new-born babe; living without

premeditated reference to this world or the next. You might almost

say, that this strange uncompromisedness in him involved a sort of

unintelligence; for in his numerous trades, he did not seem to work so

much by reason or by instinct, or simply because he had been tutored to

it, or by any intermixture of all these, even or uneven; but merely by

a kind of deaf and dumb, spontaneous literal process. He was a pure

manipulator; his brain, if he had ever had one, must have early

oozed along into the muscles of his fingers. He was like one of

those unreasoning but still highly useful, MULTUM IN PARVO, Sheffield

contrivances, assuming the exterior--though a little swelled--of a

common pocket knife; but containing, not only blades of various sizes,

but also screw-drivers, cork-screws, tweezers, awls, pens, rulers,

nail-filers, countersinkers. So, if his superiors wanted to use the

carpenter for a screw-driver, all they had to do was to open that part

of him, and the screw was fast: or if for tweezers, take him up by the

legs, and there they were.

Yet, as previously hinted, this omnitooled, open-and-shut carpenter,

was, after all, no mere machine of an automaton. If he did not have a

common soul in him, he had a subtle something that somehow anomalously

did its duty. What that was, whether essence of quicksilver, or a few

drops of hartshorn, there is no telling. But there it was; and there it

had abided for now some sixty years or more. And this it was, this same

unaccountable, cunning life-principle in him; this it was, that kept

him a great part of the time soliloquizing; but only like an unreasoning

wheel, which also hummingly soliloquizes; or rather, his body was a

sentry-box and this soliloquizer on guard there, and talking all the

time to keep himself awake.

CHAPTER 108. Ahab and the Carpenter.

The Deck--First Night Watch.

(CARPENTER STANDING BEFORE HIS VICE-BENCH, AND BY THE LIGHT OF TWO

LANTERNS BUSILY FILING THE IVORY JOIST FOR THE LEG, WHICH JOIST IS

FIRMLY FIXED IN THE VICE. SLABS OF IVORY, LEATHER STRAPS, PADS, SCREWS,

AND VARIOUS TOOLS OF ALL SORTS LYING ABOUT THE BENCH. FORWARD, THE RED

FLAME OF THE FORGE IS SEEN, WHERE THE BLACKSMITH IS AT WORK.)

Drat the file, and drat the bone! That is hard which should be soft,

and that is soft which should be hard. So we go, who file old jaws and

shinbones. Let's try another. Aye, now, this works better (SNEEZES).

Halloa, this bone dust is (SNEEZES)--why it's (SNEEZES)--yes it's

(SNEEZES)--bless my soul, it won't let me speak! This is what an old

fellow gets now for working in dead lumber. Saw a live tree, and

you don't get this dust; amputate a live bone, and you don't get it

(SNEEZES). Come, come, you old Smut, there, bear a hand, and let's have

that ferule and buckle-screw; I'll be ready for them presently. Lucky

now (SNEEZES) there's no knee-joint to make; that might puzzle a little;

but a mere shinbone--why it's easy as making hop-poles; only I should

like to put a good finish on. Time, time; if I but only had the time, I

could turn him out as neat a leg now as ever (SNEEZES) scraped to a lady

in a parlor. Those buckskin legs and calves of legs I've seen in shop

windows wouldn't compare at all. They soak water, they do; and of

course get rheumatic, and have to be doctored (SNEEZES) with washes and

lotions, just like live legs. There; before I saw it off, now, I must

call his old Mogulship, and see whether the length will be all right;

too short, if anything, I guess. Ha! that's the heel; we are in luck;

here he comes, or it's somebody else, that's certain.

AHAB (ADVANCING)

(DURING THE ENSUING SCENE, THE CARPENTER CONTINUES SNEEZING AT TIMES)

Well, manmaker!

Just in time, sir. If the captain pleases, I will now mark the length.

Let me measure, sir.

Measured for a leg! good. Well, it's not the first time. About it!

There; keep thy finger on it. This is a cogent vice thou hast here,

carpenter; let me feel its grip once. So, so; it does pinch some.

Oh, sir, it will break bones--beware, beware!

No fear; I like a good grip; I like to feel something in this

slippery world that can hold, man. What's Prometheus about there?--the

blacksmith, I mean--what's he about?

He must be forging the buckle-screw, sir, now.

Right. It's a partnership; he supplies the muscle part. He makes a

fierce red flame there!

Aye, sir; he must have the white heat for this kind of fine work.

Um-m. So he must. I do deem it now a most meaning thing, that that

old Greek, Prometheus, who made men, they say, should have been a

blacksmith, and animated them with fire; for what's made in fire must

properly belong to fire; and so hell's probable. How the soot flies!

This must be the remainder the Greek made the Africans of. Carpenter,

when he's through with that buckle, tell him to forge a pair of steel

shoulder-blades; there's a pedlar aboard with a crushing pack.

Sir?

Hold; while Prometheus is about it, I'll order a complete man after a

desirable pattern. Imprimis, fifty feet high in his socks; then, chest

modelled after the Thames Tunnel; then, legs with roots to 'em, to stay

in one place; then, arms three feet through the wrist; no heart at all,

brass forehead, and about a quarter of an acre of fine brains; and let

me see--shall I order eyes to see outwards? No, but put a sky-light on

top of his head to illuminate inwards. There, take the order, and away.

Now, what's he speaking about, and who's he speaking to, I should like

to know? Shall I keep standing here? (ASIDE).

'Tis but indifferent architecture to make a blind dome; here's one. No,

no, no; I must have a lantern.

Ho, ho! That's it, hey? Here are two, sir; one will serve my turn.

What art thou thrusting that thief-catcher into my face for, man?

Thrusted light is worse than presented pistols.

I thought, sir, that you spoke to carpenter.

Carpenter? why that's--but no;--a very tidy, and, I may say,

an extremely gentlemanlike sort of business thou art in here,

carpenter;--or would'st thou rather work in clay?

Sir?--Clay? clay, sir? That's mud; we leave clay to ditchers, sir.

The fellow's impious! What art thou sneezing about?

Bone is rather dusty, sir.

Take the hint, then; and when thou art dead, never bury thyself under

living people's noses.

Sir?--oh! ah!--I guess so;--yes--dear!

Look ye, carpenter, I dare say thou callest thyself a right good

workmanlike workman, eh? Well, then, will it speak thoroughly well

for thy work, if, when I come to mount this leg thou makest, I shall

nevertheless feel another leg in the same identical place with it; that

is, carpenter, my old lost leg; the flesh and blood one, I mean. Canst

thou not drive that old Adam away?

Truly, sir, I begin to understand somewhat now. Yes, I have heard

something curious on that score, sir; how that a dismasted man never

entirely loses the feeling of his old spar, but it will be still

pricking him at times. May I humbly ask if it be really so, sir?

It is, man. Look, put thy live leg here in the place where mine once

was; so, now, here is only one distinct leg to the eye, yet two to the

soul. Where thou feelest tingling life; there, exactly there, there to a

hair, do I. Is't a riddle?

I should humbly call it a poser, sir.

Hist, then. How dost thou know that some entire, living, thinking thing

may not be invisibly and uninterpenetratingly standing precisely where

thou now standest; aye, and standing there in thy spite? In thy most

solitary hours, then, dost thou not fear eavesdroppers? Hold, don't

speak! And if I still feel the smart of my crushed leg, though it be now

so long dissolved; then, why mayst not thou, carpenter, feel the fiery

pains of hell for ever, and without a body? Hah!

Good Lord! Truly, sir, if it comes to that, I must calculate over again;

I think I didn't carry a small figure, sir.

Look ye, pudding-heads should never grant premises.--How long before the

leg is done?

Perhaps an hour, sir.

Bungle away at it then, and bring it to me (TURNS TO GO). Oh, Life! Here

I am, proud as Greek god, and yet standing debtor to this blockhead for

a bone to stand on! Cursed be that mortal inter-indebtedness which will

not do away with ledgers. I would be free as air; and I'm down in the

whole world's books. I am so rich, I could have given bid for bid with

the wealthiest Praetorians at the auction of the Roman empire (which was

the world's); and yet I owe for the flesh in the tongue I brag with. By

heavens! I'll get a crucible, and into it, and dissolve myself down to

one small, compendious vertebra. So.

CARPENTER (RESUMING HIS WORK).

Well, well, well! Stubb knows him best of all, and Stubb always says

he's queer; says nothing but that one sufficient little word queer; he's

queer, says Stubb; he's queer--queer, queer; and keeps dinning it into

Mr. Starbuck all the time--queer--sir--queer, queer, very queer. And

here's his leg! Yes, now that I think of it, here's his bedfellow! has

a stick of whale's jaw-bone for a wife! And this is his leg; he'll stand

on this. What was that now about one leg standing in three places, and

all three places standing in one hell--how was that? Oh! I don't wonder

he looked so scornful at me! I'm a sort of strange-thoughted sometimes,

they say; but that's only haphazard-like. Then, a short, little old body

like me, should never undertake to wade out into deep waters with tall,

heron-built captains; the water chucks you under the chin pretty quick,

and there's a great cry for life-boats. And here's the heron's leg!

long and slim, sure enough! Now, for most folks one pair of legs lasts

a lifetime, and that must be because they use them mercifully, as a

tender-hearted old lady uses her roly-poly old coach-horses. But Ahab;

oh he's a hard driver. Look, driven one leg to death, and spavined the

other for life, and now wears out bone legs by the cord. Halloa, there,

you Smut! bear a hand there with those screws, and let's finish it

before the resurrection fellow comes a-calling with his horn for

all legs, true or false, as brewery-men go round collecting old beer

barrels, to fill 'em up again. What a leg this is! It looks like a real

live leg, filed down to nothing but the core; he'll be standing on this

to-morrow; he'll be taking altitudes on it. Halloa! I almost forgot the

little oval slate, smoothed ivory, where he figures up the latitude. So,

so; chisel, file, and sand-paper, now!

CHAPTER 109. Ahab and Starbuck in the Cabin.

According to usage they were pumping the ship next morning; and lo! no

inconsiderable oil came up with the water; the casks below must have

sprung a bad leak. Much concern was shown; and Starbuck went down into

the cabin to report this unfavourable affair.\*

\*In Sperm-whalemen with any considerable quantity of oil on board, it

is a regular semiweekly duty to conduct a hose into the hold, and drench

the casks with sea-water; which afterwards, at varying intervals, is

removed by the ship's pumps. Hereby the casks are sought to be kept

damply tight; while by the changed character of the withdrawn water, the

mariners readily detect any serious leakage in the precious cargo.

Now, from the South and West the Pequod was drawing nigh to Formosa and

the Bashee Isles, between which lies one of the tropical outlets from

the China waters into the Pacific. And so Starbuck found Ahab with

a general chart of the oriental archipelagoes spread before him;

and another separate one representing the long eastern coasts of the

Japanese islands--Niphon, Matsmai, and Sikoke. With his snow-white new

ivory leg braced against the screwed leg of his table, and with a long

pruning-hook of a jack-knife in his hand, the wondrous old man, with his

back to the gangway door, was wrinkling his brow, and tracing his old

courses again.

"Who's there?" hearing the footstep at the door, but not turning round

to it. "On deck! Begone!"

"Captain Ahab mistakes; it is I. The oil in the hold is leaking, sir. We

must up Burtons and break out."

"Up Burtons and break out? Now that we are nearing Japan; heave-to here

for a week to tinker a parcel of old hoops?"

"Either do that, sir, or waste in one day more oil than we may make good

in a year. What we come twenty thousand miles to get is worth saving,

sir."

"So it is, so it is; if we get it."

"I was speaking of the oil in the hold, sir."

"And I was not speaking or thinking of that at all. Begone! Let it leak!

I'm all aleak myself. Aye! leaks in leaks! not only full of leaky casks,

but those leaky casks are in a leaky ship; and that's a far worse plight

than the Pequod's, man. Yet I don't stop to plug my leak; for who can

find it in the deep-loaded hull; or how hope to plug it, even if

found, in this life's howling gale? Starbuck! I'll not have the Burtons

hoisted."

"What will the owners say, sir?"

"Let the owners stand on Nantucket beach and outyell the Typhoons. What

cares Ahab? Owners, owners? Thou art always prating to me, Starbuck,

about those miserly owners, as if the owners were my conscience. But

look ye, the only real owner of anything is its commander; and hark ye,

my conscience is in this ship's keel.--On deck!"

"Captain Ahab," said the reddening mate, moving further into the cabin,

with a daring so strangely respectful and cautious that it almost seemed

not only every way seeking to avoid the slightest outward manifestation

of itself, but within also seemed more than half distrustful of itself;

"A better man than I might well pass over in thee what he would quickly

enough resent in a younger man; aye, and in a happier, Captain Ahab."

"Devils! Dost thou then so much as dare to critically think of me?--On

deck!"

"Nay, sir, not yet; I do entreat. And I do dare, sir--to be forbearing!

Shall we not understand each other better than hitherto, Captain Ahab?"

Ahab seized a loaded musket from the rack (forming part of most

South-Sea-men's cabin furniture), and pointing it towards Starbuck,

exclaimed: "There is one God that is Lord over the earth, and one

Captain that is lord over the Pequod.--On deck!"

For an instant in the flashing eyes of the mate, and his fiery cheeks,

you would have almost thought that he had really received the blaze of

the levelled tube. But, mastering his emotion, he half calmly rose,

and as he quitted the cabin, paused for an instant and said: "Thou hast

outraged, not insulted me, sir; but for that I ask thee not to beware of

Starbuck; thou wouldst but laugh; but let Ahab beware of Ahab; beware of

thyself, old man."

"He waxes brave, but nevertheless obeys; most careful bravery that!"

murmured Ahab, as Starbuck disappeared. "What's that he said--Ahab

beware of Ahab--there's something there!" Then unconsciously using the

musket for a staff, with an iron brow he paced to and fro in the little

cabin; but presently the thick plaits of his forehead relaxed, and

returning the gun to the rack, he went to the deck.

"Thou art but too good a fellow, Starbuck," he said lowly to the mate;

then raising his voice to the crew: "Furl the t'gallant-sails, and

close-reef the top-sails, fore and aft; back the main-yard; up Burton,

and break out in the main-hold."

It were perhaps vain to surmise exactly why it was, that as respecting

Starbuck, Ahab thus acted. It may have been a flash of honesty in him;

or mere prudential policy which, under the circumstance, imperiously

forbade the slightest symptom of open disaffection, however transient,

in the important chief officer of his ship. However it was, his orders

were executed; and the Burtons were hoisted.

CHAPTER 110. Queequeg in His Coffin.

Upon searching, it was found that the casks last struck into the hold

were perfectly sound, and that the leak must be further off. So, it

being calm weather, they broke out deeper and deeper, disturbing the

slumbers of the huge ground-tier butts; and from that black midnight

sending those gigantic moles into the daylight above. So deep did they

go; and so ancient, and corroded, and weedy the aspect of the lowermost

puncheons, that you almost looked next for some mouldy corner-stone cask

containing coins of Captain Noah, with copies of the posted placards,

vainly warning the infatuated old world from the flood. Tierce after

tierce, too, of water, and bread, and beef, and shooks of staves, and

iron bundles of hoops, were hoisted out, till at last the piled decks

were hard to get about; and the hollow hull echoed under foot, as if

you were treading over empty catacombs, and reeled and rolled in the sea

like an air-freighted demijohn. Top-heavy was the ship as a dinnerless

student with all Aristotle in his head. Well was it that the Typhoons

did not visit them then.

Now, at this time it was that my poor pagan companion, and fast

bosom-friend, Queequeg, was seized with a fever, which brought him nigh

to his endless end.

Be it said, that in this vocation of whaling, sinecures are unknown;

dignity and danger go hand in hand; till you get to be Captain, the

higher you rise the harder you toil. So with poor Queequeg, who, as

harpooneer, must not only face all the rage of the living whale, but--as

we have elsewhere seen--mount his dead back in a rolling sea; and

finally descend into the gloom of the hold, and bitterly sweating

all day in that subterraneous confinement, resolutely manhandle the

clumsiest casks and see to their stowage. To be short, among whalemen,

the harpooneers are the holders, so called.

Poor Queequeg! when the ship was about half disembowelled, you should

have stooped over the hatchway, and peered down upon him there; where,

stripped to his woollen drawers, the tattooed savage was crawling about

amid that dampness and slime, like a green spotted lizard at the bottom

of a well. And a well, or an ice-house, it somehow proved to him, poor

pagan; where, strange to say, for all the heat of his sweatings, he

caught a terrible chill which lapsed into a fever; and at last, after

some days' suffering, laid him in his hammock, close to the very sill

of the door of death. How he wasted and wasted away in those few

long-lingering days, till there seemed but little left of him but his

frame and tattooing. But as all else in him thinned, and his cheek-bones

grew sharper, his eyes, nevertheless, seemed growing fuller and fuller;

they became of a strange softness of lustre; and mildly but deeply

looked out at you there from his sickness, a wondrous testimony to that

immortal health in him which could not die, or be weakened. And like

circles on the water, which, as they grow fainter, expand; so his eyes

seemed rounding and rounding, like the rings of Eternity. An awe that

cannot be named would steal over you as you sat by the side of this

waning savage, and saw as strange things in his face, as any beheld who

were bystanders when Zoroaster died. For whatever is truly wondrous and

fearful in man, never yet was put into words or books. And the drawing

near of Death, which alike levels all, alike impresses all with a last

revelation, which only an author from the dead could adequately tell.

So that--let us say it again--no dying Chaldee or Greek had higher and

holier thoughts than those, whose mysterious shades you saw creeping

over the face of poor Queequeg, as he quietly lay in his swaying

hammock, and the rolling sea seemed gently rocking him to his final

rest, and the ocean's invisible flood-tide lifted him higher and higher

towards his destined heaven.

Not a man of the crew but gave him up; and, as for Queequeg himself,

what he thought of his case was forcibly shown by a curious favour he

asked. He called one to him in the grey morning watch, when the day was

just breaking, and taking his hand, said that while in Nantucket he

had chanced to see certain little canoes of dark wood, like the rich

war-wood of his native isle; and upon inquiry, he had learned that all

whalemen who died in Nantucket, were laid in those same dark canoes,

and that the fancy of being so laid had much pleased him; for it was not

unlike the custom of his own race, who, after embalming a dead warrior,

stretched him out in his canoe, and so left him to be floated away to

the starry archipelagoes; for not only do they believe that the stars

are isles, but that far beyond all visible horizons, their own mild,

uncontinented seas, interflow with the blue heavens; and so form the

white breakers of the milky way. He added, that he shuddered at

the thought of being buried in his hammock, according to the usual

sea-custom, tossed like something vile to the death-devouring sharks.

No: he desired a canoe like those of Nantucket, all the more congenial

to him, being a whaleman, that like a whale-boat these coffin-canoes

were without a keel; though that involved but uncertain steering, and

much lee-way adown the dim ages.

Now, when this strange circumstance was made known aft, the carpenter

was at once commanded to do Queequeg's bidding, whatever it might

include. There was some heathenish, coffin-coloured old lumber aboard,

which, upon a long previous voyage, had been cut from the aboriginal

groves of the Lackaday islands, and from these dark planks the coffin

was recommended to be made. No sooner was the carpenter apprised of

the order, than taking his rule, he forthwith with all the indifferent

promptitude of his character, proceeded into the forecastle and took

Queequeg's measure with great accuracy, regularly chalking Queequeg's

person as he shifted the rule.

"Ah! poor fellow! he'll have to die now," ejaculated the Long Island

sailor.

Going to his vice-bench, the carpenter for convenience sake and general

reference, now transferringly measured on it the exact length the coffin

was to be, and then made the transfer permanent by cutting two notches

at its extremities. This done, he marshalled the planks and his tools,

and to work.

When the last nail was driven, and the lid duly planed and fitted,

he lightly shouldered the coffin and went forward with it, inquiring

whether they were ready for it yet in that direction.

Overhearing the indignant but half-humorous cries with which the

people on deck began to drive the coffin away, Queequeg, to every one's

consternation, commanded that the thing should be instantly brought to

him, nor was there any denying him; seeing that, of all mortals, some

dying men are the most tyrannical; and certainly, since they will

shortly trouble us so little for evermore, the poor fellows ought to be

indulged.

Leaning over in his hammock, Queequeg long regarded the coffin with

an attentive eye. He then called for his harpoon, had the wooden stock

drawn from it, and then had the iron part placed in the coffin along

with one of the paddles of his boat. All by his own request, also,

biscuits were then ranged round the sides within: a flask of fresh water

was placed at the head, and a small bag of woody earth scraped up in

the hold at the foot; and a piece of sail-cloth being rolled up for a

pillow, Queequeg now entreated to be lifted into his final bed, that he

might make trial of its comforts, if any it had. He lay without moving

a few minutes, then told one to go to his bag and bring out his little

god, Yojo. Then crossing his arms on his breast with Yojo between, he

called for the coffin lid (hatch he called it) to be placed over him.

The head part turned over with a leather hinge, and there lay Queequeg

in his coffin with little but his composed countenance in view. "Rarmai"

(it will do; it is easy), he murmured at last, and signed to be replaced

in his hammock.

But ere this was done, Pip, who had been slily hovering near by all this

while, drew nigh to him where he lay, and with soft sobbings, took him

by the hand; in the other, holding his tambourine.

"Poor rover! will ye never have done with all this weary roving? where

go ye now? But if the currents carry ye to those sweet Antilles where

the beaches are only beat with water-lilies, will ye do one little

errand for me? Seek out one Pip, who's now been missing long: I think

he's in those far Antilles. If ye find him, then comfort him; for he

must be very sad; for look! he's left his tambourine behind;--I found

it. Rig-a-dig, dig, dig! Now, Queequeg, die; and I'll beat ye your dying

march."

"I have heard," murmured Starbuck, gazing down the scuttle, "that in

violent fevers, men, all ignorance, have talked in ancient tongues;

and that when the mystery is probed, it turns out always that in their

wholly forgotten childhood those ancient tongues had been really spoken

in their hearing by some lofty scholars. So, to my fond faith, poor Pip,

in this strange sweetness of his lunacy, brings heavenly vouchers of all

our heavenly homes. Where learned he that, but there?--Hark! he speaks

again: but more wildly now."

"Form two and two! Let's make a General of him! Ho, where's his harpoon?

Lay it across here.--Rig-a-dig, dig, dig! huzza! Oh for a game cock

now to sit upon his head and crow! Queequeg dies game!--mind ye that;

Queequeg dies game!--take ye good heed of that; Queequeg dies game! I

say; game, game, game! but base little Pip, he died a coward; died all

a'shiver;--out upon Pip! Hark ye; if ye find Pip, tell all the Antilles

he's a runaway; a coward, a coward, a coward! Tell them he jumped from

a whale-boat! I'd never beat my tambourine over base Pip, and hail

him General, if he were once more dying here. No, no! shame upon all

cowards--shame upon them! Let 'em go drown like Pip, that jumped from a

whale-boat. Shame! shame!"

During all this, Queequeg lay with closed eyes, as if in a dream. Pip

was led away, and the sick man was replaced in his hammock.

But now that he had apparently made every preparation for death; now

that his coffin was proved a good fit, Queequeg suddenly rallied; soon

there seemed no need of the carpenter's box: and thereupon, when some

expressed their delighted surprise, he, in substance, said, that the

cause of his sudden convalescence was this;--at a critical moment, he

had just recalled a little duty ashore, which he was leaving undone;

and therefore had changed his mind about dying: he could not die yet,

he averred. They asked him, then, whether to live or die was a matter of

his own sovereign will and pleasure. He answered, certainly. In a word,

it was Queequeg's conceit, that if a man made up his mind to live, mere

sickness could not kill him: nothing but a whale, or a gale, or some

violent, ungovernable, unintelligent destroyer of that sort.

Now, there is this noteworthy difference between savage and civilized;

that while a sick, civilized man may be six months convalescing,

generally speaking, a sick savage is almost half-well again in a day.

So, in good time my Queequeg gained strength; and at length after

sitting on the windlass for a few indolent days (but eating with a

vigorous appetite) he suddenly leaped to his feet, threw out his arms

and legs, gave himself a good stretching, yawned a little bit, and then

springing into the head of his hoisted boat, and poising a harpoon,

pronounced himself fit for a fight.

With a wild whimsiness, he now used his coffin for a sea-chest; and

emptying into it his canvas bag of clothes, set them in order there.

Many spare hours he spent, in carving the lid with all manner of

grotesque figures and drawings; and it seemed that hereby he was

striving, in his rude way, to copy parts of the twisted tattooing on

his body. And this tattooing had been the work of a departed prophet and

seer of his island, who, by those hieroglyphic marks, had written out on

his body a complete theory of the heavens and the earth, and a mystical

treatise on the art of attaining truth; so that Queequeg in his own

proper person was a riddle to unfold; a wondrous work in one volume; but

whose mysteries not even himself could read, though his own live heart

beat against them; and these mysteries were therefore destined in

the end to moulder away with the living parchment whereon they were

inscribed, and so be unsolved to the last. And this thought it must

have been which suggested to Ahab that wild exclamation of his, when

one morning turning away from surveying poor Queequeg--"Oh, devilish

tantalization of the gods!"

CHAPTER 111. The Pacific.

When gliding by the Bashee isles we emerged at last upon the great South

Sea; were it not for other things, I could have greeted my dear Pacific

with uncounted thanks, for now the long supplication of my youth was

answered; that serene ocean rolled eastwards from me a thousand leagues

of blue.

There is, one knows not what sweet mystery about this sea, whose gently

awful stirrings seem to speak of some hidden soul beneath; like those

fabled undulations of the Ephesian sod over the buried Evangelist St.

John. And meet it is, that over these sea-pastures, wide-rolling watery

prairies and Potters' Fields of all four continents, the waves should

rise and fall, and ebb and flow unceasingly; for here, millions of mixed

shades and shadows, drowned dreams, somnambulisms, reveries; all that

we call lives and souls, lie dreaming, dreaming, still; tossing like

slumberers in their beds; the ever-rolling waves but made so by their

restlessness.

To any meditative Magian rover, this serene Pacific, once beheld, must

ever after be the sea of his adoption. It rolls the midmost waters of

the world, the Indian ocean and Atlantic being but its arms. The same

waves wash the moles of the new-built Californian towns, but yesterday

planted by the recentest race of men, and lave the faded but still

gorgeous skirts of Asiatic lands, older than Abraham; while all between

float milky-ways of coral isles, and low-lying, endless, unknown

Archipelagoes, and impenetrable Japans. Thus this mysterious, divine

Pacific zones the world's whole bulk about; makes all coasts one bay

to it; seems the tide-beating heart of earth. Lifted by those eternal

swells, you needs must own the seductive god, bowing your head to Pan.

But few thoughts of Pan stirred Ahab's brain, as standing like an

iron statue at his accustomed place beside the mizen rigging, with one

nostril he unthinkingly snuffed the sugary musk from the Bashee isles

(in whose sweet woods mild lovers must be walking), and with the other

consciously inhaled the salt breath of the new found sea; that sea in

which the hated White Whale must even then be swimming. Launched at

length upon these almost final waters, and gliding towards the Japanese

cruising-ground, the old man's purpose intensified itself. His firm lips

met like the lips of a vice; the Delta of his forehead's veins swelled

like overladen brooks; in his very sleep, his ringing cry ran through

the vaulted hull, "Stern all! the White Whale spouts thick blood!"

CHAPTER 112. The Blacksmith.

Availing himself of the mild, summer-cool weather that now reigned in

these latitudes, and in preparation for the peculiarly active

pursuits shortly to be anticipated, Perth, the begrimed, blistered old

blacksmith, had not removed his portable forge to the hold again, after

concluding his contributory work for Ahab's leg, but still retained

it on deck, fast lashed to ringbolts by the foremast; being now almost

incessantly invoked by the headsmen, and harpooneers, and bowsmen to do

some little job for them; altering, or repairing, or new shaping their

various weapons and boat furniture. Often he would be surrounded by an

eager circle, all waiting to be served; holding boat-spades, pike-heads,

harpoons, and lances, and jealously watching his every sooty movement,

as he toiled. Nevertheless, this old man's was a patient hammer wielded

by a patient arm. No murmur, no impatience, no petulance did come from

him. Silent, slow, and solemn; bowing over still further his chronically

broken back, he toiled away, as if toil were life itself, and the

heavy beating of his hammer the heavy beating of his heart. And so it

was.--Most miserable!

A peculiar walk in this old man, a certain slight but painful appearing

yawing in his gait, had at an early period of the voyage excited the

curiosity of the mariners. And to the importunity of their persisted

questionings he had finally given in; and so it came to pass that every

one now knew the shameful story of his wretched fate.

Belated, and not innocently, one bitter winter's midnight, on the road

running between two country towns, the blacksmith half-stupidly felt

the deadly numbness stealing over him, and sought refuge in a leaning,

dilapidated barn. The issue was, the loss of the extremities of both

feet. Out of this revelation, part by part, at last came out the four

acts of the gladness, and the one long, and as yet uncatastrophied fifth

act of the grief of his life's drama.

He was an old man, who, at the age of nearly sixty, had postponedly

encountered that thing in sorrow's technicals called ruin. He had been

an artisan of famed excellence, and with plenty to do; owned a house

and garden; embraced a youthful, daughter-like, loving wife, and three

blithe, ruddy children; every Sunday went to a cheerful-looking church,

planted in a grove. But one night, under cover of darkness, and further

concealed in a most cunning disguisement, a desperate burglar slid into

his happy home, and robbed them all of everything. And darker yet to

tell, the blacksmith himself did ignorantly conduct this burglar into

his family's heart. It was the Bottle Conjuror! Upon the opening of that

fatal cork, forth flew the fiend, and shrivelled up his home. Now, for

prudent, most wise, and economic reasons, the blacksmith's shop was in

the basement of his dwelling, but with a separate entrance to it; so

that always had the young and loving healthy wife listened with no

unhappy nervousness, but with vigorous pleasure, to the stout ringing of

her young-armed old husband's hammer; whose reverberations, muffled by

passing through the floors and walls, came up to her, not unsweetly,

in her nursery; and so, to stout Labor's iron lullaby, the blacksmith's

infants were rocked to slumber.

Oh, woe on woe! Oh, Death, why canst thou not sometimes be timely? Hadst

thou taken this old blacksmith to thyself ere his full ruin came upon

him, then had the young widow had a delicious grief, and her orphans a

truly venerable, legendary sire to dream of in their after years; and

all of them a care-killing competency. But Death plucked down some

virtuous elder brother, on whose whistling daily toil solely hung the

responsibilities of some other family, and left the worse than useless

old man standing, till the hideous rot of life should make him easier to

harvest.

Why tell the whole? The blows of the basement hammer every day grew more

and more between; and each blow every day grew fainter than the last;

the wife sat frozen at the window, with tearless eyes, glitteringly

gazing into the weeping faces of her children; the bellows fell; the

forge choked up with cinders; the house was sold; the mother dived

down into the long church-yard grass; her children twice followed her

thither; and the houseless, familyless old man staggered off a vagabond

in crape; his every woe unreverenced; his grey head a scorn to flaxen

curls!

Death seems the only desirable sequel for a career like this; but Death

is only a launching into the region of the strange Untried; it is but

the first salutation to the possibilities of the immense Remote, the

Wild, the Watery, the Unshored; therefore, to the death-longing eyes of

such men, who still have left in them some interior compunctions against

suicide, does the all-contributed and all-receptive ocean alluringly

spread forth his whole plain of unimaginable, taking terrors, and

wonderful, new-life adventures; and from the hearts of infinite

Pacifics, the thousand mermaids sing to them--"Come hither,

broken-hearted; here is another life without the guilt of intermediate

death; here are wonders supernatural, without dying for them. Come

hither! bury thyself in a life which, to your now equally abhorred and

abhorring, landed world, is more oblivious than death. Come hither! put

up THY gravestone, too, within the churchyard, and come hither, till we

marry thee!"

Hearkening to these voices, East and West, by early sunrise, and by fall

of eve, the blacksmith's soul responded, Aye, I come! And so Perth went

a-whaling.

CHAPTER 113. The Forge.

With matted beard, and swathed in a bristling shark-skin apron, about

mid-day, Perth was standing between his forge and anvil, the latter

placed upon an iron-wood log, with one hand holding a pike-head in the

coals, and with the other at his forge's lungs, when Captain Ahab came

along, carrying in his hand a small rusty-looking leathern bag. While

yet a little distance from the forge, moody Ahab paused; till at last,

Perth, withdrawing his iron from the fire, began hammering it upon the

anvil--the red mass sending off the sparks in thick hovering flights,

some of which flew close to Ahab.

"Are these thy Mother Carey's chickens, Perth? they are always flying

in thy wake; birds of good omen, too, but not to all;--look here, they

burn; but thou--thou liv'st among them without a scorch."

"Because I am scorched all over, Captain Ahab," answered Perth, resting

for a moment on his hammer; "I am past scorching; not easily can'st thou

scorch a scar."

"Well, well; no more. Thy shrunk voice sounds too calmly, sanely woeful

to me. In no Paradise myself, I am impatient of all misery in others

that is not mad. Thou should'st go mad, blacksmith; say, why dost thou

not go mad? How can'st thou endure without being mad? Do the heavens yet

hate thee, that thou can'st not go mad?--What wert thou making there?"

"Welding an old pike-head, sir; there were seams and dents in it."

"And can'st thou make it all smooth again, blacksmith, after such hard

usage as it had?"

"I think so, sir."

"And I suppose thou can'st smoothe almost any seams and dents; never

mind how hard the metal, blacksmith?"

"Aye, sir, I think I can; all seams and dents but one."

"Look ye here, then," cried Ahab, passionately advancing, and leaning

with both hands on Perth's shoulders; "look ye here--HERE--can ye

smoothe out a seam like this, blacksmith," sweeping one hand across his

ribbed brow; "if thou could'st, blacksmith, glad enough would I lay

my head upon thy anvil, and feel thy heaviest hammer between my eyes.

Answer! Can'st thou smoothe this seam?"

"Oh! that is the one, sir! Said I not all seams and dents but one?"

"Aye, blacksmith, it is the one; aye, man, it is unsmoothable; for

though thou only see'st it here in my flesh, it has worked down into the

bone of my skull--THAT is all wrinkles! But, away with child's play; no

more gaffs and pikes to-day. Look ye here!" jingling the leathern bag,

as if it were full of gold coins. "I, too, want a harpoon made; one that

a thousand yoke of fiends could not part, Perth; something that will

stick in a whale like his own fin-bone. There's the stuff," flinging

the pouch upon the anvil. "Look ye, blacksmith, these are the gathered

nail-stubbs of the steel shoes of racing horses."

"Horse-shoe stubbs, sir? Why, Captain Ahab, thou hast here, then, the

best and stubbornest stuff we blacksmiths ever work."

"I know it, old man; these stubbs will weld together like glue from the

melted bones of murderers. Quick! forge me the harpoon. And forge me

first, twelve rods for its shank; then wind, and twist, and hammer these

twelve together like the yarns and strands of a tow-line. Quick! I'll

blow the fire."

When at last the twelve rods were made, Ahab tried them, one by one, by

spiralling them, with his own hand, round a long, heavy iron bolt. "A

flaw!" rejecting the last one. "Work that over again, Perth."

This done, Perth was about to begin welding the twelve into one, when

Ahab stayed his hand, and said he would weld his own iron. As, then,

with regular, gasping hems, he hammered on the anvil, Perth passing to

him the glowing rods, one after the other, and the hard pressed forge

shooting up its intense straight flame, the Parsee passed silently, and

bowing over his head towards the fire, seemed invoking some curse or

some blessing on the toil. But, as Ahab looked up, he slid aside.

"What's that bunch of lucifers dodging about there for?" muttered Stubb,

looking on from the forecastle. "That Parsee smells fire like a fusee;

and smells of it himself, like a hot musket's powder-pan."

At last the shank, in one complete rod, received its final heat; and as

Perth, to temper it, plunged it all hissing into the cask of water near

by, the scalding steam shot up into Ahab's bent face.

"Would'st thou brand me, Perth?" wincing for a moment with the pain;

"have I been but forging my own branding-iron, then?"

"Pray God, not that; yet I fear something, Captain Ahab. Is not this

harpoon for the White Whale?"

"For the white fiend! But now for the barbs; thou must make them

thyself, man. Here are my razors--the best of steel; here, and make the

barbs sharp as the needle-sleet of the Icy Sea."

For a moment, the old blacksmith eyed the razors as though he would fain

not use them.

"Take them, man, I have no need for them; for I now neither shave, sup,

nor pray till--but here--to work!"

Fashioned at last into an arrowy shape, and welded by Perth to the

shank, the steel soon pointed the end of the iron; and as the blacksmith

was about giving the barbs their final heat, prior to tempering them, he

cried to Ahab to place the water-cask near.

"No, no--no water for that; I want it of the true death-temper. Ahoy,

there! Tashtego, Queequeg, Daggoo! What say ye, pagans! Will ye give me

as much blood as will cover this barb?" holding it high up. A cluster of

dark nods replied, Yes. Three punctures were made in the heathen flesh,

and the White Whale's barbs were then tempered.

"Ego non baptizo te in nomine patris, sed in nomine diaboli!"

deliriously howled Ahab, as the malignant iron scorchingly devoured the

baptismal blood.

Now, mustering the spare poles from below, and selecting one of hickory,

with the bark still investing it, Ahab fitted the end to the socket of

the iron. A coil of new tow-line was then unwound, and some fathoms of

it taken to the windlass, and stretched to a great tension. Pressing

his foot upon it, till the rope hummed like a harp-string, then eagerly

bending over it, and seeing no strandings, Ahab exclaimed, "Good! and

now for the seizings."

At one extremity the rope was unstranded, and the separate spread yarns

were all braided and woven round the socket of the harpoon; the pole

was then driven hard up into the socket; from the lower end the rope

was traced half-way along the pole's length, and firmly secured so, with

intertwistings of twine. This done, pole, iron, and rope--like the Three

Fates--remained inseparable, and Ahab moodily stalked away with the

weapon; the sound of his ivory leg, and the sound of the hickory pole,

both hollowly ringing along every plank. But ere he entered his cabin,

light, unnatural, half-bantering, yet most piteous sound was heard. Oh,

Pip! thy wretched laugh, thy idle but unresting eye; all thy strange

mummeries not unmeaningly blended with the black tragedy of the

melancholy ship, and mocked it!

CHAPTER 114. The Gilder.

Penetrating further and further into the heart of the Japanese cruising

ground, the Pequod was soon all astir in the fishery. Often, in mild,

pleasant weather, for twelve, fifteen, eighteen, and twenty hours on the

stretch, they were engaged in the boats, steadily pulling, or sailing,

or paddling after the whales, or for an interlude of sixty or seventy

minutes calmly awaiting their uprising; though with but small success

for their pains.

At such times, under an abated sun; afloat all day upon smooth, slow

heaving swells; seated in his boat, light as a birch canoe; and so

sociably mixing with the soft waves themselves, that like hearth-stone

cats they purr against the gunwale; these are the times of dreamy

quietude, when beholding the tranquil beauty and brilliancy of the

ocean's skin, one forgets the tiger heart that pants beneath it; and

would not willingly remember, that this velvet paw but conceals a

remorseless fang.

These are the times, when in his whale-boat the rover softly feels a

certain filial, confident, land-like feeling towards the sea; that he

regards it as so much flowery earth; and the distant ship revealing

only the tops of her masts, seems struggling forward, not through high

rolling waves, but through the tall grass of a rolling prairie: as when

the western emigrants' horses only show their erected ears, while their

hidden bodies widely wade through the amazing verdure.

The long-drawn virgin vales; the mild blue hill-sides; as over these

there steals the hush, the hum; you almost swear that play-wearied

children lie sleeping in these solitudes, in some glad May-time, when

the flowers of the woods are plucked. And all this mixes with your most

mystic mood; so that fact and fancy, half-way meeting, interpenetrate,

and form one seamless whole.

Nor did such soothing scenes, however temporary, fail of at least as

temporary an effect on Ahab. But if these secret golden keys did seem

to open in him his own secret golden treasuries, yet did his breath upon

them prove but tarnishing.

Oh, grassy glades! oh, ever vernal endless landscapes in the soul; in

ye,--though long parched by the dead drought of the earthy life,--in ye,

men yet may roll, like young horses in new morning clover; and for some

few fleeting moments, feel the cool dew of the life immortal on them.

Would to God these blessed calms would last. But the mingled, mingling

threads of life are woven by warp and woof: calms crossed by storms, a

storm for every calm. There is no steady unretracing progress in this

life; we do not advance through fixed gradations, and at the last one

pause:--through infancy's unconscious spell, boyhood's thoughtless

faith, adolescence' doubt (the common doom), then scepticism, then

disbelief, resting at last in manhood's pondering repose of If. But once

gone through, we trace the round again; and are infants, boys, and men,

and Ifs eternally. Where lies the final harbor, whence we unmoor no

more? In what rapt ether sails the world, of which the weariest will

never weary? Where is the foundling's father hidden? Our souls are like

those orphans whose unwedded mothers die in bearing them: the secret of

our paternity lies in their grave, and we must there to learn it.

And that same day, too, gazing far down from his boat's side into that

same golden sea, Starbuck lowly murmured:--

"Loveliness unfathomable, as ever lover saw in his young bride's

eye!--Tell me not of thy teeth-tiered sharks, and thy kidnapping

cannibal ways. Let faith oust fact; let fancy oust memory; I look deep

down and do believe."

And Stubb, fish-like, with sparkling scales, leaped up in that same

golden light:--

"I am Stubb, and Stubb has his history; but here Stubb takes oaths that

he has always been jolly!"

CHAPTER 115. The Pequod Meets The Bachelor.

And jolly enough were the sights and the sounds that came bearing down

before the wind, some few weeks after Ahab's harpoon had been welded.

It was a Nantucket ship, the Bachelor, which had just wedged in her

last cask of oil, and bolted down her bursting hatches; and now, in glad

holiday apparel, was joyously, though somewhat vain-gloriously, sailing

round among the widely-separated ships on the ground, previous to

pointing her prow for home.

The three men at her mast-head wore long streamers of narrow red bunting

at their hats; from the stern, a whale-boat was suspended, bottom down;

and hanging captive from the bowsprit was seen the long lower jaw of the

last whale they had slain. Signals, ensigns, and jacks of all colours

were flying from her rigging, on every side. Sideways lashed in each of

her three basketed tops were two barrels of sperm; above which, in her

top-mast cross-trees, you saw slender breakers of the same precious

fluid; and nailed to her main truck was a brazen lamp.

As was afterwards learned, the Bachelor had met with the most surprising

success; all the more wonderful, for that while cruising in the same

seas numerous other vessels had gone entire months without securing a

single fish. Not only had barrels of beef and bread been given away to

make room for the far more valuable sperm, but additional supplemental

casks had been bartered for, from the ships she had met; and these were

stowed along the deck, and in the captain's and officers' state-rooms.

Even the cabin table itself had been knocked into kindling-wood; and the

cabin mess dined off the broad head of an oil-butt, lashed down to the

floor for a centrepiece. In the forecastle, the sailors had actually

caulked and pitched their chests, and filled them; it was humorously

added, that the cook had clapped a head on his largest boiler, and

filled it; that the steward had plugged his spare coffee-pot and filled

it; that the harpooneers had headed the sockets of their irons and

filled them; that indeed everything was filled with sperm, except the

captain's pantaloons pockets, and those he reserved to thrust his hands

into, in self-complacent testimony of his entire satisfaction.

As this glad ship of good luck bore down upon the moody Pequod, the

barbarian sound of enormous drums came from her forecastle; and drawing

still nearer, a crowd of her men were seen standing round her huge

try-pots, which, covered with the parchment-like POKE or stomach skin of

the black fish, gave forth a loud roar to every stroke of the clenched

hands of the crew. On the quarter-deck, the mates and harpooneers were

dancing with the olive-hued girls who had eloped with them from the

Polynesian Isles; while suspended in an ornamented boat, firmly secured

aloft between the foremast and mainmast, three Long Island negroes, with

glittering fiddle-bows of whale ivory, were presiding over the hilarious

jig. Meanwhile, others of the ship's company were tumultuously busy at

the masonry of the try-works, from which the huge pots had been

removed. You would have almost thought they were pulling down the cursed

Bastille, such wild cries they raised, as the now useless brick and

mortar were being hurled into the sea.

Lord and master over all this scene, the captain stood erect on the

ship's elevated quarter-deck, so that the whole rejoicing drama was

full before him, and seemed merely contrived for his own individual

diversion.

And Ahab, he too was standing on his quarter-deck, shaggy and black,

with a stubborn gloom; and as the two ships crossed each other's

wakes--one all jubilations for things passed, the other all forebodings

as to things to come--their two captains in themselves impersonated the

whole striking contrast of the scene.

"Come aboard, come aboard!" cried the gay Bachelor's commander, lifting

a glass and a bottle in the air.

"Hast seen the White Whale?" gritted Ahab in reply.

"No; only heard of him; but don't believe in him at all," said the other

good-humoredly. "Come aboard!"

"Thou art too damned jolly. Sail on. Hast lost any men?"

"Not enough to speak of--two islanders, that's all;--but come aboard,

old hearty, come along. I'll soon take that black from your brow. Come

along, will ye (merry's the play); a full ship and homeward-bound."

"How wondrous familiar is a fool!" muttered Ahab; then aloud, "Thou art

a full ship and homeward bound, thou sayst; well, then, call me an empty

ship, and outward-bound. So go thy ways, and I will mine. Forward there!

Set all sail, and keep her to the wind!"

And thus, while the one ship went cheerily before the breeze, the other

stubbornly fought against it; and so the two vessels parted; the crew

of the Pequod looking with grave, lingering glances towards the receding

Bachelor; but the Bachelor's men never heeding their gaze for the lively

revelry they were in. And as Ahab, leaning over the taffrail, eyed the

homewardbound craft, he took from his pocket a small vial of sand, and

then looking from the ship to the vial, seemed thereby bringing two

remote associations together, for that vial was filled with Nantucket

soundings.

CHAPTER 116. The Dying Whale.

Not seldom in this life, when, on the right side, fortune's favourites

sail close by us, we, though all adroop before, catch somewhat of the

rushing breeze, and joyfully feel our bagging sails fill out. So seemed

it with the Pequod. For next day after encountering the gay Bachelor,

whales were seen and four were slain; and one of them by Ahab.

It was far down the afternoon; and when all the spearings of the crimson

fight were done: and floating in the lovely sunset sea and sky, sun

and whale both stilly died together; then, such a sweetness and such

plaintiveness, such inwreathing orisons curled up in that rosy air, that

it almost seemed as if far over from the deep green convent valleys of

the Manilla isles, the Spanish land-breeze, wantonly turned sailor, had

gone to sea, freighted with these vesper hymns.

Soothed again, but only soothed to deeper gloom, Ahab, who had sterned

off from the whale, sat intently watching his final wanings from the now

tranquil boat. For that strange spectacle observable in all sperm whales

dying--the turning sunwards of the head, and so expiring--that strange

spectacle, beheld of such a placid evening, somehow to Ahab conveyed a

wondrousness unknown before.

"He turns and turns him to it,--how slowly, but how steadfastly, his

homage-rendering and invoking brow, with his last dying motions. He too

worships fire; most faithful, broad, baronial vassal of the sun!--Oh

that these too-favouring eyes should see these too-favouring sights.

Look! here, far water-locked; beyond all hum of human weal or woe;

in these most candid and impartial seas; where to traditions no rocks

furnish tablets; where for long Chinese ages, the billows have still

rolled on speechless and unspoken to, as stars that shine upon the

Niger's unknown source; here, too, life dies sunwards full of faith; but

see! no sooner dead, than death whirls round the corpse, and it heads

some other way.

"Oh, thou dark Hindoo half of nature, who of drowned bones hast builded

thy separate throne somewhere in the heart of these unverdured seas;

thou art an infidel, thou queen, and too truly speakest to me in the

wide-slaughtering Typhoon, and the hushed burial of its after calm. Nor

has this thy whale sunwards turned his dying head, and then gone round

again, without a lesson to me.

"Oh, trebly hooped and welded hip of power! Oh, high aspiring, rainbowed

jet!--that one strivest, this one jettest all in vain! In vain, oh

whale, dost thou seek intercedings with yon all-quickening sun, that

only calls forth life, but gives it not again. Yet dost thou, darker

half, rock me with a prouder, if a darker faith. All thy unnamable

imminglings float beneath me here; I am buoyed by breaths of once living

things, exhaled as air, but water now.

"Then hail, for ever hail, O sea, in whose eternal tossings the wild

fowl finds his only rest. Born of earth, yet suckled by the sea; though

hill and valley mothered me, ye billows are my foster-brothers!"

CHAPTER 117. The Whale Watch.

The four whales slain that evening had died wide apart; one, far to

windward; one, less distant, to leeward; one ahead; one astern. These

last three were brought alongside ere nightfall; but the windward one

could not be reached till morning; and the boat that had killed it lay

by its side all night; and that boat was Ahab's.

The waif-pole was thrust upright into the dead whale's spout-hole; and

the lantern hanging from its top, cast a troubled flickering glare

upon the black, glossy back, and far out upon the midnight waves, which

gently chafed the whale's broad flank, like soft surf upon a beach.

Ahab and all his boat's crew seemed asleep but the Parsee; who crouching

in the bow, sat watching the sharks, that spectrally played round the

whale, and tapped the light cedar planks with their tails. A sound

like the moaning in squadrons over Asphaltites of unforgiven ghosts of

Gomorrah, ran shuddering through the air.

Started from his slumbers, Ahab, face to face, saw the Parsee; and

hooped round by the gloom of the night they seemed the last men in a

flooded world. "I have dreamed it again," said he.

"Of the hearses? Have I not said, old man, that neither hearse nor

coffin can be thine?"

"And who are hearsed that die on the sea?"

"But I said, old man, that ere thou couldst die on this voyage, two

hearses must verily be seen by thee on the sea; the first not made by

mortal hands; and the visible wood of the last one must be grown in

America."

"Aye, aye! a strange sight that, Parsee:--a hearse and its plumes

floating over the ocean with the waves for the pall-bearers. Ha! Such a

sight we shall not soon see."

"Believe it or not, thou canst not die till it be seen, old man."

"And what was that saying about thyself?"

"Though it come to the last, I shall still go before thee thy pilot."

"And when thou art so gone before--if that ever befall--then ere I can

follow, thou must still appear to me, to pilot me still?--Was it not

so? Well, then, did I believe all ye say, oh my pilot! I have here two

pledges that I shall yet slay Moby Dick and survive it."

"Take another pledge, old man," said the Parsee, as his eyes lighted up

like fire-flies in the gloom--"Hemp only can kill thee."

"The gallows, ye mean.--I am immortal then, on land and on sea," cried

Ahab, with a laugh of derision;--"Immortal on land and on sea!"

Both were silent again, as one man. The grey dawn came on, and the

slumbering crew arose from the boat's bottom, and ere noon the dead

whale was brought to the ship.

CHAPTER 118. The Quadrant.

The season for the Line at length drew near; and every day when Ahab,

coming from his cabin, cast his eyes aloft, the vigilant helmsman would

ostentatiously handle his spokes, and the eager mariners quickly run to

the braces, and would stand there with all their eyes centrally fixed

on the nailed doubloon; impatient for the order to point the ship's

prow for the equator. In good time the order came. It was hard upon high

noon; and Ahab, seated in the bows of his high-hoisted boat, was

about taking his wonted daily observation of the sun to determine his

latitude.

Now, in that Japanese sea, the days in summer are as freshets of

effulgences. That unblinkingly vivid Japanese sun seems the blazing

focus of the glassy ocean's immeasurable burning-glass. The sky looks

lacquered; clouds there are none; the horizon floats; and this nakedness

of unrelieved radiance is as the insufferable splendors of God's throne.

Well that Ahab's quadrant was furnished with coloured glasses, through

which to take sight of that solar fire. So, swinging his seated form

to the roll of the ship, and with his astrological-looking instrument

placed to his eye, he remained in that posture for some moments to

catch the precise instant when the sun should gain its precise meridian.

Meantime while his whole attention was absorbed, the Parsee was kneeling

beneath him on the ship's deck, and with face thrown up like Ahab's,

was eyeing the same sun with him; only the lids of his eyes half hooded

their orbs, and his wild face was subdued to an earthly passionlessness.

At length the desired observation was taken; and with his pencil upon

his ivory leg, Ahab soon calculated what his latitude must be at that

precise instant. Then falling into a moment's revery, he again looked up

towards the sun and murmured to himself: "Thou sea-mark! thou high and

mighty Pilot! thou tellest me truly where I AM--but canst thou cast the

least hint where I SHALL be? Or canst thou tell where some other thing

besides me is this moment living? Where is Moby Dick? This instant thou

must be eyeing him. These eyes of mine look into the very eye that is

even now beholding him; aye, and into the eye that is even now equally

beholding the objects on the unknown, thither side of thee, thou sun!"

Then gazing at his quadrant, and handling, one after the other, its

numerous cabalistical contrivances, he pondered again, and muttered:

"Foolish toy! babies' plaything of haughty Admirals, and Commodores, and

Captains; the world brags of thee, of thy cunning and might; but what

after all canst thou do, but tell the poor, pitiful point, where thou

thyself happenest to be on this wide planet, and the hand that holds

thee: no! not one jot more! Thou canst not tell where one drop of water

or one grain of sand will be to-morrow noon; and yet with thy impotence

thou insultest the sun! Science! Curse thee, thou vain toy; and cursed

be all the things that cast man's eyes aloft to that heaven, whose live

vividness but scorches him, as these old eyes are even now scorched

with thy light, O sun! Level by nature to this earth's horizon are the

glances of man's eyes; not shot from the crown of his head, as if God

had meant him to gaze on his firmament. Curse thee, thou quadrant!"

dashing it to the deck, "no longer will I guide my earthly way by thee;

the level ship's compass, and the level deadreckoning, by log and by

line; THESE shall conduct me, and show me my place on the sea. Aye,"

lighting from the boat to the deck, "thus I trample on thee, thou paltry

thing that feebly pointest on high; thus I split and destroy thee!"

As the frantic old man thus spoke and thus trampled with his live

and dead feet, a sneering triumph that seemed meant for Ahab, and a

fatalistic despair that seemed meant for himself--these passed over

the mute, motionless Parsee's face. Unobserved he rose and glided away;

while, awestruck by the aspect of their commander, the seamen clustered

together on the forecastle, till Ahab, troubledly pacing the deck,

shouted out--"To the braces! Up helm!--square in!"

In an instant the yards swung round; and as the ship half-wheeled upon

her heel, her three firm-seated graceful masts erectly poised upon

her long, ribbed hull, seemed as the three Horatii pirouetting on one

sufficient steed.

Standing between the knight-heads, Starbuck watched the Pequod's

tumultuous way, and Ahab's also, as he went lurching along the deck.

"I have sat before the dense coal fire and watched it all aglow, full of

its tormented flaming life; and I have seen it wane at last, down, down,

to dumbest dust. Old man of oceans! of all this fiery life of thine,

what will at length remain but one little heap of ashes!"

"Aye," cried Stubb, "but sea-coal ashes--mind ye that, Mr.

Starbuck--sea-coal, not your common charcoal. Well, well; I heard Ahab

mutter, 'Here some one thrusts these cards into these old hands of mine;

swears that I must play them, and no others.' And damn me, Ahab, but

thou actest right; live in the game, and die in it!"

CHAPTER 119. The Candles.

Warmest climes but nurse the cruellest fangs: the tiger of Bengal

crouches in spiced groves of ceaseless verdure. Skies the most effulgent

but basket the deadliest thunders: gorgeous Cuba knows tornadoes

that never swept tame northern lands. So, too, it is, that in these

resplendent Japanese seas the mariner encounters the direst of all

storms, the Typhoon. It will sometimes burst from out that cloudless

sky, like an exploding bomb upon a dazed and sleepy town.

Towards evening of that day, the Pequod was torn of her canvas, and

bare-poled was left to fight a Typhoon which had struck her directly

ahead. When darkness came on, sky and sea roared and split with the

thunder, and blazed with the lightning, that showed the disabled masts

fluttering here and there with the rags which the first fury of the

tempest had left for its after sport.

Holding by a shroud, Starbuck was standing on the quarter-deck; at every

flash of the lightning glancing aloft, to see what additional disaster

might have befallen the intricate hamper there; while Stubb and Flask

were directing the men in the higher hoisting and firmer lashing of the

boats. But all their pains seemed naught. Though lifted to the very

top of the cranes, the windward quarter boat (Ahab's) did not escape.

A great rolling sea, dashing high up against the reeling ship's high

teetering side, stove in the boat's bottom at the stern, and left it

again, all dripping through like a sieve.

"Bad work, bad work! Mr. Starbuck," said Stubb, regarding the wreck,

"but the sea will have its way. Stubb, for one, can't fight it. You see,

Mr. Starbuck, a wave has such a great long start before it leaps, all

round the world it runs, and then comes the spring! But as for me, all

the start I have to meet it, is just across the deck here. But never

mind; it's all in fun: so the old song says;"--(SINGS.)

Oh! jolly is the gale,

And a joker is the whale,

A' flourishin' his tail,--

Such a funny, sporty, gamy, jesty, joky, hoky-poky lad, is the Ocean, oh!

The scud all a flyin',

That's his flip only foamin';

When he stirs in the spicin',--

Such a funny, sporty, gamy, jesty, joky, hoky-poky lad, is the Ocean, oh!

Thunder splits the ships,

But he only smacks his lips,

A tastin' of this flip,--

Such a funny, sporty, gamy, jesty, joky, hoky-poky lad, is the Ocean, oh!

"Avast Stubb," cried Starbuck, "let the Typhoon sing, and strike his

harp here in our rigging; but if thou art a brave man thou wilt hold thy

peace."

"But I am not a brave man; never said I was a brave man; I am a coward;

and I sing to keep up my spirits. And I tell you what it is, Mr.

Starbuck, there's no way to stop my singing in this world but to cut my

throat. And when that's done, ten to one I sing ye the doxology for a

wind-up."

"Madman! look through my eyes if thou hast none of thine own."

"What! how can you see better of a dark night than anybody else, never

mind how foolish?"

"Here!" cried Starbuck, seizing Stubb by the shoulder, and pointing his

hand towards the weather bow, "markest thou not that the gale comes from

the eastward, the very course Ahab is to run for Moby Dick? the very

course he swung to this day noon? now mark his boat there; where is

that stove? In the stern-sheets, man; where he is wont to stand--his

stand-point is stove, man! Now jump overboard, and sing away, if thou

must!

"I don't half understand ye: what's in the wind?"

"Yes, yes, round the Cape of Good Hope is the shortest way to

Nantucket," soliloquized Starbuck suddenly, heedless of Stubb's

question. "The gale that now hammers at us to stave us, we can turn it

into a fair wind that will drive us towards home. Yonder, to windward,

all is blackness of doom; but to leeward, homeward--I see it lightens up

there; but not with the lightning."

At that moment in one of the intervals of profound darkness, following

the flashes, a voice was heard at his side; and almost at the same

instant a volley of thunder peals rolled overhead.

"Who's there?"

"Old Thunder!" said Ahab, groping his way along the bulwarks to his

pivot-hole; but suddenly finding his path made plain to him by elbowed

lances of fire.

Now, as the lightning rod to a spire on shore is intended to carry off

the perilous fluid into the soil; so the kindred rod which at sea some

ships carry to each mast, is intended to conduct it into the water. But

as this conductor must descend to considerable depth, that its end may

avoid all contact with the hull; and as moreover, if kept constantly

towing there, it would be liable to many mishaps, besides interfering

not a little with some of the rigging, and more or less impeding the

vessel's way in the water; because of all this, the lower parts of a

ship's lightning-rods are not always overboard; but are generally made

in long slender links, so as to be the more readily hauled up into the

chains outside, or thrown down into the sea, as occasion may require.

"The rods! the rods!" cried Starbuck to the crew, suddenly admonished to

vigilance by the vivid lightning that had just been darting flambeaux,

to light Ahab to his post. "Are they overboard? drop them over, fore and

aft. Quick!"

"Avast!" cried Ahab; "let's have fair play here, though we be the weaker

side. Yet I'll contribute to raise rods on the Himmalehs and Andes, that

all the world may be secured; but out on privileges! Let them be, sir."

"Look aloft!" cried Starbuck. "The corpusants! the corpusants!"

All the yard-arms were tipped with a pallid fire; and touched at each

tri-pointed lightning-rod-end with three tapering white flames, each of

the three tall masts was silently burning in that sulphurous air, like

three gigantic wax tapers before an altar.

"Blast the boat! let it go!" cried Stubb at this instant, as a swashing

sea heaved up under his own little craft, so that its gunwale violently

jammed his hand, as he was passing a lashing. "Blast it!"--but

slipping backward on the deck, his uplifted eyes caught the flames; and

immediately shifting his tone he cried--"The corpusants have mercy on us

all!"

To sailors, oaths are household words; they will swear in the trance of

the calm, and in the teeth of the tempest; they will imprecate curses

from the topsail-yard-arms, when most they teeter over to a seething

sea; but in all my voyagings, seldom have I heard a common oath when

God's burning finger has been laid on the ship; when His "Mene, Mene,

Tekel Upharsin" has been woven into the shrouds and the cordage.

While this pallidness was burning aloft, few words were heard from the

enchanted crew; who in one thick cluster stood on the forecastle,

all their eyes gleaming in that pale phosphorescence, like a far away

constellation of stars. Relieved against the ghostly light, the gigantic

jet negro, Daggoo, loomed up to thrice his real stature, and seemed

the black cloud from which the thunder had come. The parted mouth of

Tashtego revealed his shark-white teeth, which strangely gleamed as

if they too had been tipped by corpusants; while lit up by the

preternatural light, Queequeg's tattooing burned like Satanic blue

flames on his body.

The tableau all waned at last with the pallidness aloft; and once more

the Pequod and every soul on her decks were wrapped in a pall. A moment

or two passed, when Starbuck, going forward, pushed against some one. It

was Stubb. "What thinkest thou now, man; I heard thy cry; it was not the

same in the song."

"No, no, it wasn't; I said the corpusants have mercy on us all; and I

hope they will, still. But do they only have mercy on long faces?--have

they no bowels for a laugh? And look ye, Mr. Starbuck--but it's too dark

to look. Hear me, then: I take that mast-head flame we saw for a sign

of good luck; for those masts are rooted in a hold that is going to be

chock a' block with sperm-oil, d'ye see; and so, all that sperm will

work up into the masts, like sap in a tree. Yes, our three masts will

yet be as three spermaceti candles--that's the good promise we saw."

At that moment Starbuck caught sight of Stubb's face slowly beginning

to glimmer into sight. Glancing upwards, he cried: "See! see!" and once

more the high tapering flames were beheld with what seemed redoubled

supernaturalness in their pallor.

"The corpusants have mercy on us all," cried Stubb, again.

At the base of the mainmast, full beneath the doubloon and the flame,

the Parsee was kneeling in Ahab's front, but with his head bowed away

from him; while near by, from the arched and overhanging rigging, where

they had just been engaged securing a spar, a number of the seamen,

arrested by the glare, now cohered together, and hung pendulous, like a

knot of numbed wasps from a drooping, orchard twig. In various enchanted

attitudes, like the standing, or stepping, or running skeletons in

Herculaneum, others remained rooted to the deck; but all their eyes

upcast.

"Aye, aye, men!" cried Ahab. "Look up at it; mark it well; the white

flame but lights the way to the White Whale! Hand me those mainmast

links there; I would fain feel this pulse, and let mine beat against it;

blood against fire! So."

Then turning--the last link held fast in his left hand, he put his foot

upon the Parsee; and with fixed upward eye, and high-flung right arm, he

stood erect before the lofty tri-pointed trinity of flames.

"Oh! thou clear spirit of clear fire, whom on these seas I as Persian

once did worship, till in the sacramental act so burned by thee, that to

this hour I bear the scar; I now know thee, thou clear spirit, and I now

know that thy right worship is defiance. To neither love nor reverence

wilt thou be kind; and e'en for hate thou canst but kill; and all

are killed. No fearless fool now fronts thee. I own thy speechless,

placeless power; but to the last gasp of my earthquake life will

dispute its unconditional, unintegral mastery in me. In the midst of the

personified impersonal, a personality stands here. Though but a point at

best; whencesoe'er I came; wheresoe'er I go; yet while I earthly live,

the queenly personality lives in me, and feels her royal rights. But war

is pain, and hate is woe. Come in thy lowest form of love, and I will

kneel and kiss thee; but at thy highest, come as mere supernal power;

and though thou launchest navies of full-freighted worlds, there's that

in here that still remains indifferent. Oh, thou clear spirit, of thy

fire thou madest me, and like a true child of fire, I breathe it back to

thee."

[SUDDEN, REPEATED FLASHES OF LIGHTNING; THE NINE FLAMES LEAP LENGTHWISE

TO THRICE THEIR PREVIOUS HEIGHT; AHAB, WITH THE REST, CLOSES HIS EYES,

HIS RIGHT HAND PRESSED HARD UPON THEM.]

"I own thy speechless, placeless power; said I not so? Nor was it wrung

from me; nor do I now drop these links. Thou canst blind; but I can then

grope. Thou canst consume; but I can then be ashes. Take the homage of

these poor eyes, and shutter-hands. I would not take it. The lightning

flashes through my skull; mine eye-balls ache and ache; my whole beaten

brain seems as beheaded, and rolling on some stunning ground. Oh, oh!

Yet blindfold, yet will I talk to thee. Light though thou be, thou

leapest out of darkness; but I am darkness leaping out of light, leaping

out of thee! The javelins cease; open eyes; see, or not? There burn the

flames! Oh, thou magnanimous! now I do glory in my genealogy. But thou

art but my fiery father; my sweet mother, I know not. Oh, cruel! what

hast thou done with her? There lies my puzzle; but thine is greater.

Thou knowest not how came ye, hence callest thyself unbegotten;

certainly knowest not thy beginning, hence callest thyself unbegun. I

know that of me, which thou knowest not of thyself, oh, thou omnipotent.

There is some unsuffusing thing beyond thee, thou clear spirit, to whom

all thy eternity is but time, all thy creativeness mechanical. Through

thee, thy flaming self, my scorched eyes do dimly see it. Oh, thou

foundling fire, thou hermit immemorial, thou too hast thy incommunicable

riddle, thy unparticipated grief. Here again with haughty agony, I read

my sire. Leap! leap up, and lick the sky! I leap with thee; I burn with

thee; would fain be welded with thee; defyingly I worship thee!"

"The boat! the boat!" cried Starbuck, "look at thy boat, old man!"

Ahab's harpoon, the one forged at Perth's fire, remained firmly lashed

in its conspicuous crotch, so that it projected beyond his whale-boat's

bow; but the sea that had stove its bottom had caused the loose leather

sheath to drop off; and from the keen steel barb there now came a

levelled flame of pale, forked fire. As the silent harpoon burned there

like a serpent's tongue, Starbuck grasped Ahab by the arm--"God, God

is against thee, old man; forbear! 'tis an ill voyage! ill begun, ill

continued; let me square the yards, while we may, old man, and make a

fair wind of it homewards, to go on a better voyage than this."

Overhearing Starbuck, the panic-stricken crew instantly ran to the

braces--though not a sail was left aloft. For the moment all the aghast

mate's thoughts seemed theirs; they raised a half mutinous cry. But

dashing the rattling lightning links to the deck, and snatching the

burning harpoon, Ahab waved it like a torch among them; swearing to

transfix with it the first sailor that but cast loose a rope's end.

Petrified by his aspect, and still more shrinking from the fiery dart

that he held, the men fell back in dismay, and Ahab again spoke:--

"All your oaths to hunt the White Whale are as binding as mine; and

heart, soul, and body, lungs and life, old Ahab is bound. And that ye

may know to what tune this heart beats; look ye here; thus I blow out

the last fear!" And with one blast of his breath he extinguished the

flame.

As in the hurricane that sweeps the plain, men fly the neighborhood of

some lone, gigantic elm, whose very height and strength but render it so

much the more unsafe, because so much the more a mark for thunderbolts;

so at those last words of Ahab's many of the mariners did run from him

in a terror of dismay.

CHAPTER 120. The Deck Towards the End of the First Night Watch.

AHAB STANDING BY THE HELM. STARBUCK APPROACHING HIM.

"We must send down the main-top-sail yard, sir. The band is working loose

and the lee lift is half-stranded. Shall I strike it, sir?"

"Strike nothing; lash it. If I had sky-sail poles, I'd sway them up

now."

"Sir!--in God's name!--sir?"

"Well."

"The anchors are working, sir. Shall I get them inboard?"

"Strike nothing, and stir nothing, but lash everything. The wind rises,

but it has not got up to my table-lands yet. Quick, and see to it.--By

masts and keels! he takes me for the hunch-backed skipper of some

coasting smack. Send down my main-top-sail yard! Ho, gluepots! Loftiest

trucks were made for wildest winds, and this brain-truck of mine now

sails amid the cloud-scud. Shall I strike that? Oh, none but cowards

send down their brain-trucks in tempest time. What a hooroosh aloft

there! I would e'en take it for sublime, did I not know that the colic

is a noisy malady. Oh, take medicine, take medicine!"

CHAPTER 121. Midnight.--The Forecastle Bulwarks.

STUBB AND FLASK MOUNTED ON THEM, AND PASSING ADDITIONAL LASHINGS OVER

THE ANCHORS THERE HANGING.

"No, Stubb; you may pound that knot there as much as you please, but you

will never pound into me what you were just now saying. And how long

ago is it since you said the very contrary? Didn't you once say that

whatever ship Ahab sails in, that ship should pay something extra on its

insurance policy, just as though it were loaded with powder barrels aft

and boxes of lucifers forward? Stop, now; didn't you say so?"

"Well, suppose I did? What then? I've part changed my flesh since that

time, why not my mind? Besides, supposing we ARE loaded with powder

barrels aft and lucifers forward; how the devil could the lucifers get

afire in this drenching spray here? Why, my little man, you have

pretty red hair, but you couldn't get afire now. Shake yourself; you're

Aquarius, or the water-bearer, Flask; might fill pitchers at your coat

collar. Don't you see, then, that for these extra risks the Marine

Insurance companies have extra guarantees? Here are hydrants, Flask. But

hark, again, and I'll answer ye the other thing. First take your leg off

from the crown of the anchor here, though, so I can pass the rope;

now listen. What's the mighty difference between holding a mast's

lightning-rod in the storm, and standing close by a mast that hasn't

got any lightning-rod at all in a storm? Don't you see, you timber-head,

that no harm can come to the holder of the rod, unless the mast is first

struck? What are you talking about, then? Not one ship in a hundred

carries rods, and Ahab,--aye, man, and all of us,--were in no more

danger then, in my poor opinion, than all the crews in ten thousand

ships now sailing the seas. Why, you King-Post, you, I suppose you would

have every man in the world go about with a small lightning-rod running

up the corner of his hat, like a militia officer's skewered feather,

and trailing behind like his sash. Why don't ye be sensible, Flask? it's

easy to be sensible; why don't ye, then? any man with half an eye can be

sensible."

"I don't know that, Stubb. You sometimes find it rather hard."

"Yes, when a fellow's soaked through, it's hard to be sensible, that's

a fact. And I am about drenched with this spray. Never mind; catch the

turn there, and pass it. Seems to me we are lashing down these anchors

now as if they were never going to be used again. Tying these two

anchors here, Flask, seems like tying a man's hands behind him. And what

big generous hands they are, to be sure. These are your iron fists,

hey? What a hold they have, too! I wonder, Flask, whether the world is

anchored anywhere; if she is, she swings with an uncommon long cable,

though. There, hammer that knot down, and we've done. So; next to

touching land, lighting on deck is the most satisfactory. I say, just

wring out my jacket skirts, will ye? Thank ye. They laugh at long-togs

so, Flask; but seems to me, a Long tailed coat ought always to be worn

in all storms afloat. The tails tapering down that way, serve to carry

off the water, d'ye see. Same with cocked hats; the cocks form gable-end

eave-troughs, Flask. No more monkey-jackets and tarpaulins for me; I

must mount a swallow-tail, and drive down a beaver; so. Halloa! whew!

there goes my tarpaulin overboard; Lord, Lord, that the winds that come

from heaven should be so unmannerly! This is a nasty night, lad."

CHAPTER 122. Midnight Aloft.--Thunder and Lightning.

THE MAIN-TOP-SAIL YARD.--TASHTEGO PASSING NEW LASHINGS AROUND IT.

"Um, um, um. Stop that thunder! Plenty too much thunder up here. What's

the use of thunder? Um, um, um. We don't want thunder; we want rum; give

us a glass of rum. Um, um, um!"

CHAPTER 123. The Musket.

During the most violent shocks of the Typhoon, the man at the Pequod's

jaw-bone tiller had several times been reelingly hurled to the deck by

its spasmodic motions, even though preventer tackles had been attached

to it--for they were slack--because some play to the tiller was

indispensable.

In a severe gale like this, while the ship is but a tossed shuttlecock

to the blast, it is by no means uncommon to see the needles in the

compasses, at intervals, go round and round. It was thus with the

Pequod's; at almost every shock the helmsman had not failed to notice

the whirling velocity with which they revolved upon the cards; it is

a sight that hardly anyone can behold without some sort of unwonted

emotion.

Some hours after midnight, the Typhoon abated so much, that through the

strenuous exertions of Starbuck and Stubb--one engaged forward and the

other aft--the shivered remnants of the jib and fore and main-top-sails

were cut adrift from the spars, and went eddying away to leeward, like

the feathers of an albatross, which sometimes are cast to the winds when

that storm-tossed bird is on the wing.

The three corresponding new sails were now bent and reefed, and a

storm-trysail was set further aft; so that the ship soon went through

the water with some precision again; and the course--for the present,

East-south-east--which he was to steer, if practicable, was once more

given to the helmsman. For during the violence of the gale, he had only

steered according to its vicissitudes. But as he was now bringing the

ship as near her course as possible, watching the compass meanwhile, lo!

a good sign! the wind seemed coming round astern; aye, the foul breeze

became fair!

Instantly the yards were squared, to the lively song of "HO! THE

FAIR WIND! OH-YE-HO, CHEERLY MEN!" the crew singing for joy, that so

promising an event should so soon have falsified the evil portents

preceding it.

In compliance with the standing order of his commander--to report

immediately, and at any one of the twenty-four hours, any decided change

in the affairs of the deck,--Starbuck had no sooner trimmed the yards to

the breeze--however reluctantly and gloomily,--than he mechanically went

below to apprise Captain Ahab of the circumstance.

Ere knocking at his state-room, he involuntarily paused before it

a moment. The cabin lamp--taking long swings this way and that--was

burning fitfully, and casting fitful shadows upon the old man's bolted

door,--a thin one, with fixed blinds inserted, in place of upper panels.

The isolated subterraneousness of the cabin made a certain humming

silence to reign there, though it was hooped round by all the roar of

the elements. The loaded muskets in the rack were shiningly revealed, as

they stood upright against the forward bulkhead. Starbuck was an honest,

upright man; but out of Starbuck's heart, at that instant when he saw

the muskets, there strangely evolved an evil thought; but so blent with

its neutral or good accompaniments that for the instant he hardly knew

it for itself.

"He would have shot me once," he murmured, "yes, there's the very musket

that he pointed at me;--that one with the studded stock; let me touch

it--lift it. Strange, that I, who have handled so many deadly lances,

strange, that I should shake so now. Loaded? I must see. Aye, aye; and

powder in the pan;--that's not good. Best spill it?--wait. I'll cure

myself of this. I'll hold the musket boldly while I think.--I come

to report a fair wind to him. But how fair? Fair for death and

doom,--THAT'S fair for Moby Dick. It's a fair wind that's only fair for

that accursed fish.--The very tube he pointed at me!--the very one;

THIS one--I hold it here; he would have killed me with the very thing I

handle now.--Aye and he would fain kill all his crew. Does he not say

he will not strike his spars to any gale? Has he not dashed his heavenly

quadrant? and in these same perilous seas, gropes he not his way by mere

dead reckoning of the error-abounding log? and in this very Typhoon, did

he not swear that he would have no lightning-rods? But shall this crazed

old man be tamely suffered to drag a whole ship's company down to doom

with him?--Yes, it would make him the wilful murderer of thirty men and

more, if this ship come to any deadly harm; and come to deadly harm, my

soul swears this ship will, if Ahab have his way. If, then, he were this

instant--put aside, that crime would not be his. Ha! is he muttering in

his sleep? Yes, just there,--in there, he's sleeping. Sleeping? aye,

but still alive, and soon awake again. I can't withstand thee, then, old

man. Not reasoning; not remonstrance; not entreaty wilt thou hearken to;

all this thou scornest. Flat obedience to thy own flat commands, this is

all thou breathest. Aye, and say'st the men have vow'd thy vow; say'st

all of us are Ahabs. Great God forbid!--But is there no other way? no

lawful way?--Make him a prisoner to be taken home? What! hope to wrest

this old man's living power from his own living hands? Only a fool

would try it. Say he were pinioned even; knotted all over with ropes

and hawsers; chained down to ring-bolts on this cabin floor; he would

be more hideous than a caged tiger, then. I could not endure the

sight; could not possibly fly his howlings; all comfort, sleep itself,

inestimable reason would leave me on the long intolerable voyage. What,

then, remains? The land is hundreds of leagues away, and locked Japan

the nearest. I stand alone here upon an open sea, with two oceans and

a whole continent between me and law.--Aye, aye, 'tis so.--Is heaven

a murderer when its lightning strikes a would-be murderer in his bed,

tindering sheets and skin together?--And would I be a murderer, then,

if"--and slowly, stealthily, and half sideways looking, he placed the

loaded musket's end against the door.

"On this level, Ahab's hammock swings within; his head this way. A

touch, and Starbuck may survive to hug his wife and child again.--Oh

Mary! Mary!--boy! boy! boy!--But if I wake thee not to death, old man,

who can tell to what unsounded deeps Starbuck's body this day week

may sink, with all the crew! Great God, where art Thou? Shall I? shall

I?--The wind has gone down and shifted, sir; the fore and main topsails

are reefed and set; she heads her course."

"Stern all! Oh Moby Dick, I clutch thy heart at last!"

Such were the sounds that now came hurtling from out the old man's

tormented sleep, as if Starbuck's voice had caused the long dumb dream

to speak.

The yet levelled musket shook like a drunkard's arm against the panel;

Starbuck seemed wrestling with an angel; but turning from the door, he

placed the death-tube in its rack, and left the place.

"He's too sound asleep, Mr. Stubb; go thou down, and wake him, and tell

him. I must see to the deck here. Thou know'st what to say."

CHAPTER 124. The Needle.

Next morning the not-yet-subsided sea rolled in long slow billows of

mighty bulk, and striving in the Pequod's gurgling track, pushed her on

like giants' palms outspread. The strong, unstaggering breeze abounded

so, that sky and air seemed vast outbellying sails; the whole world

boomed before the wind. Muffled in the full morning light, the invisible

sun was only known by the spread intensity of his place; where his

bayonet rays moved on in stacks. Emblazonings, as of crowned Babylonian

kings and queens, reigned over everything. The sea was as a crucible of

molten gold, that bubblingly leaps with light and heat.

Long maintaining an enchanted silence, Ahab stood apart; and every time

the tetering ship loweringly pitched down her bowsprit, he turned to eye

the bright sun's rays produced ahead; and when she profoundly settled by

the stern, he turned behind, and saw the sun's rearward place, and how

the same yellow rays were blending with his undeviating wake.

"Ha, ha, my ship! thou mightest well be taken now for the sea-chariot of

the sun. Ho, ho! all ye nations before my prow, I bring the sun to ye!

Yoke on the further billows; hallo! a tandem, I drive the sea!"

But suddenly reined back by some counter thought, he hurried towards the

helm, huskily demanding how the ship was heading.

"East-sou-east, sir," said the frightened steersman.

"Thou liest!" smiting him with his clenched fist. "Heading East at this

hour in the morning, and the sun astern?"

Upon this every soul was confounded; for the phenomenon just then

observed by Ahab had unaccountably escaped every one else; but its very

blinding palpableness must have been the cause.

Thrusting his head half way into the binnacle, Ahab caught one glimpse

of the compasses; his uplifted arm slowly fell; for a moment he almost

seemed to stagger. Standing behind him Starbuck looked, and lo! the two

compasses pointed East, and the Pequod was as infallibly going West.

But ere the first wild alarm could get out abroad among the crew,

the old man with a rigid laugh exclaimed, "I have it! It has happened

before. Mr. Starbuck, last night's thunder turned our compasses--that's

all. Thou hast before now heard of such a thing, I take it."

"Aye; but never before has it happened to me, sir," said the pale mate,

gloomily.

Here, it must needs be said, that accidents like this have in more than

one case occurred to ships in violent storms. The magnetic energy, as

developed in the mariner's needle, is, as all know, essentially one with

the electricity beheld in heaven; hence it is not to be much marvelled

at, that such things should be. Instances where the lightning has

actually struck the vessel, so as to smite down some of the spars and

rigging, the effect upon the needle has at times been still more fatal;

all its loadstone virtue being annihilated, so that the before magnetic

steel was of no more use than an old wife's knitting needle. But in

either case, the needle never again, of itself, recovers the original

virtue thus marred or lost; and if the binnacle compasses be affected,

the same fate reaches all the others that may be in the ship; even were

the lowermost one inserted into the kelson.

Deliberately standing before the binnacle, and eyeing the transpointed

compasses, the old man, with the sharp of his extended hand, now took

the precise bearing of the sun, and satisfied that the needles were

exactly inverted, shouted out his orders for the ship's course to be

changed accordingly. The yards were hard up; and once more the Pequod

thrust her undaunted bows into the opposing wind, for the supposed fair

one had only been juggling her.

Meanwhile, whatever were his own secret thoughts, Starbuck said nothing,

but quietly he issued all requisite orders; while Stubb and Flask--who

in some small degree seemed then to be sharing his feelings--likewise

unmurmuringly acquiesced. As for the men, though some of them lowly

rumbled, their fear of Ahab was greater than their fear of Fate. But as

ever before, the pagan harpooneers remained almost wholly unimpressed;

or if impressed, it was only with a certain magnetism shot into their

congenial hearts from inflexible Ahab's.

For a space the old man walked the deck in rolling reveries. But

chancing to slip with his ivory heel, he saw the crushed copper

sight-tubes of the quadrant he had the day before dashed to the deck.

"Thou poor, proud heaven-gazer and sun's pilot! yesterday I wrecked

thee, and to-day the compasses would fain have wrecked me. So, so. But

Ahab is lord over the level loadstone yet. Mr. Starbuck--a lance without

a pole; a top-maul, and the smallest of the sail-maker's needles.

Quick!"

Accessory, perhaps, to the impulse dictating the thing he was now about

to do, were certain prudential motives, whose object might have been to

revive the spirits of his crew by a stroke of his subtile skill, in a

matter so wondrous as that of the inverted compasses. Besides, the old

man well knew that to steer by transpointed needles, though clumsily

practicable, was not a thing to be passed over by superstitious sailors,

without some shudderings and evil portents.

"Men," said he, steadily turning upon the crew, as the mate handed

him the things he had demanded, "my men, the thunder turned old Ahab's

needles; but out of this bit of steel Ahab can make one of his own, that

will point as true as any."

Abashed glances of servile wonder were exchanged by the sailors, as this

was said; and with fascinated eyes they awaited whatever magic might

follow. But Starbuck looked away.

With a blow from the top-maul Ahab knocked off the steel head of the

lance, and then handing to the mate the long iron rod remaining, bade

him hold it upright, without its touching the deck. Then, with the maul,

after repeatedly smiting the upper end of this iron rod, he placed the

blunted needle endwise on the top of it, and less strongly hammered

that, several times, the mate still holding the rod as before. Then

going through some small strange motions with it--whether indispensable

to the magnetizing of the steel, or merely intended to augment the awe

of the crew, is uncertain--he called for linen thread; and moving to the

binnacle, slipped out the two reversed needles there, and horizontally

suspended the sail-needle by its middle, over one of the compass-cards.

At first, the steel went round and round, quivering and vibrating at

either end; but at last it settled to its place, when Ahab, who had

been intently watching for this result, stepped frankly back from the

binnacle, and pointing his stretched arm towards it, exclaimed,--"Look

ye, for yourselves, if Ahab be not lord of the level loadstone! The sun

is East, and that compass swears it!"

One after another they peered in, for nothing but their own eyes could

persuade such ignorance as theirs, and one after another they slunk

away.

In his fiery eyes of scorn and triumph, you then saw Ahab in all his

fatal pride.

CHAPTER 125. The Log and Line.

While now the fated Pequod had been so long afloat this voyage, the log

and line had but very seldom been in use. Owing to a confident reliance

upon other means of determining the vessel's place, some merchantmen,

and many whalemen, especially when cruising, wholly neglect to heave the

log; though at the same time, and frequently more for form's sake than

anything else, regularly putting down upon the customary slate the

course steered by the ship, as well as the presumed average rate of

progression every hour. It had been thus with the Pequod. The wooden

reel and angular log attached hung, long untouched, just beneath the

railing of the after bulwarks. Rains and spray had damped it; sun and

wind had warped it; all the elements had combined to rot a thing that

hung so idly. But heedless of all this, his mood seized Ahab, as he

happened to glance upon the reel, not many hours after the magnet scene,

and he remembered how his quadrant was no more, and recalled his frantic

oath about the level log and line. The ship was sailing plungingly;

astern the billows rolled in riots.

"Forward, there! Heave the log!"

Two seamen came. The golden-hued Tahitian and the grizzly Manxman. "Take

the reel, one of ye, I'll heave."

They went towards the extreme stern, on the ship's lee side, where the

deck, with the oblique energy of the wind, was now almost dipping into

the creamy, sidelong-rushing sea.

The Manxman took the reel, and holding it high up, by the projecting

handle-ends of the spindle, round which the spool of line revolved, so

stood with the angular log hanging downwards, till Ahab advanced to him.

Ahab stood before him, and was lightly unwinding some thirty or forty

turns to form a preliminary hand-coil to toss overboard, when the old

Manxman, who was intently eyeing both him and the line, made bold to

speak.

"Sir, I mistrust it; this line looks far gone, long heat and wet have

spoiled it."

"'Twill hold, old gentleman. Long heat and wet, have they spoiled thee?

Thou seem'st to hold. Or, truer perhaps, life holds thee; not thou it."

"I hold the spool, sir. But just as my captain says. With these

grey hairs of mine 'tis not worth while disputing, 'specially with a

superior, who'll ne'er confess."

"What's that? There now's a patched professor in Queen Nature's

granite-founded College; but methinks he's too subservient. Where wert

thou born?"

"In the little rocky Isle of Man, sir."

"Excellent! Thou'st hit the world by that."

"I know not, sir, but I was born there."

"In the Isle of Man, hey? Well, the other way, it's good. Here's a man

from Man; a man born in once independent Man, and now unmanned of Man;

which is sucked in--by what? Up with the reel! The dead, blind wall

butts all inquiring heads at last. Up with it! So."

The log was heaved. The loose coils rapidly straightened out in a long

dragging line astern, and then, instantly, the reel began to whirl. In

turn, jerkingly raised and lowered by the rolling billows, the towing

resistance of the log caused the old reelman to stagger strangely.

"Hold hard!"

Snap! the overstrained line sagged down in one long festoon; the tugging

log was gone.

"I crush the quadrant, the thunder turns the needles, and now the mad

sea parts the log-line. But Ahab can mend all. Haul in here, Tahitian;

reel up, Manxman. And look ye, let the carpenter make another log, and

mend thou the line. See to it."

"There he goes now; to him nothing's happened; but to me, the skewer

seems loosening out of the middle of the world. Haul in, haul in,

Tahitian! These lines run whole, and whirling out: come in broken, and

dragging slow. Ha, Pip? come to help; eh, Pip?"

"Pip? whom call ye Pip? Pip jumped from the whale-boat. Pip's missing.

Let's see now if ye haven't fished him up here, fisherman. It drags

hard; I guess he's holding on. Jerk him, Tahiti! Jerk him off; we haul

in no cowards here. Ho! there's his arm just breaking water. A hatchet!

a hatchet! cut it off--we haul in no cowards here. Captain Ahab! sir,

sir! here's Pip, trying to get on board again."

"Peace, thou crazy loon," cried the Manxman, seizing him by the arm.

"Away from the quarter-deck!"

"The greater idiot ever scolds the lesser," muttered Ahab, advancing.

"Hands off from that holiness! Where sayest thou Pip was, boy?

"Astern there, sir, astern! Lo! lo!"

"And who art thou, boy? I see not my reflection in the vacant pupils of

thy eyes. Oh God! that man should be a thing for immortal souls to sieve

through! Who art thou, boy?"

"Bell-boy, sir; ship's-crier; ding, dong, ding! Pip! Pip! Pip!

One hundred pounds of clay reward for Pip; five feet high--looks

cowardly--quickest known by that! Ding, dong, ding! Who's seen Pip the

coward?"

"There can be no hearts above the snow-line. Oh, ye frozen heavens! look

down here. Ye did beget this luckless child, and have abandoned him,

ye creative libertines. Here, boy; Ahab's cabin shall be Pip's home

henceforth, while Ahab lives. Thou touchest my inmost centre, boy; thou

art tied to me by cords woven of my heart-strings. Come, let's down."

"What's this? here's velvet shark-skin," intently gazing at Ahab's hand,

and feeling it. "Ah, now, had poor Pip but felt so kind a thing as this,

perhaps he had ne'er been lost! This seems to me, sir, as a man-rope;

something that weak souls may hold by. Oh, sir, let old Perth now come

and rivet these two hands together; the black one with the white, for I

will not let this go."

"Oh, boy, nor will I thee, unless I should thereby drag thee to worse

horrors than are here. Come, then, to my cabin. Lo! ye believers in

gods all goodness, and in man all ill, lo you! see the omniscient gods

oblivious of suffering man; and man, though idiotic, and knowing not

what he does, yet full of the sweet things of love and gratitude. Come!

I feel prouder leading thee by thy black hand, than though I grasped an

Emperor's!"

"There go two daft ones now," muttered the old Manxman. "One daft with

strength, the other daft with weakness. But here's the end of the rotten

line--all dripping, too. Mend it, eh? I think we had best have a new

line altogether. I'll see Mr. Stubb about it."

CHAPTER 126. The Life-Buoy.

Steering now south-eastward by Ahab's levelled steel, and her progress

solely determined by Ahab's level log and line; the Pequod held on

her path towards the Equator. Making so long a passage through such

unfrequented waters, descrying no ships, and ere long, sideways impelled

by unvarying trade winds, over waves monotonously mild; all these seemed

the strange calm things preluding some riotous and desperate scene.

At last, when the ship drew near to the outskirts, as it were, of the

Equatorial fishing-ground, and in the deep darkness that goes before the

dawn, was sailing by a cluster of rocky islets; the watch--then headed

by Flask--was startled by a cry so plaintively wild and unearthly--like

half-articulated wailings of the ghosts of all Herod's murdered

Innocents--that one and all, they started from their reveries, and for

the space of some moments stood, or sat, or leaned all transfixedly

listening, like the carved Roman slave, while that wild cry remained

within hearing. The Christian or civilized part of the crew said it was

mermaids, and shuddered; but the pagan harpooneers remained unappalled.

Yet the grey Manxman--the oldest mariner of all--declared that the wild

thrilling sounds that were heard, were the voices of newly drowned men

in the sea.

Below in his hammock, Ahab did not hear of this till grey dawn, when

he came to the deck; it was then recounted to him by Flask, not

unaccompanied with hinted dark meanings. He hollowly laughed, and thus

explained the wonder.

Those rocky islands the ship had passed were the resort of great numbers

of seals, and some young seals that had lost their dams, or some dams

that had lost their cubs, must have risen nigh the ship and kept company

with her, crying and sobbing with their human sort of wail. But this

only the more affected some of them, because most mariners cherish a

very superstitious feeling about seals, arising not only from their

peculiar tones when in distress, but also from the human look of their

round heads and semi-intelligent faces, seen peeringly uprising from

the water alongside. In the sea, under certain circumstances, seals have

more than once been mistaken for men.

But the bodings of the crew were destined to receive a most plausible

confirmation in the fate of one of their number that morning. At

sun-rise this man went from his hammock to his mast-head at the fore;

and whether it was that he was not yet half waked from his sleep (for

sailors sometimes go aloft in a transition state), whether it was thus

with the man, there is now no telling; but, be that as it may, he

had not been long at his perch, when a cry was heard--a cry and a

rushing--and looking up, they saw a falling phantom in the air; and

looking down, a little tossed heap of white bubbles in the blue of the

sea.

The life-buoy--a long slender cask--was dropped from the stern, where it

always hung obedient to a cunning spring; but no hand rose to seize it,

and the sun having long beat upon this cask it had shrunken, so that it

slowly filled, and that parched wood also filled at its every pore; and

the studded iron-bound cask followed the sailor to the bottom, as if to

yield him his pillow, though in sooth but a hard one.

And thus the first man of the Pequod that mounted the mast to look out

for the White Whale, on the White Whale's own peculiar ground; that man

was swallowed up in the deep. But few, perhaps, thought of that at the

time. Indeed, in some sort, they were not grieved at this event, at

least as a portent; for they regarded it, not as a foreshadowing of evil

in the future, but as the fulfilment of an evil already presaged. They

declared that now they knew the reason of those wild shrieks they had

heard the night before. But again the old Manxman said nay.

The lost life-buoy was now to be replaced; Starbuck was directed to see

to it; but as no cask of sufficient lightness could be found, and as

in the feverish eagerness of what seemed the approaching crisis of

the voyage, all hands were impatient of any toil but what was directly

connected with its final end, whatever that might prove to be;

therefore, they were going to leave the ship's stern unprovided with a

buoy, when by certain strange signs and inuendoes Queequeg hinted a hint

concerning his coffin.

"A life-buoy of a coffin!" cried Starbuck, starting.

"Rather queer, that, I should say," said Stubb.

"It will make a good enough one," said Flask, "the carpenter here can

arrange it easily."

"Bring it up; there's nothing else for it," said Starbuck, after a

melancholy pause. "Rig it, carpenter; do not look at me so--the coffin,

I mean. Dost thou hear me? Rig it."

"And shall I nail down the lid, sir?" moving his hand as with a hammer.

"Aye."

"And shall I caulk the seams, sir?" moving his hand as with a

caulking-iron.

"Aye."

"And shall I then pay over the same with pitch, sir?" moving his hand as

with a pitch-pot.

"Away! what possesses thee to this? Make a life-buoy of the coffin, and

no more.--Mr. Stubb, Mr. Flask, come forward with me."

"He goes off in a huff. The whole he can endure; at the parts he baulks.

Now I don't like this. I make a leg for Captain Ahab, and he wears it

like a gentleman; but I make a bandbox for Queequeg, and he won't put

his head into it. Are all my pains to go for nothing with that coffin?

And now I'm ordered to make a life-buoy of it. It's like turning an old

coat; going to bring the flesh on the other side now. I don't like this

cobbling sort of business--I don't like it at all; it's undignified;

it's not my place. Let tinkers' brats do tinkerings; we are their

betters. I like to take in hand none but clean, virgin, fair-and-square

mathematical jobs, something that regularly begins at the beginning, and

is at the middle when midway, and comes to an end at the conclusion; not

a cobbler's job, that's at an end in the middle, and at the beginning at

the end. It's the old woman's tricks to be giving cobbling jobs. Lord!

what an affection all old women have for tinkers. I know an old woman of

sixty-five who ran away with a bald-headed young tinker once. And that's

the reason I never would work for lonely widow old women ashore, when

I kept my job-shop in the Vineyard; they might have taken it into their

lonely old heads to run off with me. But heigh-ho! there are no caps at

sea but snow-caps. Let me see. Nail down the lid; caulk the seams; pay

over the same with pitch; batten them down tight, and hang it with the

snap-spring over the ship's stern. Were ever such things done before

with a coffin? Some superstitious old carpenters, now, would be tied

up in the rigging, ere they would do the job. But I'm made of knotty

Aroostook hemlock; I don't budge. Cruppered with a coffin! Sailing

about with a grave-yard tray! But never mind. We workers in woods make

bridal-bedsteads and card-tables, as well as coffins and hearses. We

work by the month, or by the job, or by the profit; not for us to ask

the why and wherefore of our work, unless it be too confounded cobbling,

and then we stash it if we can. Hem! I'll do the job, now, tenderly.

I'll have me--let's see--how many in the ship's company, all told? But

I've forgotten. Any way, I'll have me thirty separate, Turk's-headed

life-lines, each three feet long hanging all round to the coffin. Then,

if the hull go down, there'll be thirty lively fellows all fighting for

one coffin, a sight not seen very often beneath the sun! Come hammer,

caulking-iron, pitch-pot, and marling-spike! Let's to it."

CHAPTER 127. The Deck.

THE COFFIN LAID UPON TWO LINE-TUBS, BETWEEN THE VICE-BENCH AND THE OPEN

HATCHWAY; THE CARPENTER CAULKING ITS SEAMS; THE STRING OF TWISTED OAKUM

SLOWLY UNWINDING FROM A LARGE ROLL OF IT PLACED IN THE BOSOM OF

HIS FROCK.--AHAB COMES SLOWLY FROM THE CABIN-GANGWAY, AND HEARS PIP

FOLLOWING HIM.

"Back, lad; I will be with ye again presently. He goes! Not this hand

complies with my humor more genially than that boy.--Middle aisle of a

church! What's here?"

"Life-buoy, sir. Mr. Starbuck's orders. Oh, look, sir! Beware the

hatchway!"

"Thank ye, man. Thy coffin lies handy to the vault."

"Sir? The hatchway? oh! So it does, sir, so it does."

"Art not thou the leg-maker? Look, did not this stump come from thy

shop?"

"I believe it did, sir; does the ferrule stand, sir?"

"Well enough. But art thou not also the undertaker?"

"Aye, sir; I patched up this thing here as a coffin for Queequeg; but

they've set me now to turning it into something else."

"Then tell me; art thou not an arrant, all-grasping, intermeddling,

monopolising, heathenish old scamp, to be one day making legs, and the

next day coffins to clap them in, and yet again life-buoys out of those

same coffins? Thou art as unprincipled as the gods, and as much of a

jack-of-all-trades."

"But I do not mean anything, sir. I do as I do."

"The gods again. Hark ye, dost thou not ever sing working about a

coffin? The Titans, they say, hummed snatches when chipping out the

craters for volcanoes; and the grave-digger in the play sings, spade in

hand. Dost thou never?"

"Sing, sir? Do I sing? Oh, I'm indifferent enough, sir, for that; but

the reason why the grave-digger made music must have been because there

was none in his spade, sir. But the caulking mallet is full of it. Hark

to it."

"Aye, and that's because the lid there's a sounding-board; and what in

all things makes the sounding-board is this--there's naught beneath. And

yet, a coffin with a body in it rings pretty much the same, Carpenter.

Hast thou ever helped carry a bier, and heard the coffin knock against

the churchyard gate, going in?

"Faith, sir, I've--"

"Faith? What's that?"

"Why, faith, sir, it's only a sort of exclamation-like--that's all,

sir."

"Um, um; go on."

"I was about to say, sir, that--"

"Art thou a silk-worm? Dost thou spin thy own shroud out of thyself?

Look at thy bosom! Despatch! and get these traps out of sight."

"He goes aft. That was sudden, now; but squalls come sudden in hot

latitudes. I've heard that the Isle of Albemarle, one of the Gallipagos,

is cut by the Equator right in the middle. Seems to me some sort of

Equator cuts yon old man, too, right in his middle. He's always under

the Line--fiery hot, I tell ye! He's looking this way--come, oakum;

quick. Here we go again. This wooden mallet is the cork, and I'm the

professor of musical glasses--tap, tap!"

(AHAB TO HIMSELF.)

"There's a sight! There's a sound! The grey-headed woodpecker tapping

the hollow tree! Blind and dumb might well be envied now. See! that

thing rests on two line-tubs, full of tow-lines. A most malicious wag,

that fellow. Rat-tat! So man's seconds tick! Oh! how immaterial are all

materials! What things real are there, but imponderable thoughts? Here

now's the very dreaded symbol of grim death, by a mere hap, made

the expressive sign of the help and hope of most endangered life.

A life-buoy of a coffin! Does it go further? Can it be that in some

spiritual sense the coffin is, after all, but an immortality-preserver!

I'll think of that. But no. So far gone am I in the dark side of earth,

that its other side, the theoretic bright one, seems but uncertain

twilight to me. Will ye never have done, Carpenter, with that accursed

sound? I go below; let me not see that thing here when I return

again. Now, then, Pip, we'll talk this over; I do suck most wondrous

philosophies from thee! Some unknown conduits from the unknown worlds

must empty into thee!"

CHAPTER 128. The Pequod Meets The Rachel.

Next day, a large ship, the Rachel, was descried, bearing directly down

upon the Pequod, all her spars thickly clustering with men. At the

time the Pequod was making good speed through the water; but as the

broad-winged windward stranger shot nigh to her, the boastful sails all

fell together as blank bladders that are burst, and all life fled from

the smitten hull.

"Bad news; she brings bad news," muttered the old Manxman. But ere her

commander, who, with trumpet to mouth, stood up in his boat; ere he

could hopefully hail, Ahab's voice was heard.

"Hast seen the White Whale?"

"Aye, yesterday. Have ye seen a whale-boat adrift?"

Throttling his joy, Ahab negatively answered this unexpected question;

and would then have fain boarded the stranger, when the stranger captain

himself, having stopped his vessel's way, was seen descending her

side. A few keen pulls, and his boat-hook soon clinched the Pequod's

main-chains, and he sprang to the deck. Immediately he was recognised by

Ahab for a Nantucketer he knew. But no formal salutation was exchanged.

"Where was he?--not killed!--not killed!" cried Ahab, closely advancing.

"How was it?"

It seemed that somewhat late on the afternoon of the day previous, while

three of the stranger's boats were engaged with a shoal of whales, which

had led them some four or five miles from the ship; and while they were

yet in swift chase to windward, the white hump and head of Moby Dick had

suddenly loomed up out of the water, not very far to leeward; whereupon,

the fourth rigged boat--a reserved one--had been instantly lowered in

chase. After a keen sail before the wind, this fourth boat--the swiftest

keeled of all--seemed to have succeeded in fastening--at least, as

well as the man at the mast-head could tell anything about it. In the

distance he saw the diminished dotted boat; and then a swift gleam

of bubbling white water; and after that nothing more; whence it was

concluded that the stricken whale must have indefinitely run away with

his pursuers, as often happens. There was some apprehension, but no

positive alarm, as yet. The recall signals were placed in the rigging;

darkness came on; and forced to pick up her three far to windward

boats--ere going in quest of the fourth one in the precisely opposite

direction--the ship had not only been necessitated to leave that boat to

its fate till near midnight, but, for the time, to increase her distance

from it. But the rest of her crew being at last safe aboard, she crowded

all sail--stunsail on stunsail--after the missing boat; kindling a fire

in her try-pots for a beacon; and every other man aloft on the look-out.

But though when she had thus sailed a sufficient distance to gain the

presumed place of the absent ones when last seen; though she then

paused to lower her spare boats to pull all around her; and not finding

anything, had again dashed on; again paused, and lowered her boats; and

though she had thus continued doing till daylight; yet not the least

glimpse of the missing keel had been seen.

The story told, the stranger Captain immediately went on to reveal his

object in boarding the Pequod. He desired that ship to unite with his

own in the search; by sailing over the sea some four or five miles

apart, on parallel lines, and so sweeping a double horizon, as it were.

"I will wager something now," whispered Stubb to Flask, "that some one

in that missing boat wore off that Captain's best coat; mayhap, his

watch--he's so cursed anxious to get it back. Who ever heard of two

pious whale-ships cruising after one missing whale-boat in the height of

the whaling season? See, Flask, only see how pale he looks--pale in the

very buttons of his eyes--look--it wasn't the coat--it must have been

the--"

"My boy, my own boy is among them. For God's sake--I beg, I

conjure"--here exclaimed the stranger Captain to Ahab, who thus far

had but icily received his petition. "For eight-and-forty hours let me

charter your ship--I will gladly pay for it, and roundly pay for it--if

there be no other way--for eight-and-forty hours only--only that--you

must, oh, you must, and you SHALL do this thing."

"His son!" cried Stubb, "oh, it's his son he's lost! I take back the

coat and watch--what says Ahab? We must save that boy."

"He's drowned with the rest on 'em, last night," said the old Manx

sailor standing behind them; "I heard; all of ye heard their spirits."

Now, as it shortly turned out, what made this incident of the Rachel's

the more melancholy, was the circumstance, that not only was one of the

Captain's sons among the number of the missing boat's crew; but among

the number of the other boat's crews, at the same time, but on the other

hand, separated from the ship during the dark vicissitudes of the chase,

there had been still another son; as that for a time, the wretched

father was plunged to the bottom of the cruellest perplexity; which

was only solved for him by his chief mate's instinctively adopting the

ordinary procedure of a whale-ship in such emergencies, that is, when

placed between jeopardized but divided boats, always to pick up the

majority first. But the captain, for some unknown constitutional reason,

had refrained from mentioning all this, and not till forced to it by

Ahab's iciness did he allude to his one yet missing boy; a little lad,

but twelve years old, whose father with the earnest but unmisgiving

hardihood of a Nantucketer's paternal love, had thus early sought to

initiate him in the perils and wonders of a vocation almost immemorially

the destiny of all his race. Nor does it unfrequently occur, that

Nantucket captains will send a son of such tender age away from them,

for a protracted three or four years' voyage in some other ship than

their own; so that their first knowledge of a whaleman's career shall

be unenervated by any chance display of a father's natural but untimely

partiality, or undue apprehensiveness and concern.

Meantime, now the stranger was still beseeching his poor boon of Ahab;

and Ahab still stood like an anvil, receiving every shock, but without

the least quivering of his own.

"I will not go," said the stranger, "till you say aye to me. Do to me

as you would have me do to you in the like case. For YOU too have a boy,

Captain Ahab--though but a child, and nestling safely at home now--a

child of your old age too--Yes, yes, you relent; I see it--run, run,

men, now, and stand by to square in the yards."

"Avast," cried Ahab--"touch not a rope-yarn"; then in a voice that

prolongingly moulded every word--"Captain Gardiner, I will not do it.

Even now I lose time. Good-bye, good-bye. God bless ye, man, and may I

forgive myself, but I must go. Mr. Starbuck, look at the binnacle watch,

and in three minutes from this present instant warn off all strangers:

then brace forward again, and let the ship sail as before."

Hurriedly turning, with averted face, he descended into his cabin,

leaving the strange captain transfixed at this unconditional and utter

rejection of his so earnest suit. But starting from his enchantment,

Gardiner silently hurried to the side; more fell than stepped into his

boat, and returned to his ship.

Soon the two ships diverged their wakes; and long as the strange vessel

was in view, she was seen to yaw hither and thither at every dark spot,

however small, on the sea. This way and that her yards were swung round;

starboard and larboard, she continued to tack; now she beat against a

head sea; and again it pushed her before it; while all the while, her

masts and yards were thickly clustered with men, as three tall cherry

trees, when the boys are cherrying among the boughs.

But by her still halting course and winding, woeful way, you plainly saw

that this ship that so wept with spray, still remained without comfort.

She was Rachel, weeping for her children, because they were not.

CHAPTER 129. The Cabin.

(AHAB MOVING TO GO ON DECK; PIP CATCHES HIM BY THE HAND TO FOLLOW.)

"Lad, lad, I tell thee thou must not follow Ahab now. The hour is coming

when Ahab would not scare thee from him, yet would not have thee by him.

There is that in thee, poor lad, which I feel too curing to my malady.

Like cures like; and for this hunt, my malady becomes my most desired

health. Do thou abide below here, where they shall serve thee, as if

thou wert the captain. Aye, lad, thou shalt sit here in my own screwed

chair; another screw to it, thou must be."

"No, no, no! ye have not a whole body, sir; do ye but use poor me for

your one lost leg; only tread upon me, sir; I ask no more, so I remain a

part of ye."

"Oh! spite of million villains, this makes me a bigot in the fadeless

fidelity of man!--and a black! and crazy!--but methinks like-cures-like

applies to him too; he grows so sane again."

"They tell me, sir, that Stubb did once desert poor little Pip, whose

drowned bones now show white, for all the blackness of his living skin.

But I will never desert ye, sir, as Stubb did him. Sir, I must go with

ye."

"If thou speakest thus to me much more, Ahab's purpose keels up in him.

I tell thee no; it cannot be."

"Oh good master, master, master!

"Weep so, and I will murder thee! have a care, for Ahab too is mad.

Listen, and thou wilt often hear my ivory foot upon the deck, and still

know that I am there. And now I quit thee. Thy hand!--Met! True art

thou, lad, as the circumference to its centre. So: God for ever bless

thee; and if it come to that,--God for ever save thee, let what will

befall."

(AHAB GOES; PIP STEPS ONE STEP FORWARD.)

"Here he this instant stood; I stand in his air,--but I'm alone. Now

were even poor Pip here I could endure it, but he's missing. Pip! Pip!

Ding, dong, ding! Who's seen Pip? He must be up here; let's try the

door. What? neither lock, nor bolt, nor bar; and yet there's no opening

it. It must be the spell; he told me to stay here: Aye, and told me this

screwed chair was mine. Here, then, I'll seat me, against the transom,

in the ship's full middle, all her keel and her three masts before me.

Here, our old sailors say, in their black seventy-fours great

admirals sometimes sit at table, and lord it over rows of captains and

lieutenants. Ha! what's this? epaulets! epaulets! the epaulets all come

crowding! Pass round the decanters; glad to see ye; fill up, monsieurs!

What an odd feeling, now, when a black boy's host to white men with gold

lace upon their coats!--Monsieurs, have ye seen one Pip?--a little

negro lad, five feet high, hang-dog look, and cowardly! Jumped from a

whale-boat once;--seen him? No! Well then, fill up again, captains, and

let's drink shame upon all cowards! I name no names. Shame upon them!

Put one foot upon the table. Shame upon all cowards.--Hist! above there,

I hear ivory--Oh, master! master! I am indeed down-hearted when you walk

over me. But here I'll stay, though this stern strikes rocks; and they

bulge through; and oysters come to join me."

CHAPTER 130. The Hat.

And now that at the proper time and place, after so long and wide a

preliminary cruise, Ahab,--all other whaling waters swept--seemed to

have chased his foe into an ocean-fold, to slay him the more securely

there; now, that he found himself hard by the very latitude and

longitude where his tormenting wound had been inflicted; now that a

vessel had been spoken which on the very day preceding had actually

encountered Moby Dick;--and now that all his successive meetings with

various ships contrastingly concurred to show the demoniac indifference

with which the white whale tore his hunters, whether sinning or sinned

against; now it was that there lurked a something in the old man's eyes,

which it was hardly sufferable for feeble souls to see. As the unsetting

polar star, which through the livelong, arctic, six months' night

sustains its piercing, steady, central gaze; so Ahab's purpose now

fixedly gleamed down upon the constant midnight of the gloomy crew. It

domineered above them so, that all their bodings, doubts, misgivings,

fears, were fain to hide beneath their souls, and not sprout forth a

single spear or leaf.

In this foreshadowing interval too, all humor, forced or natural,

vanished. Stubb no more strove to raise a smile; Starbuck no more strove

to check one. Alike, joy and sorrow, hope and fear, seemed ground to

finest dust, and powdered, for the time, in the clamped mortar of

Ahab's iron soul. Like machines, they dumbly moved about the deck, ever

conscious that the old man's despot eye was on them.

But did you deeply scan him in his more secret confidential hours; when

he thought no glance but one was on him; then you would have seen that

even as Ahab's eyes so awed the crew's, the inscrutable Parsee's glance

awed his; or somehow, at least, in some wild way, at times affected it.

Such an added, gliding strangeness began to invest the thin Fedallah

now; such ceaseless shudderings shook him; that the men looked dubious

at him; half uncertain, as it seemed, whether indeed he were a mortal

substance, or else a tremulous shadow cast upon the deck by some unseen

being's body. And that shadow was always hovering there. For not by

night, even, had Fedallah ever certainly been known to slumber, or go

below. He would stand still for hours: but never sat or leaned; his wan

but wondrous eyes did plainly say--We two watchmen never rest.

Nor, at any time, by night or day could the mariners now step upon the

deck, unless Ahab was before them; either standing in his pivot-hole, or

exactly pacing the planks between two undeviating limits,--the main-mast

and the mizen; or else they saw him standing in the cabin-scuttle,--his

living foot advanced upon the deck, as if to step; his hat slouched

heavily over his eyes; so that however motionless he stood, however the

days and nights were added on, that he had not swung in his hammock;

yet hidden beneath that slouching hat, they could never tell unerringly

whether, for all this, his eyes were really closed at times; or whether

he was still intently scanning them; no matter, though he stood so in

the scuttle for a whole hour on the stretch, and the unheeded night-damp

gathered in beads of dew upon that stone-carved coat and hat. The

clothes that the night had wet, the next day's sunshine dried upon him;

and so, day after day, and night after night; he went no more beneath

the planks; whatever he wanted from the cabin that thing he sent for.

He ate in the same open air; that is, his two only meals,--breakfast and

dinner: supper he never touched; nor reaped his beard; which darkly grew

all gnarled, as unearthed roots of trees blown over, which still grow

idly on at naked base, though perished in the upper verdure. But though

his whole life was now become one watch on deck; and though the Parsee's

mystic watch was without intermission as his own; yet these two never

seemed to speak--one man to the other--unless at long intervals some

passing unmomentous matter made it necessary. Though such a potent spell

seemed secretly to join the twain; openly, and to the awe-struck crew,

they seemed pole-like asunder. If by day they chanced to speak one word;

by night, dumb men were both, so far as concerned the slightest verbal

interchange. At times, for longest hours, without a single hail, they

stood far parted in the starlight; Ahab in his scuttle, the Parsee by

the mainmast; but still fixedly gazing upon each other; as if in the

Parsee Ahab saw his forethrown shadow, in Ahab the Parsee his abandoned

substance.

And yet, somehow, did Ahab--in his own proper self, as daily, hourly,

and every instant, commandingly revealed to his subordinates,--Ahab

seemed an independent lord; the Parsee but his slave. Still again both

seemed yoked together, and an unseen tyrant driving them; the lean shade

siding the solid rib. For be this Parsee what he may, all rib and keel

was solid Ahab.

At the first faintest glimmering of the dawn, his iron voice was heard

from aft,--"Man the mast-heads!"--and all through the day, till after

sunset and after twilight, the same voice every hour, at the striking of

the helmsman's bell, was heard--"What d'ye see?--sharp! sharp!"

But when three or four days had slided by, after meeting the

children-seeking Rachel; and no spout had yet been seen; the monomaniac

old man seemed distrustful of his crew's fidelity; at least, of nearly

all except the Pagan harpooneers; he seemed to doubt, even, whether

Stubb and Flask might not willingly overlook the sight he sought. But if

these suspicions were really his, he sagaciously refrained from verbally

expressing them, however his actions might seem to hint them.

"I will have the first sight of the whale myself,"--he said. "Aye!

Ahab must have the doubloon! and with his own hands he rigged a nest

of basketed bowlines; and sending a hand aloft, with a single sheaved

block, to secure to the main-mast head, he received the two ends of the

downward-reeved rope; and attaching one to his basket prepared a pin for

the other end, in order to fasten it at the rail. This done, with that

end yet in his hand and standing beside the pin, he looked round upon

his crew, sweeping from one to the other; pausing his glance long upon

Daggoo, Queequeg, Tashtego; but shunning Fedallah; and then settling his

firm relying eye upon the chief mate, said,--"Take the rope, sir--I give

it into thy hands, Starbuck." Then arranging his person in the basket,

he gave the word for them to hoist him to his perch, Starbuck being

the one who secured the rope at last; and afterwards stood near it. And

thus, with one hand clinging round the royal mast, Ahab gazed abroad

upon the sea for miles and miles,--ahead, astern, this side, and

that,--within the wide expanded circle commanded at so great a height.

When in working with his hands at some lofty almost isolated place in

the rigging, which chances to afford no foothold, the sailor at sea is

hoisted up to that spot, and sustained there by the rope; under these

circumstances, its fastened end on deck is always given in strict charge

to some one man who has the special watch of it. Because in such a

wilderness of running rigging, whose various different relations aloft

cannot always be infallibly discerned by what is seen of them at the

deck; and when the deck-ends of these ropes are being every few minutes

cast down from the fastenings, it would be but a natural fatality, if,

unprovided with a constant watchman, the hoisted sailor should by some

carelessness of the crew be cast adrift and fall all swooping to the

sea. So Ahab's proceedings in this matter were not unusual; the only

strange thing about them seemed to be, that Starbuck, almost the one

only man who had ever ventured to oppose him with anything in the

slightest degree approaching to decision--one of those too, whose

faithfulness on the look-out he had seemed to doubt somewhat;--it was

strange, that this was the very man he should select for his watchman;

freely giving his whole life into such an otherwise distrusted person's

hands.

Now, the first time Ahab was perched aloft; ere he had been there ten

minutes; one of those red-billed savage sea-hawks which so often fly

incommodiously close round the manned mast-heads of whalemen in these

latitudes; one of these birds came wheeling and screaming round his head

in a maze of untrackably swift circlings. Then it darted a thousand feet

straight up into the air; then spiralized downwards, and went eddying

again round his head.

But with his gaze fixed upon the dim and distant horizon, Ahab seemed

not to mark this wild bird; nor, indeed, would any one else have marked

it much, it being no uncommon circumstance; only now almost the least

heedful eye seemed to see some sort of cunning meaning in almost every

sight.

"Your hat, your hat, sir!" suddenly cried the Sicilian seaman, who

being posted at the mizen-mast-head, stood directly behind Ahab, though

somewhat lower than his level, and with a deep gulf of air dividing

them.

But already the sable wing was before the old man's eyes; the long

hooked bill at his head: with a scream, the black hawk darted away with

his prize.

An eagle flew thrice round Tarquin's head, removing his cap to replace

it, and thereupon Tanaquil, his wife, declared that Tarquin would

be king of Rome. But only by the replacing of the cap was that omen

accounted good. Ahab's hat was never restored; the wild hawk flew on and

on with it; far in advance of the prow: and at last disappeared; while

from the point of that disappearance, a minute black spot was dimly

discerned, falling from that vast height into the sea.

CHAPTER 131. The Pequod Meets The Delight.

The intense Pequod sailed on; the rolling waves and days went by; the

life-buoy-coffin still lightly swung; and another ship, most miserably

misnamed the Delight, was descried. As she drew nigh, all eyes were

fixed upon her broad beams, called shears, which, in some whaling-ships,

cross the quarter-deck at the height of eight or nine feet; serving to

carry the spare, unrigged, or disabled boats.

Upon the stranger's shears were beheld the shattered, white ribs, and

some few splintered planks, of what had once been a whale-boat; but you

now saw through this wreck, as plainly as you see through the peeled,

half-unhinged, and bleaching skeleton of a horse.

"Hast seen the White Whale?"

"Look!" replied the hollow-cheeked captain from his taffrail; and with

his trumpet he pointed to the wreck.

"Hast killed him?"

"The harpoon is not yet forged that ever will do that," answered the

other, sadly glancing upon a rounded hammock on the deck, whose gathered

sides some noiseless sailors were busy in sewing together.

"Not forged!" and snatching Perth's levelled iron from the crotch, Ahab

held it out, exclaiming--"Look ye, Nantucketer; here in this hand I hold

his death! Tempered in blood, and tempered by lightning are these barbs;

and I swear to temper them triply in that hot place behind the fin,

where the White Whale most feels his accursed life!"

"Then God keep thee, old man--see'st thou that"--pointing to the

hammock--"I bury but one of five stout men, who were alive only

yesterday; but were dead ere night. Only THAT one I bury; the rest were

buried before they died; you sail upon their tomb." Then turning to his

crew--"Are ye ready there? place the plank then on the rail, and

lift the body; so, then--Oh! God"--advancing towards the hammock with

uplifted hands--"may the resurrection and the life--"

"Brace forward! Up helm!" cried Ahab like lightning to his men.

But the suddenly started Pequod was not quick enough to escape the sound

of the splash that the corpse soon made as it struck the sea; not so

quick, indeed, but that some of the flying bubbles might have sprinkled

her hull with their ghostly baptism.

As Ahab now glided from the dejected Delight, the strange life-buoy

hanging at the Pequod's stern came into conspicuous relief.

"Ha! yonder! look yonder, men!" cried a foreboding voice in her wake.

"In vain, oh, ye strangers, ye fly our sad burial; ye but turn us your

taffrail to show us your coffin!"

CHAPTER 132. The Symphony.

It was a clear steel-blue day. The firmaments of air and sea were

hardly separable in that all-pervading azure; only, the pensive air was

transparently pure and soft, with a woman's look, and the robust and

man-like sea heaved with long, strong, lingering swells, as Samson's

chest in his sleep.

Hither, and thither, on high, glided the snow-white wings of small,

unspeckled birds; these were the gentle thoughts of the feminine air;

but to and fro in the deeps, far down in the bottomless blue, rushed

mighty leviathans, sword-fish, and sharks; and these were the strong,

troubled, murderous thinkings of the masculine sea.

But though thus contrasting within, the contrast was only in shades and

shadows without; those two seemed one; it was only the sex, as it were,

that distinguished them.

Aloft, like a royal czar and king, the sun seemed giving this gentle

air to this bold and rolling sea; even as bride to groom. And at the

girdling line of the horizon, a soft and tremulous motion--most seen

here at the Equator--denoted the fond, throbbing trust, the loving

alarms, with which the poor bride gave her bosom away.

Tied up and twisted; gnarled and knotted with wrinkles; haggardly firm

and unyielding; his eyes glowing like coals, that still glow in the

ashes of ruin; untottering Ahab stood forth in the clearness of the

morn; lifting his splintered helmet of a brow to the fair girl's

forehead of heaven.

Oh, immortal infancy, and innocency of the azure! Invisible winged

creatures that frolic all round us! Sweet childhood of air and sky! how

oblivious were ye of old Ahab's close-coiled woe! But so have I seen

little Miriam and Martha, laughing-eyed elves, heedlessly gambol around

their old sire; sporting with the circle of singed locks which grew on

the marge of that burnt-out crater of his brain.

Slowly crossing the deck from the scuttle, Ahab leaned over the side and

watched how his shadow in the water sank and sank to his gaze, the more

and the more that he strove to pierce the profundity. But the lovely

aromas in that enchanted air did at last seem to dispel, for a moment,

the cankerous thing in his soul. That glad, happy air, that winsome

sky, did at last stroke and caress him; the step-mother world, so long

cruel--forbidding--now threw affectionate arms round his stubborn neck,

and did seem to joyously sob over him, as if over one, that however

wilful and erring, she could yet find it in her heart to save and to

bless. From beneath his slouched hat Ahab dropped a tear into the sea;

nor did all the Pacific contain such wealth as that one wee drop.

Starbuck saw the old man; saw him, how he heavily leaned over the side;

and he seemed to hear in his own true heart the measureless sobbing that

stole out of the centre of the serenity around. Careful not to touch

him, or be noticed by him, he yet drew near to him, and stood there.

Ahab turned.

"Starbuck!"

"Sir."

"Oh, Starbuck! it is a mild, mild wind, and a mild looking sky. On such

a day--very much such a sweetness as this--I struck my first whale--a

boy-harpooneer of eighteen! Forty--forty--forty years ago!--ago! Forty

years of continual whaling! forty years of privation, and peril, and

storm-time! forty years on the pitiless sea! for forty years has Ahab

forsaken the peaceful land, for forty years to make war on the horrors

of the deep! Aye and yes, Starbuck, out of those forty years I have not

spent three ashore. When I think of this life I have led; the desolation

of solitude it has been; the masoned, walled-town of a Captain's

exclusiveness, which admits but small entrance to any sympathy from the

green country without--oh, weariness! heaviness! Guinea-coast slavery of

solitary command!--when I think of all this; only half-suspected, not so

keenly known to me before--and how for forty years I have fed upon dry

salted fare--fit emblem of the dry nourishment of my soil!--when the

poorest landsman has had fresh fruit to his daily hand, and broken the

world's fresh bread to my mouldy crusts--away, whole oceans away, from

that young girl-wife I wedded past fifty, and sailed for Cape Horn

the next day, leaving but one dent in my marriage pillow--wife?

wife?--rather a widow with her husband alive! Aye, I widowed that poor

girl when I married her, Starbuck; and then, the madness, the frenzy,

the boiling blood and the smoking brow, with which, for a thousand

lowerings old Ahab has furiously, foamingly chased his prey--more a

demon than a man!--aye, aye! what a forty years' fool--fool--old fool,

has old Ahab been! Why this strife of the chase? why weary, and palsy

the arm at the oar, and the iron, and the lance? how the richer or

better is Ahab now? Behold. Oh, Starbuck! is it not hard, that with this

weary load I bear, one poor leg should have been snatched from under

me? Here, brush this old hair aside; it blinds me, that I seem to weep.

Locks so grey did never grow but from out some ashes! But do I look

very old, so very, very old, Starbuck? I feel deadly faint, bowed, and

humped, as though I were Adam, staggering beneath the piled

centuries since Paradise. God! God! God!--crack my heart!--stave my

brain!--mockery! mockery! bitter, biting mockery of grey hairs, have

I lived enough joy to wear ye; and seem and feel thus intolerably old?

Close! stand close to me, Starbuck; let me look into a human eye; it is

better than to gaze into sea or sky; better than to gaze upon God. By

the green land; by the bright hearth-stone! this is the magic glass,

man; I see my wife and my child in thine eye. No, no; stay on board, on

board!--lower not when I do; when branded Ahab gives chase to Moby Dick.

That hazard shall not be thine. No, no! not with the far away home I see

in that eye!"

"Oh, my Captain! my Captain! noble soul! grand old heart, after all! why

should any one give chase to that hated fish! Away with me! let us

fly these deadly waters! let us home! Wife and child, too, are

Starbuck's--wife and child of his brotherly, sisterly, play-fellow

youth; even as thine, sir, are the wife and child of thy loving,

longing, paternal old age! Away! let us away!--this instant let me alter

the course! How cheerily, how hilariously, O my Captain, would we bowl

on our way to see old Nantucket again! I think, sir, they have some such

mild blue days, even as this, in Nantucket."

"They have, they have. I have seen them--some summer days in the

morning. About this time--yes, it is his noon nap now--the boy

vivaciously wakes; sits up in bed; and his mother tells him of me, of

cannibal old me; how I am abroad upon the deep, but will yet come back

to dance him again."

"'Tis my Mary, my Mary herself! She promised that my boy, every morning,

should be carried to the hill to catch the first glimpse of his father's

sail! Yes, yes! no more! it is done! we head for Nantucket! Come, my

Captain, study out the course, and let us away! See, see! the boy's face

from the window! the boy's hand on the hill!"

But Ahab's glance was averted; like a blighted fruit tree he shook, and

cast his last, cindered apple to the soil.

"What is it, what nameless, inscrutable, unearthly thing is it; what

cozening, hidden lord and master, and cruel, remorseless emperor

commands me; that against all natural lovings and longings, I so keep

pushing, and crowding, and jamming myself on all the time; recklessly

making me ready to do what in my own proper, natural heart, I durst not

so much as dare? Is Ahab, Ahab? Is it I, God, or who, that lifts this

arm? But if the great sun move not of himself; but is as an errand-boy

in heaven; nor one single star can revolve, but by some invisible power;

how then can this one small heart beat; this one small brain think

thoughts; unless God does that beating, does that thinking, does that

living, and not I. By heaven, man, we are turned round and round in

this world, like yonder windlass, and Fate is the handspike. And all

the time, lo! that smiling sky, and this unsounded sea! Look! see yon

Albicore! who put it into him to chase and fang that flying-fish? Where

do murderers go, man! Who's to doom, when the judge himself is dragged

to the bar? But it is a mild, mild wind, and a mild looking sky; and

the air smells now, as if it blew from a far-away meadow; they have been

making hay somewhere under the slopes of the Andes, Starbuck, and the

mowers are sleeping among the new-mown hay. Sleeping? Aye, toil we how

we may, we all sleep at last on the field. Sleep? Aye, and rust amid

greenness; as last year's scythes flung down, and left in the half-cut

swaths--Starbuck!"

But blanched to a corpse's hue with despair, the Mate had stolen away.

Ahab crossed the deck to gaze over on the other side; but started at

two reflected, fixed eyes in the water there. Fedallah was motionlessly

leaning over the same rail.

CHAPTER 133. The Chase--First Day.

That night, in the mid-watch, when the old man--as his wont at

intervals--stepped forth from the scuttle in which he leaned, and went

to his pivot-hole, he suddenly thrust out his face fiercely, snuffing

up the sea air as a sagacious ship's dog will, in drawing nigh to

some barbarous isle. He declared that a whale must be near. Soon that

peculiar odor, sometimes to a great distance given forth by the

living sperm whale, was palpable to all the watch; nor was any mariner

surprised when, after inspecting the compass, and then the dog-vane, and

then ascertaining the precise bearing of the odor as nearly as possible,

Ahab rapidly ordered the ship's course to be slightly altered, and the

sail to be shortened.

The acute policy dictating these movements was sufficiently vindicated

at daybreak, by the sight of a long sleek on the sea directly and

lengthwise ahead, smooth as oil, and resembling in the pleated watery

wrinkles bordering it, the polished metallic-like marks of some swift

tide-rip, at the mouth of a deep, rapid stream.

"Man the mast-heads! Call all hands!"

Thundering with the butts of three clubbed handspikes on the forecastle

deck, Daggoo roused the sleepers with such judgment claps that they

seemed to exhale from the scuttle, so instantaneously did they appear

with their clothes in their hands.

"What d'ye see?" cried Ahab, flattening his face to the sky.

"Nothing, nothing sir!" was the sound hailing down in reply.

"T'gallant sails!--stunsails! alow and aloft, and on both sides!"

All sail being set, he now cast loose the life-line, reserved for

swaying him to the main royal-mast head; and in a few moments they were

hoisting him thither, when, while but two thirds of the way aloft,

and while peering ahead through the horizontal vacancy between the

main-top-sail and top-gallant-sail, he raised a gull-like cry in the

air. "There she blows!--there she blows! A hump like a snow-hill! It is

Moby Dick!"

Fired by the cry which seemed simultaneously taken up by the three

look-outs, the men on deck rushed to the rigging to behold the famous

whale they had so long been pursuing. Ahab had now gained his final

perch, some feet above the other look-outs, Tashtego standing just

beneath him on the cap of the top-gallant-mast, so that the Indian's

head was almost on a level with Ahab's heel. From this height the whale

was now seen some mile or so ahead, at every roll of the sea revealing

his high sparkling hump, and regularly jetting his silent spout into the

air. To the credulous mariners it seemed the same silent spout they had

so long ago beheld in the moonlit Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

"And did none of ye see it before?" cried Ahab, hailing the perched men

all around him.

"I saw him almost that same instant, sir, that Captain Ahab did, and I

cried out," said Tashtego.

"Not the same instant; not the same--no, the doubloon is mine, Fate

reserved the doubloon for me. I only; none of ye could have raised the

White Whale first. There she blows!--there she blows!--there she blows!

There again!--there again!" he cried, in long-drawn, lingering, methodic

tones, attuned to the gradual prolongings of the whale's visible jets.

"He's going to sound! In stunsails! Down top-gallant-sails! Stand by

three boats. Mr. Starbuck, remember, stay on board, and keep the ship.

Helm there! Luff, luff a point! So; steady, man, steady! There go

flukes! No, no; only black water! All ready the boats there? Stand by,

stand by! Lower me, Mr. Starbuck; lower, lower,--quick, quicker!" and he

slid through the air to the deck.

"He is heading straight to leeward, sir," cried Stubb, "right away from

us; cannot have seen the ship yet."

"Be dumb, man! Stand by the braces! Hard down the helm!--brace up!

Shiver her!--shiver her!--So; well that! Boats, boats!"

Soon all the boats but Starbuck's were dropped; all the boat-sails

set--all the paddles plying; with rippling swiftness, shooting to

leeward; and Ahab heading the onset. A pale, death-glimmer lit up

Fedallah's sunken eyes; a hideous motion gnawed his mouth.

Like noiseless nautilus shells, their light prows sped through the sea;

but only slowly they neared the foe. As they neared him, the ocean grew

still more smooth; seemed drawing a carpet over its waves; seemed a

noon-meadow, so serenely it spread. At length the breathless hunter came

so nigh his seemingly unsuspecting prey, that his entire dazzling hump

was distinctly visible, sliding along the sea as if an isolated thing,

and continually set in a revolving ring of finest, fleecy, greenish

foam. He saw the vast, involved wrinkles of the slightly projecting head

beyond. Before it, far out on the soft Turkish-rugged waters, went

the glistening white shadow from his broad, milky forehead, a musical

rippling playfully accompanying the shade; and behind, the blue waters

interchangeably flowed over into the moving valley of his steady wake;

and on either hand bright bubbles arose and danced by his side. But

these were broken again by the light toes of hundreds of gay fowl softly

feathering the sea, alternate with their fitful flight; and like to

some flag-staff rising from the painted hull of an argosy, the tall but

shattered pole of a recent lance projected from the white whale's back;

and at intervals one of the cloud of soft-toed fowls hovering, and

to and fro skimming like a canopy over the fish, silently perched and

rocked on this pole, the long tail feathers streaming like pennons.

A gentle joyousness--a mighty mildness of repose in swiftness, invested

the gliding whale. Not the white bull Jupiter swimming away with

ravished Europa clinging to his graceful horns; his lovely, leering

eyes sideways intent upon the maid; with smooth bewitching fleetness,

rippling straight for the nuptial bower in Crete; not Jove, not that

great majesty Supreme! did surpass the glorified White Whale as he so

divinely swam.

On each soft side--coincident with the parted swell, that but once

leaving him, then flowed so wide away--on each bright side, the whale

shed off enticings. No wonder there had been some among the hunters who

namelessly transported and allured by all this serenity, had ventured

to assail it; but had fatally found that quietude but the vesture of

tornadoes. Yet calm, enticing calm, oh, whale! thou glidest on, to all

who for the first time eye thee, no matter how many in that same way

thou may'st have bejuggled and destroyed before.

And thus, through the serene tranquillities of the tropical sea, among

waves whose hand-clappings were suspended by exceeding rapture, Moby

Dick moved on, still withholding from sight the full terrors of his

submerged trunk, entirely hiding the wrenched hideousness of his jaw.

But soon the fore part of him slowly rose from the water; for an instant

his whole marbleized body formed a high arch, like Virginia's Natural

Bridge, and warningly waving his bannered flukes in the air, the

grand god revealed himself, sounded, and went out of sight. Hoveringly

halting, and dipping on the wing, the white sea-fowls longingly lingered

over the agitated pool that he left.

With oars apeak, and paddles down, the sheets of their sails adrift, the

three boats now stilly floated, awaiting Moby Dick's reappearance.

"An hour," said Ahab, standing rooted in his boat's stern; and he gazed

beyond the whale's place, towards the dim blue spaces and wide wooing

vacancies to leeward. It was only an instant; for again his eyes seemed

whirling round in his head as he swept the watery circle. The breeze now

freshened; the sea began to swell.

"The birds!--the birds!" cried Tashtego.

In long Indian file, as when herons take wing, the white birds were

now all flying towards Ahab's boat; and when within a few yards began

fluttering over the water there, wheeling round and round, with joyous,

expectant cries. Their vision was keener than man's; Ahab could discover

no sign in the sea. But suddenly as he peered down and down into its

depths, he profoundly saw a white living spot no bigger than a white

weasel, with wonderful celerity uprising, and magnifying as it rose,

till it turned, and then there were plainly revealed two long crooked

rows of white, glistening teeth, floating up from the undiscoverable

bottom. It was Moby Dick's open mouth and scrolled jaw; his vast,

shadowed bulk still half blending with the blue of the sea. The

glittering mouth yawned beneath the boat like an open-doored marble

tomb; and giving one sidelong sweep with his steering oar, Ahab whirled

the craft aside from this tremendous apparition. Then, calling upon

Fedallah to change places with him, went forward to the bows, and

seizing Perth's harpoon, commanded his crew to grasp their oars and

stand by to stern.

Now, by reason of this timely spinning round the boat upon its axis, its

bow, by anticipation, was made to face the whale's head while yet

under water. But as if perceiving this stratagem, Moby Dick, with that

malicious intelligence ascribed to him, sidelingly transplanted himself,

as it were, in an instant, shooting his pleated head lengthwise beneath

the boat.

Through and through; through every plank and each rib, it thrilled for

an instant, the whale obliquely lying on his back, in the manner of

a biting shark, slowly and feelingly taking its bows full within his

mouth, so that the long, narrow, scrolled lower jaw curled high up into

the open air, and one of the teeth caught in a row-lock. The bluish

pearl-white of the inside of the jaw was within six inches of Ahab's

head, and reached higher than that. In this attitude the White Whale

now shook the slight cedar as a mildly cruel cat her mouse. With

unastonished eyes Fedallah gazed, and crossed his arms; but the

tiger-yellow crew were tumbling over each other's heads to gain the

uttermost stern.

And now, while both elastic gunwales were springing in and out, as the

whale dallied with the doomed craft in this devilish way; and from his

body being submerged beneath the boat, he could not be darted at from

the bows, for the bows were almost inside of him, as it were; and

while the other boats involuntarily paused, as before a quick crisis

impossible to withstand, then it was that monomaniac Ahab, furious with

this tantalizing vicinity of his foe, which placed him all alive and

helpless in the very jaws he hated; frenzied with all this, he seized

the long bone with his naked hands, and wildly strove to wrench it from

its gripe. As now he thus vainly strove, the jaw slipped from him; the

frail gunwales bent in, collapsed, and snapped, as both jaws, like an

enormous shears, sliding further aft, bit the craft completely in twain,

and locked themselves fast again in the sea, midway between the two

floating wrecks. These floated aside, the broken ends drooping, the crew

at the stern-wreck clinging to the gunwales, and striving to hold fast

to the oars to lash them across.

At that preluding moment, ere the boat was yet snapped, Ahab, the first

to perceive the whale's intent, by the crafty upraising of his head, a

movement that loosed his hold for the time; at that moment his hand

had made one final effort to push the boat out of the bite. But only

slipping further into the whale's mouth, and tilting over sideways as it

slipped, the boat had shaken off his hold on the jaw; spilled him out of

it, as he leaned to the push; and so he fell flat-faced upon the sea.

Ripplingly withdrawing from his prey, Moby Dick now lay at a little

distance, vertically thrusting his oblong white head up and down in the

billows; and at the same time slowly revolving his whole spindled body;

so that when his vast wrinkled forehead rose--some twenty or more feet

out of the water--the now rising swells, with all their confluent waves,

dazzlingly broke against it; vindictively tossing their shivered spray

still higher into the air.\* So, in a gale, the but half baffled Channel

billows only recoil from the base of the Eddystone, triumphantly to

overleap its summit with their scud.

\*This motion is peculiar to the sperm whale. It receives its designation

(pitchpoling) from its being likened to that preliminary up-and-down

poise of the whale-lance, in the exercise called pitchpoling, previously

described. By this motion the whale must best and most comprehensively

view whatever objects may be encircling him.

But soon resuming his horizontal attitude, Moby Dick swam swiftly round

and round the wrecked crew; sideways churning the water in his vengeful

wake, as if lashing himself up to still another and more deadly assault.

The sight of the splintered boat seemed to madden him, as the blood of

grapes and mulberries cast before Antiochus's elephants in the book

of Maccabees. Meanwhile Ahab half smothered in the foam of the whale's

insolent tail, and too much of a cripple to swim,--though he could still

keep afloat, even in the heart of such a whirlpool as that; helpless

Ahab's head was seen, like a tossed bubble which the least chance shock

might burst. From the boat's fragmentary stern, Fedallah incuriously and

mildly eyed him; the clinging crew, at the other drifting end, could not

succor him; more than enough was it for them to look to themselves.

For so revolvingly appalling was the White Whale's aspect, and so

planetarily swift the ever-contracting circles he made, that he seemed

horizontally swooping upon them. And though the other boats, unharmed,

still hovered hard by; still they dared not pull into the eddy to

strike, lest that should be the signal for the instant destruction of

the jeopardized castaways, Ahab and all; nor in that case could they

themselves hope to escape. With straining eyes, then, they remained on

the outer edge of the direful zone, whose centre had now become the old

man's head.

Meantime, from the beginning all this had been descried from the ship's

mast heads; and squaring her yards, she had borne down upon the scene;

and was now so nigh, that Ahab in the water hailed her!--"Sail on

the"--but that moment a breaking sea dashed on him from Moby Dick, and

whelmed him for the time. But struggling out of it again, and chancing

to rise on a towering crest, he shouted,--"Sail on the whale!--Drive him

off!"

The Pequod's prows were pointed; and breaking up the charmed circle, she

effectually parted the white whale from his victim. As he sullenly swam

off, the boats flew to the rescue.

Dragged into Stubb's boat with blood-shot, blinded eyes, the white brine

caking in his wrinkles; the long tension of Ahab's bodily strength did

crack, and helplessly he yielded to his body's doom: for a time, lying

all crushed in the bottom of Stubb's boat, like one trodden under foot

of herds of elephants. Far inland, nameless wails came from him, as

desolate sounds from out ravines.

But this intensity of his physical prostration did but so much the more

abbreviate it. In an instant's compass, great hearts sometimes condense

to one deep pang, the sum total of those shallow pains kindly diffused

through feebler men's whole lives. And so, such hearts, though summary

in each one suffering; still, if the gods decree it, in their

life-time aggregate a whole age of woe, wholly made up of instantaneous

intensities; for even in their pointless centres, those noble natures

contain the entire circumferences of inferior souls.

"The harpoon," said Ahab, half way rising, and draggingly leaning on one

bended arm--"is it safe?"

"Aye, sir, for it was not darted; this is it," said Stubb, showing it.

"Lay it before me;--any missing men?"

"One, two, three, four, five;--there were five oars, sir, and here are

five men."

"That's good.--Help me, man; I wish to stand. So, so, I see him! there!

there! going to leeward still; what a leaping spout!--Hands off from me!

The eternal sap runs up in Ahab's bones again! Set the sail; out oars;

the helm!"

It is often the case that when a boat is stove, its crew, being picked

up by another boat, help to work that second boat; and the chase is thus

continued with what is called double-banked oars. It was thus now. But

the added power of the boat did not equal the added power of the whale,

for he seemed to have treble-banked his every fin; swimming with a

velocity which plainly showed, that if now, under these circumstances,

pushed on, the chase would prove an indefinitely prolonged, if not a

hopeless one; nor could any crew endure for so long a period, such an

unintermitted, intense straining at the oar; a thing barely tolerable

only in some one brief vicissitude. The ship itself, then, as it

sometimes happens, offered the most promising intermediate means of

overtaking the chase. Accordingly, the boats now made for her, and were

soon swayed up to their cranes--the two parts of the wrecked boat having

been previously secured by her--and then hoisting everything to her

side, and stacking her canvas high up, and sideways outstretching it

with stun-sails, like the double-jointed wings of an albatross; the

Pequod bore down in the leeward wake of Moby-Dick. At the well known,

methodic intervals, the whale's glittering spout was regularly announced

from the manned mast-heads; and when he would be reported as just gone

down, Ahab would take the time, and then pacing the deck, binnacle-watch

in hand, so soon as the last second of the allotted hour expired, his

voice was heard.--"Whose is the doubloon now? D'ye see him?" and if the

reply was, No, sir! straightway he commanded them to lift him to his

perch. In this way the day wore on; Ahab, now aloft and motionless;

anon, unrestingly pacing the planks.

As he was thus walking, uttering no sound, except to hail the men aloft,

or to bid them hoist a sail still higher, or to spread one to a still

greater breadth--thus to and fro pacing, beneath his slouched hat, at

every turn he passed his own wrecked boat, which had been dropped upon

the quarter-deck, and lay there reversed; broken bow to shattered stern.

At last he paused before it; and as in an already over-clouded sky fresh

troops of clouds will sometimes sail across, so over the old man's face

there now stole some such added gloom as this.

Stubb saw him pause; and perhaps intending, not vainly, though, to

evince his own unabated fortitude, and thus keep up a valiant place in

his Captain's mind, he advanced, and eyeing the wreck exclaimed--"The

thistle the ass refused; it pricked his mouth too keenly, sir; ha! ha!"

"What soulless thing is this that laughs before a wreck? Man, man! did

I not know thee brave as fearless fire (and as mechanical) I could swear

thou wert a poltroon. Groan nor laugh should be heard before a wreck."

"Aye, sir," said Starbuck drawing near, "'tis a solemn sight; an omen,

and an ill one."

"Omen? omen?--the dictionary! If the gods think to speak outright to

man, they will honourably speak outright; not shake their heads, and

give an old wives' darkling hint.--Begone! Ye two are the opposite poles

of one thing; Starbuck is Stubb reversed, and Stubb is Starbuck; and

ye two are all mankind; and Ahab stands alone among the millions of

the peopled earth, nor gods nor men his neighbors! Cold, cold--I

shiver!--How now? Aloft there! D'ye see him? Sing out for every spout,

though he spout ten times a second!"

The day was nearly done; only the hem of his golden robe was rustling.

Soon, it was almost dark, but the look-out men still remained unset.

"Can't see the spout now, sir;--too dark"--cried a voice from the air.

"How heading when last seen?"

"As before, sir,--straight to leeward."

"Good! he will travel slower now 'tis night. Down royals and top-gallant

stun-sails, Mr. Starbuck. We must not run over him before morning; he's

making a passage now, and may heave-to a while. Helm there! keep her

full before the wind!--Aloft! come down!--Mr. Stubb, send a fresh hand

to the fore-mast head, and see it manned till morning."--Then advancing

towards the doubloon in the main-mast--"Men, this gold is mine, for I

earned it; but I shall let it abide here till the White Whale is dead;

and then, whosoever of ye first raises him, upon the day he shall be

killed, this gold is that man's; and if on that day I shall again raise

him, then, ten times its sum shall be divided among all of ye! Away

now!--the deck is thine, sir!"

And so saying, he placed himself half way within the scuttle, and

slouching his hat, stood there till dawn, except when at intervals

rousing himself to see how the night wore on.

CHAPTER 134. The Chase--Second Day.

At day-break, the three mast-heads were punctually manned afresh.

"D'ye see him?" cried Ahab after allowing a little space for the light

to spread.

"See nothing, sir."

"Turn up all hands and make sail! he travels faster than I thought

for;--the top-gallant sails!--aye, they should have been kept on her all

night. But no matter--'tis but resting for the rush."

Here be it said, that this pertinacious pursuit of one particular whale,

continued through day into night, and through night into day, is a thing

by no means unprecedented in the South sea fishery. For such is the

wonderful skill, prescience of experience, and invincible confidence

acquired by some great natural geniuses among the Nantucket commanders;

that from the simple observation of a whale when last descried, they

will, under certain given circumstances, pretty accurately foretell both

the direction in which he will continue to swim for a time, while out of

sight, as well as his probable rate of progression during that period.

And, in these cases, somewhat as a pilot, when about losing sight of

a coast, whose general trending he well knows, and which he desires

shortly to return to again, but at some further point; like as this

pilot stands by his compass, and takes the precise bearing of the

cape at present visible, in order the more certainly to hit aright

the remote, unseen headland, eventually to be visited: so does the

fisherman, at his compass, with the whale; for after being chased, and

diligently marked, through several hours of daylight, then, when night

obscures the fish, the creature's future wake through the darkness

is almost as established to the sagacious mind of the hunter, as the

pilot's coast is to him. So that to this hunter's wondrous skill, the

proverbial evanescence of a thing writ in water, a wake, is to all

desired purposes well nigh as reliable as the steadfast land. And as the

mighty iron Leviathan of the modern railway is so familiarly known in

its every pace, that, with watches in their hands, men time his rate as

doctors that of a baby's pulse; and lightly say of it, the up train or

the down train will reach such or such a spot, at such or such an hour;

even so, almost, there are occasions when these Nantucketers time that

other Leviathan of the deep, according to the observed humor of his

speed; and say to themselves, so many hours hence this whale will have

gone two hundred miles, will have about reached this or that degree of

latitude or longitude. But to render this acuteness at all successful in

the end, the wind and the sea must be the whaleman's allies; for of what

present avail to the becalmed or windbound mariner is the skill that

assures him he is exactly ninety-three leagues and a quarter from his

port? Inferable from these statements, are many collateral subtile

matters touching the chase of whales.

The ship tore on; leaving such a furrow in the sea as when a

cannon-ball, missent, becomes a plough-share and turns up the level

field.

"By salt and hemp!" cried Stubb, "but this swift motion of the deck

creeps up one's legs and tingles at the heart. This ship and I are two

brave fellows!--Ha, ha! Some one take me up, and launch me, spine-wise,

on the sea,--for by live-oaks! my spine's a keel. Ha, ha! we go the gait

that leaves no dust behind!"

"There she blows--she blows!--she blows!--right ahead!" was now the

mast-head cry.

"Aye, aye!" cried Stubb, "I knew it--ye can't escape--blow on and

split your spout, O whale! the mad fiend himself is after ye! blow your

trump--blister your lungs!--Ahab will dam off your blood, as a miller

shuts his watergate upon the stream!"

And Stubb did but speak out for well nigh all that crew. The frenzies

of the chase had by this time worked them bubblingly up, like old wine

worked anew. Whatever pale fears and forebodings some of them might

have felt before; these were not only now kept out of sight through the

growing awe of Ahab, but they were broken up, and on all sides routed,

as timid prairie hares that scatter before the bounding bison. The hand

of Fate had snatched all their souls; and by the stirring perils of

the previous day; the rack of the past night's suspense; the fixed,

unfearing, blind, reckless way in which their wild craft went plunging

towards its flying mark; by all these things, their hearts were bowled

along. The wind that made great bellies of their sails, and rushed the

vessel on by arms invisible as irresistible; this seemed the symbol of

that unseen agency which so enslaved them to the race.

They were one man, not thirty. For as the one ship that held them all;

though it was put together of all contrasting things--oak, and maple,

and pine wood; iron, and pitch, and hemp--yet all these ran into each

other in the one concrete hull, which shot on its way, both balanced and

directed by the long central keel; even so, all the individualities of

the crew, this man's valor, that man's fear; guilt and guiltiness, all

varieties were welded into oneness, and were all directed to that fatal

goal which Ahab their one lord and keel did point to.

The rigging lived. The mast-heads, like the tops of tall palms, were

outspreadingly tufted with arms and legs. Clinging to a spar with one

hand, some reached forth the other with impatient wavings; others,

shading their eyes from the vivid sunlight, sat far out on the rocking

yards; all the spars in full bearing of mortals, ready and ripe for

their fate. Ah! how they still strove through that infinite blueness to

seek out the thing that might destroy them!

"Why sing ye not out for him, if ye see him?" cried Ahab, when, after

the lapse of some minutes since the first cry, no more had been heard.

"Sway me up, men; ye have been deceived; not Moby Dick casts one odd jet

that way, and then disappears."

It was even so; in their headlong eagerness, the men had mistaken some

other thing for the whale-spout, as the event itself soon proved; for

hardly had Ahab reached his perch; hardly was the rope belayed to its

pin on deck, when he struck the key-note to an orchestra, that made the

air vibrate as with the combined discharges of rifles. The triumphant

halloo of thirty buckskin lungs was heard, as--much nearer to the ship

than the place of the imaginary jet, less than a mile ahead--Moby Dick

bodily burst into view! For not by any calm and indolent spoutings; not

by the peaceable gush of that mystic fountain in his head, did the White

Whale now reveal his vicinity; but by the far more wondrous phenomenon

of breaching. Rising with his utmost velocity from the furthest depths,

the Sperm Whale thus booms his entire bulk into the pure element of

air, and piling up a mountain of dazzling foam, shows his place to the

distance of seven miles and more. In those moments, the torn, enraged

waves he shakes off, seem his mane; in some cases, this breaching is his

act of defiance.

"There she breaches! there she breaches!" was the cry, as in his

immeasurable bravadoes the White Whale tossed himself salmon-like to

Heaven. So suddenly seen in the blue plain of the sea, and relieved

against the still bluer margin of the sky, the spray that he raised, for

the moment, intolerably glittered and glared like a glacier; and

stood there gradually fading and fading away from its first sparkling

intensity, to the dim mistiness of an advancing shower in a vale.

"Aye, breach your last to the sun, Moby Dick!" cried Ahab, "thy hour and

thy harpoon are at hand!--Down! down all of ye, but one man at the fore.

The boats!--stand by!"

Unmindful of the tedious rope-ladders of the shrouds, the men, like

shooting stars, slid to the deck, by the isolated backstays and

halyards; while Ahab, less dartingly, but still rapidly was dropped from

his perch.

"Lower away," he cried, so soon as he had reached his boat--a spare one,

rigged the afternoon previous. "Mr. Starbuck, the ship is thine--keep

away from the boats, but keep near them. Lower, all!"

As if to strike a quick terror into them, by this time being the first

assailant himself, Moby Dick had turned, and was now coming for the

three crews. Ahab's boat was central; and cheering his men, he told them

he would take the whale head-and-head,--that is, pull straight up to his

forehead,--a not uncommon thing; for when within a certain limit, such

a course excludes the coming onset from the whale's sidelong vision.

But ere that close limit was gained, and while yet all three boats were

plain as the ship's three masts to his eye; the White Whale churning

himself into furious speed, almost in an instant as it were, rushing

among the boats with open jaws, and a lashing tail, offered appalling

battle on every side; and heedless of the irons darted at him from every

boat, seemed only intent on annihilating each separate plank of which

those boats were made. But skilfully manoeuvred, incessantly wheeling

like trained chargers in the field; the boats for a while eluded him;

though, at times, but by a plank's breadth; while all the time, Ahab's

unearthly slogan tore every other cry but his to shreds.

But at last in his untraceable evolutions, the White Whale so crossed

and recrossed, and in a thousand ways entangled the slack of the three

lines now fast to him, that they foreshortened, and, of themselves,

warped the devoted boats towards the planted irons in him; though now

for a moment the whale drew aside a little, as if to rally for a more

tremendous charge. Seizing that opportunity, Ahab first paid out more

line: and then was rapidly hauling and jerking in upon it again--hoping

that way to disencumber it of some snarls--when lo!--a sight more savage

than the embattled teeth of sharks!

Caught and twisted--corkscrewed in the mazes of the line, loose harpoons

and lances, with all their bristling barbs and points, came flashing

and dripping up to the chocks in the bows of Ahab's boat. Only one

thing could be done. Seizing the boat-knife, he critically reached

within--through--and then, without--the rays of steel; dragged in

the line beyond, passed it, inboard, to the bowsman, and then, twice

sundering the rope near the chocks--dropped the intercepted fagot of

steel into the sea; and was all fast again. That instant, the White

Whale made a sudden rush among the remaining tangles of the other lines;

by so doing, irresistibly dragged the more involved boats of Stubb and

Flask towards his flukes; dashed them together like two rolling husks on

a surf-beaten beach, and then, diving down into the sea, disappeared in

a boiling maelstrom, in which, for a space, the odorous cedar chips of

the wrecks danced round and round, like the grated nutmeg in a swiftly

stirred bowl of punch.

While the two crews were yet circling in the waters, reaching out after

the revolving line-tubs, oars, and other floating furniture, while

aslope little Flask bobbed up and down like an empty vial, twitching his

legs upwards to escape the dreaded jaws of sharks; and Stubb was lustily

singing out for some one to ladle him up; and while the old man's

line--now parting--admitted of his pulling into the creamy pool to

rescue whom he could;--in that wild simultaneousness of a thousand

concreted perils,--Ahab's yet unstricken boat seemed drawn up towards

Heaven by invisible wires,--as, arrow-like, shooting perpendicularly

from the sea, the White Whale dashed his broad forehead against its

bottom, and sent it, turning over and over, into the air; till it fell

again--gunwale downwards--and Ahab and his men struggled out from under

it, like seals from a sea-side cave.

The first uprising momentum of the whale--modifying its direction as

he struck the surface--involuntarily launched him along it, to a little

distance from the centre of the destruction he had made; and with his

back to it, he now lay for a moment slowly feeling with his flukes from

side to side; and whenever a stray oar, bit of plank, the least chip

or crumb of the boats touched his skin, his tail swiftly drew back, and

came sideways smiting the sea. But soon, as if satisfied that his work

for that time was done, he pushed his pleated forehead through the

ocean, and trailing after him the intertangled lines, continued his

leeward way at a traveller's methodic pace.

As before, the attentive ship having descried the whole fight, again

came bearing down to the rescue, and dropping a boat, picked up the

floating mariners, tubs, oars, and whatever else could be caught at, and

safely landed them on her decks. Some sprained shoulders, wrists, and

ankles; livid contusions; wrenched harpoons and lances; inextricable

intricacies of rope; shattered oars and planks; all these were there;

but no fatal or even serious ill seemed to have befallen any one. As

with Fedallah the day before, so Ahab was now found grimly clinging to

his boat's broken half, which afforded a comparatively easy float; nor

did it so exhaust him as the previous day's mishap.

But when he was helped to the deck, all eyes were fastened upon him; as

instead of standing by himself he still half-hung upon the shoulder of

Starbuck, who had thus far been the foremost to assist him. His ivory

leg had been snapped off, leaving but one short sharp splinter.

"Aye, aye, Starbuck, 'tis sweet to lean sometimes, be the leaner who he

will; and would old Ahab had leaned oftener than he has."

"The ferrule has not stood, sir," said the carpenter, now coming up; "I

put good work into that leg."

"But no bones broken, sir, I hope," said Stubb with true concern.

"Aye! and all splintered to pieces, Stubb!--d'ye see it.--But even with

a broken bone, old Ahab is untouched; and I account no living bone of

mine one jot more me, than this dead one that's lost. Nor white whale,

nor man, nor fiend, can so much as graze old Ahab in his own proper and

inaccessible being. Can any lead touch yonder floor, any mast scrape

yonder roof?--Aloft there! which way?"

"Dead to leeward, sir."

"Up helm, then; pile on the sail again, ship keepers! down the rest of

the spare boats and rig them--Mr. Starbuck away, and muster the boat's

crews."

"Let me first help thee towards the bulwarks, sir."

"Oh, oh, oh! how this splinter gores me now! Accursed fate! that the

unconquerable captain in the soul should have such a craven mate!"

"Sir?"

"My body, man, not thee. Give me something for a cane--there, that

shivered lance will do. Muster the men. Surely I have not seen him yet.

By heaven it cannot be!--missing?--quick! call them all."

The old man's hinted thought was true. Upon mustering the company, the

Parsee was not there.

"The Parsee!" cried Stubb--"he must have been caught in--"

"The black vomit wrench thee!--run all of ye above, alow, cabin,

forecastle--find him--not gone--not gone!"

But quickly they returned to him with the tidings that the Parsee was

nowhere to be found.

"Aye, sir," said Stubb--"caught among the tangles of your line--I

thought I saw him dragging under."

"MY line! MY line? Gone?--gone? What means that little word?--What

death-knell rings in it, that old Ahab shakes as if he were the belfry.

The harpoon, too!--toss over the litter there,--d'ye see it?--the forged

iron, men, the white whale's--no, no, no,--blistered fool! this hand did

dart it!--'tis in the fish!--Aloft there! Keep him nailed--Quick!--all

hands to the rigging of the boats--collect the oars--harpooneers!

the irons, the irons!--hoist the royals higher--a pull on all the

sheets!--helm there! steady, steady for your life! I'll ten times girdle

the unmeasured globe; yea and dive straight through it, but I'll slay

him yet!

"Great God! but for one single instant show thyself," cried Starbuck;

"never, never wilt thou capture him, old man--In Jesus' name no more of

this, that's worse than devil's madness. Two days chased; twice stove

to splinters; thy very leg once more snatched from under thee; thy evil

shadow gone--all good angels mobbing thee with warnings:--

"What more wouldst thou have?--Shall we keep chasing this murderous fish

till he swamps the last man? Shall we be dragged by him to the bottom

of the sea? Shall we be towed by him to the infernal world? Oh,

oh,--Impiety and blasphemy to hunt him more!"

"Starbuck, of late I've felt strangely moved to thee; ever since that

hour we both saw--thou know'st what, in one another's eyes. But in this

matter of the whale, be the front of thy face to me as the palm of this

hand--a lipless, unfeatured blank. Ahab is for ever Ahab, man. This

whole act's immutably decreed. 'Twas rehearsed by thee and me a billion

years before this ocean rolled. Fool! I am the Fates' lieutenant; I act

under orders. Look thou, underling! that thou obeyest mine.--Stand round

me, men. Ye see an old man cut down to the stump; leaning on a shivered

lance; propped up on a lonely foot. 'Tis Ahab--his body's part; but

Ahab's soul's a centipede, that moves upon a hundred legs. I feel

strained, half stranded, as ropes that tow dismasted frigates in a gale;

and I may look so. But ere I break, ye'll hear me crack; and till ye hear

THAT, know that Ahab's hawser tows his purpose yet. Believe ye, men, in

the things called omens? Then laugh aloud, and cry encore! For ere they

drown, drowning things will twice rise to the surface; then rise again,

to sink for evermore. So with Moby Dick--two days he's floated--tomorrow

will be the third. Aye, men, he'll rise once more,--but only to spout

his last! D'ye feel brave men, brave?"

"As fearless fire," cried Stubb.

"And as mechanical," muttered Ahab. Then as the men went forward, he

muttered on: "The things called omens! And yesterday I talked the same

to Starbuck there, concerning my broken boat. Oh! how valiantly I seek

to drive out of others' hearts what's clinched so fast in mine!--The

Parsee--the Parsee!--gone, gone? and he was to go before:--but still was

to be seen again ere I could perish--How's that?--There's a riddle now

might baffle all the lawyers backed by the ghosts of the whole line

of judges:--like a hawk's beak it pecks my brain. I'LL, I'LL solve it,

though!"

When dusk descended, the whale was still in sight to leeward.

So once more the sail was shortened, and everything passed nearly as

on the previous night; only, the sound of hammers, and the hum of the

grindstone was heard till nearly daylight, as the men toiled by lanterns

in the complete and careful rigging of the spare boats and sharpening

their fresh weapons for the morrow. Meantime, of the broken keel of

Ahab's wrecked craft the carpenter made him another leg; while still as

on the night before, slouched Ahab stood fixed within his scuttle; his

hid, heliotrope glance anticipatingly gone backward on its dial; sat due

eastward for the earliest sun.

CHAPTER 135. The Chase.--Third Day.

The morning of the third day dawned fair and fresh, and once more the

solitary night-man at the fore-mast-head was relieved by crowds of the

daylight look-outs, who dotted every mast and almost every spar.

"D'ye see him?" cried Ahab; but the whale was not yet in sight.

"In his infallible wake, though; but follow that wake, that's all. Helm

there; steady, as thou goest, and hast been going. What a lovely day

again! were it a new-made world, and made for a summer-house to the

angels, and this morning the first of its throwing open to them, a

fairer day could not dawn upon that world. Here's food for thought, had

Ahab time to think; but Ahab never thinks; he only feels, feels, feels;

THAT'S tingling enough for mortal man! to think's audacity. God only has

that right and privilege. Thinking is, or ought to be, a coolness and a

calmness; and our poor hearts throb, and our poor brains beat too much

for that. And yet, I've sometimes thought my brain was very calm--frozen

calm, this old skull cracks so, like a glass in which the contents

turned to ice, and shiver it. And still this hair is growing now; this

moment growing, and heat must breed it; but no, it's like that sort

of common grass that will grow anywhere, between the earthy clefts of

Greenland ice or in Vesuvius lava. How the wild winds blow it; they whip

it about me as the torn shreds of split sails lash the tossed ship they

cling to. A vile wind that has no doubt blown ere this through prison

corridors and cells, and wards of hospitals, and ventilated them, and

now comes blowing hither as innocent as fleeces. Out upon it!--it's

tainted. Were I the wind, I'd blow no more on such a wicked, miserable

world. I'd crawl somewhere to a cave, and slink there. And yet, 'tis a

noble and heroic thing, the wind! who ever conquered it? In every fight

it has the last and bitterest blow. Run tilting at it, and you but run

through it. Ha! a coward wind that strikes stark naked men, but will not

stand to receive a single blow. Even Ahab is a braver thing--a nobler

thing than THAT. Would now the wind but had a body; but all the things

that most exasperate and outrage mortal man, all these things are

bodiless, but only bodiless as objects, not as agents. There's a most

special, a most cunning, oh, a most malicious difference! And yet, I

say again, and swear it now, that there's something all glorious and

gracious in the wind. These warm Trade Winds, at least, that in the

clear heavens blow straight on, in strong and steadfast, vigorous

mildness; and veer not from their mark, however the baser currents of

the sea may turn and tack, and mightiest Mississippies of the land swift

and swerve about, uncertain where to go at last. And by the eternal

Poles! these same Trades that so directly blow my good ship on; these

Trades, or something like them--something so unchangeable, and full as

strong, blow my keeled soul along! To it! Aloft there! What d'ye see?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Nothing! and noon at hand! The doubloon goes a-begging! See the sun!

Aye, aye, it must be so. I've oversailed him. How, got the start? Aye,

he's chasing ME now; not I, HIM--that's bad; I might have known it, too.

Fool! the lines--the harpoons he's towing. Aye, aye, I have run him by

last night. About! about! Come down, all of ye, but the regular look

outs! Man the braces!"

Steering as she had done, the wind had been somewhat on the Pequod's

quarter, so that now being pointed in the reverse direction, the braced

ship sailed hard upon the breeze as she rechurned the cream in her own

white wake.

"Against the wind he now steers for the open jaw," murmured Starbuck to

himself, as he coiled the new-hauled main-brace upon the rail. "God keep

us, but already my bones feel damp within me, and from the inside wet my

flesh. I misdoubt me that I disobey my God in obeying him!"

"Stand by to sway me up!" cried Ahab, advancing to the hempen basket.

"We should meet him soon."

"Aye, aye, sir," and straightway Starbuck did Ahab's bidding, and once

more Ahab swung on high.

A whole hour now passed; gold-beaten out to ages. Time itself now held

long breaths with keen suspense. But at last, some three points off the

weather bow, Ahab descried the spout again, and instantly from the three

mast-heads three shrieks went up as if the tongues of fire had voiced

it.

"Forehead to forehead I meet thee, this third time, Moby Dick! On deck

there!--brace sharper up; crowd her into the wind's eye. He's too

far off to lower yet, Mr. Starbuck. The sails shake! Stand over that

helmsman with a top-maul! So, so; he travels fast, and I must down. But

let me have one more good round look aloft here at the sea; there's

time for that. An old, old sight, and yet somehow so young; aye, and

not changed a wink since I first saw it, a boy, from the sand-hills of

Nantucket! The same!--the same!--the same to Noah as to me. There's

a soft shower to leeward. Such lovely leewardings! They must lead

somewhere--to something else than common land, more palmy than the

palms. Leeward! the white whale goes that way; look to windward,

then; the better if the bitterer quarter. But good bye, good bye, old

mast-head! What's this?--green? aye, tiny mosses in these warped cracks.

No such green weather stains on Ahab's head! There's the difference now

between man's old age and matter's. But aye, old mast, we both grow old

together; sound in our hulls, though, are we not, my ship? Aye, minus

a leg, that's all. By heaven this dead wood has the better of my live

flesh every way. I can't compare with it; and I've known some ships made

of dead trees outlast the lives of men made of the most vital stuff of

vital fathers. What's that he said? he should still go before me, my

pilot; and yet to be seen again? But where? Will I have eyes at the

bottom of the sea, supposing I descend those endless stairs? and all

night I've been sailing from him, wherever he did sink to. Aye, aye,

like many more thou told'st direful truth as touching thyself, O Parsee;

but, Ahab, there thy shot fell short. Good-bye, mast-head--keep a good

eye upon the whale, the while I'm gone. We'll talk to-morrow, nay,

to-night, when the white whale lies down there, tied by head and tail."

He gave the word; and still gazing round him, was steadily lowered

through the cloven blue air to the deck.

In due time the boats were lowered; but as standing in his shallop's

stern, Ahab just hovered upon the point of the descent, he waved to the

mate,--who held one of the tackle-ropes on deck--and bade him pause.

"Starbuck!"

"Sir?"

"For the third time my soul's ship starts upon this voyage, Starbuck."

"Aye, sir, thou wilt have it so."

"Some ships sail from their ports, and ever afterwards are missing,

Starbuck!"

"Truth, sir: saddest truth."

"Some men die at ebb tide; some at low water; some at the full of

the flood;--and I feel now like a billow that's all one crested comb,

Starbuck. I am old;--shake hands with me, man."

Their hands met; their eyes fastened; Starbuck's tears the glue.

"Oh, my captain, my captain!--noble heart--go not--go not!--see, it's a

brave man that weeps; how great the agony of the persuasion then!"

"Lower away!"--cried Ahab, tossing the mate's arm from him. "Stand by

the crew!"

In an instant the boat was pulling round close under the stern.

"The sharks! the sharks!" cried a voice from the low cabin-window there;

"O master, my master, come back!"

But Ahab heard nothing; for his own voice was high-lifted then; and the

boat leaped on.

Yet the voice spake true; for scarce had he pushed from the ship, when

numbers of sharks, seemingly rising from out the dark waters beneath

the hull, maliciously snapped at the blades of the oars, every time they

dipped in the water; and in this way accompanied the boat with their

bites. It is a thing not uncommonly happening to the whale-boats in

those swarming seas; the sharks at times apparently following them in

the same prescient way that vultures hover over the banners of marching

regiments in the east. But these were the first sharks that had been

observed by the Pequod since the White Whale had been first descried;

and whether it was that Ahab's crew were all such tiger-yellow

barbarians, and therefore their flesh more musky to the senses of the

sharks--a matter sometimes well known to affect them,--however it was,

they seemed to follow that one boat without molesting the others.

"Heart of wrought steel!" murmured Starbuck gazing over the side, and

following with his eyes the receding boat--"canst thou yet ring boldly

to that sight?--lowering thy keel among ravening sharks, and followed by

them, open-mouthed to the chase; and this the critical third day?--For

when three days flow together in one continuous intense pursuit; be sure

the first is the morning, the second the noon, and the third the evening

and the end of that thing--be that end what it may. Oh! my God! what

is this that shoots through me, and leaves me so deadly calm, yet

expectant,--fixed at the top of a shudder! Future things swim before me,

as in empty outlines and skeletons; all the past is somehow grown dim.

Mary, girl! thou fadest in pale glories behind me; boy! I seem to

see but thy eyes grown wondrous blue. Strangest problems of life seem

clearing; but clouds sweep between--Is my journey's end coming? My legs

feel faint; like his who has footed it all day. Feel thy heart,--beats

it yet? Stir thyself, Starbuck!--stave it off--move, move!

speak aloud!--Mast-head there! See ye my boy's hand on the

hill?--Crazed;--aloft there!--keep thy keenest eye upon the boats:--

"Mark well the whale!--Ho! again!--drive off that hawk! see! he pecks--he

tears the vane"--pointing to the red flag flying at the main-truck--"Ha!

he soars away with it!--Where's the old man now? see'st thou that sight,

oh Ahab!--shudder, shudder!"

The boats had not gone very far, when by a signal from the mast-heads--a

downward pointed arm, Ahab knew that the whale had sounded; but

intending to be near him at the next rising, he held on his way a little

sideways from the vessel; the becharmed crew maintaining the profoundest

silence, as the head-beat waves hammered and hammered against the

opposing bow.

"Drive, drive in your nails, oh ye waves! to their uttermost heads

drive them in! ye but strike a thing without a lid; and no coffin and no

hearse can be mine:--and hemp only can kill me! Ha! ha!"

Suddenly the waters around them slowly swelled in broad circles; then

quickly upheaved, as if sideways sliding from a submerged berg of

ice, swiftly rising to the surface. A low rumbling sound was heard; a

subterraneous hum; and then all held their breaths; as bedraggled with

trailing ropes, and harpoons, and lances, a vast form shot lengthwise,

but obliquely from the sea. Shrouded in a thin drooping veil of mist, it

hovered for a moment in the rainbowed air; and then fell swamping back

into the deep. Crushed thirty feet upwards, the waters flashed for

an instant like heaps of fountains, then brokenly sank in a shower of

flakes, leaving the circling surface creamed like new milk round the

marble trunk of the whale.

"Give way!" cried Ahab to the oarsmen, and the boats darted forward to

the attack; but maddened by yesterday's fresh irons that corroded in

him, Moby Dick seemed combinedly possessed by all the angels that fell

from heaven. The wide tiers of welded tendons overspreading his broad

white forehead, beneath the transparent skin, looked knitted together;

as head on, he came churning his tail among the boats; and once more

flailed them apart; spilling out the irons and lances from the two

mates' boats, and dashing in one side of the upper part of their bows,

but leaving Ahab's almost without a scar.

While Daggoo and Queequeg were stopping the strained planks; and as the

whale swimming out from them, turned, and showed one entire flank as he

shot by them again; at that moment a quick cry went up. Lashed round

and round to the fish's back; pinioned in the turns upon turns in which,

during the past night, the whale had reeled the involutions of the lines

around him, the half torn body of the Parsee was seen; his sable raiment

frayed to shreds; his distended eyes turned full upon old Ahab.

The harpoon dropped from his hand.

"Befooled, befooled!"--drawing in a long lean breath--"Aye, Parsee! I

see thee again.--Aye, and thou goest before; and this, THIS then is the

hearse that thou didst promise. But I hold thee to the last letter of

thy word. Where is the second hearse? Away, mates, to the ship! those

boats are useless now; repair them if ye can in time, and return to

me; if not, Ahab is enough to die--Down, men! the first thing that but

offers to jump from this boat I stand in, that thing I harpoon. Ye are

not other men, but my arms and my legs; and so obey me.--Where's the

whale? gone down again?"

But he looked too nigh the boat; for as if bent upon escaping with the

corpse he bore, and as if the particular place of the last encounter had

been but a stage in his leeward voyage, Moby Dick was now again steadily

swimming forward; and had almost passed the ship,--which thus far had

been sailing in the contrary direction to him, though for the present

her headway had been stopped. He seemed swimming with his utmost

velocity, and now only intent upon pursuing his own straight path in the

sea.

"Oh! Ahab," cried Starbuck, "not too late is it, even now, the third

day, to desist. See! Moby Dick seeks thee not. It is thou, thou, that

madly seekest him!"

Setting sail to the rising wind, the lonely boat was swiftly impelled to

leeward, by both oars and canvas. And at last when Ahab was sliding

by the vessel, so near as plainly to distinguish Starbuck's face as he

leaned over the rail, he hailed him to turn the vessel about, and follow

him, not too swiftly, at a judicious interval. Glancing upwards, he

saw Tashtego, Queequeg, and Daggoo, eagerly mounting to the three

mast-heads; while the oarsmen were rocking in the two staved boats

which had but just been hoisted to the side, and were busily at work in

repairing them. One after the other, through the port-holes, as he sped,

he also caught flying glimpses of Stubb and Flask, busying themselves

on deck among bundles of new irons and lances. As he saw all this; as he

heard the hammers in the broken boats; far other hammers seemed driving

a nail into his heart. But he rallied. And now marking that the vane or

flag was gone from the main-mast-head, he shouted to Tashtego, who had

just gained that perch, to descend again for another flag, and a hammer

and nails, and so nail it to the mast.

Whether fagged by the three days' running chase, and the resistance

to his swimming in the knotted hamper he bore; or whether it was some

latent deceitfulness and malice in him: whichever was true, the White

Whale's way now began to abate, as it seemed, from the boat so rapidly

nearing him once more; though indeed the whale's last start had not been

so long a one as before. And still as Ahab glided over the waves the

unpitying sharks accompanied him; and so pertinaciously stuck to the

boat; and so continually bit at the plying oars, that the blades became

jagged and crunched, and left small splinters in the sea, at almost

every dip.

"Heed them not! those teeth but give new rowlocks to your oars. Pull on!

'tis the better rest, the shark's jaw than the yielding water."

"But at every bite, sir, the thin blades grow smaller and smaller!"

"They will last long enough! pull on!--But who can tell"--he

muttered--"whether these sharks swim to feast on the whale or on

Ahab?--But pull on! Aye, all alive, now--we near him. The helm! take the

helm! let me pass,"--and so saying two of the oarsmen helped him forward

to the bows of the still flying boat.

At length as the craft was cast to one side, and ran ranging along

with the White Whale's flank, he seemed strangely oblivious of its

advance--as the whale sometimes will--and Ahab was fairly within the

smoky mountain mist, which, thrown off from the whale's spout, curled

round his great, Monadnock hump; he was even thus close to him; when,

with body arched back, and both arms lengthwise high-lifted to the

poise, he darted his fierce iron, and his far fiercer curse into the

hated whale. As both steel and curse sank to the socket, as if sucked

into a morass, Moby Dick sideways writhed; spasmodically rolled his nigh

flank against the bow, and, without staving a hole in it, so suddenly

canted the boat over, that had it not been for the elevated part of the

gunwale to which he then clung, Ahab would once more have been tossed

into the sea. As it was, three of the oarsmen--who foreknew not the

precise instant of the dart, and were therefore unprepared for its

effects--these were flung out; but so fell, that, in an instant two of

them clutched the gunwale again, and rising to its level on a combing

wave, hurled themselves bodily inboard again; the third man helplessly

dropping astern, but still afloat and swimming.

Almost simultaneously, with a mighty volition of ungraduated,

instantaneous swiftness, the White Whale darted through the weltering

sea. But when Ahab cried out to the steersman to take new turns with

the line, and hold it so; and commanded the crew to turn round on their

seats, and tow the boat up to the mark; the moment the treacherous line

felt that double strain and tug, it snapped in the empty air!

"What breaks in me? Some sinew cracks!--'tis whole again; oars! oars!

Burst in upon him!"

Hearing the tremendous rush of the sea-crashing boat, the whale wheeled

round to present his blank forehead at bay; but in that evolution,

catching sight of the nearing black hull of the ship; seemingly seeing

in it the source of all his persecutions; bethinking it--it may be--a

larger and nobler foe; of a sudden, he bore down upon its advancing

prow, smiting his jaws amid fiery showers of foam.

Ahab staggered; his hand smote his forehead. "I grow blind; hands!

stretch out before me that I may yet grope my way. Is't night?"

"The whale! The ship!" cried the cringing oarsmen.

"Oars! oars! Slope downwards to thy depths, O sea, that ere it be for

ever too late, Ahab may slide this last, last time upon his mark! I see:

the ship! the ship! Dash on, my men! Will ye not save my ship?"

But as the oarsmen violently forced their boat through the

sledge-hammering seas, the before whale-smitten bow-ends of two planks

burst through, and in an instant almost, the temporarily disabled boat

lay nearly level with the waves; its half-wading, splashing crew, trying

hard to stop the gap and bale out the pouring water.

Meantime, for that one beholding instant, Tashtego's mast-head hammer

remained suspended in his hand; and the red flag, half-wrapping him as

with a plaid, then streamed itself straight out from him, as his own

forward-flowing heart; while Starbuck and Stubb, standing upon the

bowsprit beneath, caught sight of the down-coming monster just as soon

as he.

"The whale, the whale! Up helm, up helm! Oh, all ye sweet powers of air,

now hug me close! Let not Starbuck die, if die he must, in a woman's

fainting fit. Up helm, I say--ye fools, the jaw! the jaw! Is this the

end of all my bursting prayers? all my life-long fidelities? Oh, Ahab,

Ahab, lo, thy work. Steady! helmsman, steady. Nay, nay! Up helm again!

He turns to meet us! Oh, his unappeasable brow drives on towards one,

whose duty tells him he cannot depart. My God, stand by me now!"

"Stand not by me, but stand under me, whoever you are that will now help

Stubb; for Stubb, too, sticks here. I grin at thee, thou grinning whale!

Who ever helped Stubb, or kept Stubb awake, but Stubb's own unwinking

eye? And now poor Stubb goes to bed upon a mattrass that is all too

soft; would it were stuffed with brushwood! I grin at thee, thou

grinning whale! Look ye, sun, moon, and stars! I call ye assassins of

as good a fellow as ever spouted up his ghost. For all that, I would yet

ring glasses with ye, would ye but hand the cup! Oh, oh! oh, oh! thou

grinning whale, but there'll be plenty of gulping soon! Why fly ye

not, O Ahab! For me, off shoes and jacket to it; let Stubb die in

his drawers! A most mouldy and over salted death, though;--cherries!

cherries! cherries! Oh, Flask, for one red cherry ere we die!"

"Cherries? I only wish that we were where they grow. Oh, Stubb, I hope

my poor mother's drawn my part-pay ere this; if not, few coppers will

now come to her, for the voyage is up."

From the ship's bows, nearly all the seamen now hung inactive; hammers,

bits of plank, lances, and harpoons, mechanically retained in their

hands, just as they had darted from their various employments; all their

enchanted eyes intent upon the whale, which from side to side strangely

vibrating his predestinating head, sent a broad band of overspreading

semicircular foam before him as he rushed. Retribution, swift vengeance,

eternal malice were in his whole aspect, and spite of all that mortal

man could do, the solid white buttress of his forehead smote the ship's

starboard bow, till men and timbers reeled. Some fell flat upon their

faces. Like dislodged trucks, the heads of the harpooneers aloft shook

on their bull-like necks. Through the breach, they heard the waters

pour, as mountain torrents down a flume.

"The ship! The hearse!--the second hearse!" cried Ahab from the boat;

"its wood could only be American!"

Diving beneath the settling ship, the whale ran quivering along its

keel; but turning under water, swiftly shot to the surface again, far

off the other bow, but within a few yards of Ahab's boat, where, for a

time, he lay quiescent.

"I turn my body from the sun. What ho, Tashtego! let me hear thy hammer.

Oh! ye three unsurrendered spires of mine; thou uncracked keel; and only

god-bullied hull; thou firm deck, and haughty helm, and Pole-pointed

prow,--death-glorious ship! must ye then perish, and without me? Am I

cut off from the last fond pride of meanest shipwrecked captains? Oh,

lonely death on lonely life! Oh, now I feel my topmost greatness lies in

my topmost grief. Ho, ho! from all your furthest bounds, pour ye now in,

ye bold billows of my whole foregone life, and top this one piled comber

of my death! Towards thee I roll, thou all-destroying but unconquering

whale; to the last I grapple with thee; from hell's heart I stab at

thee; for hate's sake I spit my last breath at thee. Sink all coffins

and all hearses to one common pool! and since neither can be mine, let

me then tow to pieces, while still chasing thee, though tied to thee,

thou damned whale! THUS, I give up the spear!"

The harpoon was darted; the stricken whale flew forward; with igniting

velocity the line ran through the grooves;--ran foul. Ahab stooped to

clear it; he did clear it; but the flying turn caught him round the

neck, and voicelessly as Turkish mutes bowstring their victim, he was

shot out of the boat, ere the crew knew he was gone. Next instant, the

heavy eye-splice in the rope's final end flew out of the stark-empty

tub, knocked down an oarsman, and smiting the sea, disappeared in its

depths.

For an instant, the tranced boat's crew stood still; then turned. "The

ship? Great God, where is the ship?" Soon they through dim, bewildering

mediums saw her sidelong fading phantom, as in the gaseous Fata Morgana;

only the uppermost masts out of water; while fixed by infatuation, or

fidelity, or fate, to their once lofty perches, the pagan harpooneers

still maintained their sinking lookouts on the sea. And now, concentric

circles seized the lone boat itself, and all its crew, and each floating

oar, and every lance-pole, and spinning, animate and inanimate, all

round and round in one vortex, carried the smallest chip of the Pequod

out of sight.

But as the last whelmings intermixingly poured themselves over the

sunken head of the Indian at the mainmast, leaving a few inches of the

erect spar yet visible, together with long streaming yards of the flag,

which calmly undulated, with ironical coincidings, over the destroying

billows they almost touched;--at that instant, a red arm and a hammer

hovered backwardly uplifted in the open air, in the act of nailing

the flag faster and yet faster to the subsiding spar. A sky-hawk that

tauntingly had followed the main-truck downwards from its natural home

among the stars, pecking at the flag, and incommoding Tashtego there;

this bird now chanced to intercept its broad fluttering wing between the

hammer and the wood; and simultaneously feeling that etherial thrill,

the submerged savage beneath, in his death-gasp, kept his hammer frozen

there; and so the bird of heaven, with archangelic shrieks, and his

imperial beak thrust upwards, and his whole captive form folded in the

flag of Ahab, went down with his ship, which, like Satan, would not sink

to hell till she had dragged a living part of heaven along with her, and

helmeted herself with it.

Now small fowls flew screaming over the yet yawning gulf; a sullen white

surf beat against its steep sides; then all collapsed, and the great

shroud of the sea rolled on as it rolled five thousand years ago.

Epilogue

"AND I ONLY AM ESCAPED ALONE TO TELL THEE" Job.

The drama's done. Why then here does any one step forth?--Because one

did survive the wreck.

It so chanced, that after the Parsee's disappearance, I was he whom the

Fates ordained to take the place of Ahab's bowsman, when that bowsman

assumed the vacant post; the same, who, when on the last day the three

men were tossed from out of the rocking boat, was dropped astern. So,

floating on the margin of the ensuing scene, and in full sight of it,

when the halfspent suction of the sunk ship reached me, I was then,

but slowly, drawn towards the closing vortex. When I reached it, it had

subsided to a creamy pool. Round and round, then, and ever contracting

towards the button-like black bubble at the axis of that slowly wheeling

circle, like another Ixion I did revolve. Till, gaining that vital

centre, the black bubble upward burst; and now, liberated by reason of

its cunning spring, and, owing to its great buoyancy, rising with great

force, the coffin life-buoy shot lengthwise from the sea, fell over, and

floated by my side. Buoyed up by that coffin, for almost one whole day

and night, I floated on a soft and dirgelike main. The unharming sharks,

they glided by as if with padlocks on their mouths; the savage sea-hawks

sailed with sheathed beaks. On the second day, a sail drew near, nearer,

and picked me up at last. It was the devious-cruising Rachel, that in

her retracing search after her missing children, only found another

orphan.

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Posting Date: January 10, 2009 [EBook #2600]

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CONTENTS

BOOK ONE: 1805

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

CHAPTER XIV

CHAPTER XV

CHAPTER XVI

CHAPTER XVII

CHAPTER XVIII

CHAPTER XIX

CHAPTER XX

CHAPTER XXI

CHAPTER XXII

CHAPTER XXIII

CHAPTER XXIV

CHAPTER XXV

CHAPTER XXVI

CHAPTER XXVII

CHAPTER XXVIII

BOOK TWO: 1805

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

CHAPTER XIV

CHAPTER XV

CHAPTER XVI

CHAPTER XVII

CHAPTER XVIII

CHAPTER XIX

CHAPTER XX

CHAPTER XXI

BOOK THREE: 1805

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

CHAPTER XIV

CHAPTER XV

CHAPTER XVI

CHAPTER XVII

CHAPTER XVIII

CHAPTER XIX

BOOK FOUR: 1806

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

CHAPTER XIV

CHAPTER XV

CHAPTER XVI

BOOK FIVE: 1806 - 07

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

CHAPTER XIV

CHAPTER XV

CHAPTER XVI

CHAPTER XVII

CHAPTER XVIII

CHAPTER XIX

CHAPTER XX

CHAPTER XXI

CHAPTER XXII

BOOK SIX: 1808 - 10

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

CHAPTER XIV

CHAPTER XV

CHAPTER XVI

CHAPTER XVII

CHAPTER XVIII

CHAPTER XIX

CHAPTER XX

CHAPTER XXI

CHAPTER XXII

CHAPTER XXIII

CHAPTER XXIV

CHAPTER XXV

CHAPTER XXVI

BOOK SEVEN: 1810 - 11

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

BOOK EIGHT: 1811 - 12

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

CHAPTER XIV

CHAPTER XV

CHAPTER XVI

CHAPTER XVII

CHAPTER XVIII

CHAPTER XIX

CHAPTER XX

CHAPTER XXI

CHAPTER XXII

BOOK NINE: 1812

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

CHAPTER XIV

CHAPTER XV

CHAPTER XVI

CHAPTER XVII

CHAPTER XVIII

CHAPTER XIX

CHAPTER XX

CHAPTER XXI

CHAPTER XXII

CHAPTER XXIII

BOOK TEN: 1812

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

CHAPTER XIV

CHAPTER XV

CHAPTER XVI

CHAPTER XVII

CHAPTER XVIII

CHAPTER XIX

CHAPTER XX

CHAPTER XXI

CHAPTER XXII

CHAPTER XXIII

CHAPTER XXIV

CHAPTER XXV

CHAPTER XXVI

CHAPTER XXVII

CHAPTER XXVIII

CHAPTER XXIX

CHAPTER XXX

CHAPTER XXXI

CHAPTER XXXII

CHAPTER XXXIII

CHAPTER XXXIV

CHAPTER XXXV

CHAPTER XXXVI

CHAPTER XXXVII

CHAPTER XXXVIII

CHAPTER XXXIX

BOOK ELEVEN: 1812

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

CHAPTER XIV

CHAPTER XV

CHAPTER XVI

CHAPTER XVII

CHAPTER XVIII

CHAPTER XIX

CHAPTER XX

CHAPTER XXI

CHAPTER XXII

CHAPTER XXIII

CHAPTER XXIV

CHAPTER XXV

CHAPTER XXVI

CHAPTER XXVII

CHAPTER XXVIII

CHAPTER XXIX

CHAPTER XXX

CHAPTER XXXI

CHAPTER XXXII

CHAPTER XXXIII

CHAPTER XXXIV

BOOK TWELVE: 1812

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

CHAPTER XIV

CHAPTER XV

CHAPTER XVI

BOOK THIRTEEN: 1812

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

CHAPTER XIV

CHAPTER XV

CHAPTER XVI

CHAPTER XVII

CHAPTER XVIII

CHAPTER XIX

BOOK FOURTEEN: 1812

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

CHAPTER XIV

CHAPTER XV

CHAPTER XVI

CHAPTER XVII

CHAPTER XVIII

CHAPTER XIX

BOOK FIFTEEN: 1812 - 13

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

CHAPTER XIV

CHAPTER XV

CHAPTER XVI

CHAPTER XVII

CHAPTER XVIII

CHAPTER XIX

CHAPTER XX

FIRST EPILOGUE: 1813 - 20

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XIII

CHAPTER XIV

CHAPTER XV

CHAPTER XVI

SECOND EPILOGUE

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VIII

CHAPTER IX

CHAPTER X

CHAPTER XI

CHAPTER XII

BOOK ONE: 1805

CHAPTER I

"Well, Prince, so Genoa and Lucca are now just family estates of the

Buonapartes. But I warn you, if you don't tell me that this means war,

if you still try to defend the infamies and horrors perpetrated by that

Antichrist--I really believe he is Antichrist--I will have nothing more

to do with you and you are no longer my friend, no longer my 'faithful

slave,' as you call yourself! But how do you do? I see I have frightened

you--sit down and tell me all the news."

It was in July, 1805, and the speaker was the well-known Anna Pavlovna

Scherer, maid of honor and favorite of the Empress Marya Fedorovna. With

these words she greeted Prince Vasili Kuragin, a man of high rank and

importance, who was the first to arrive at her reception. Anna Pavlovna

had had a cough for some days. She was, as she said, suffering from la

grippe; grippe being then a new word in St. Petersburg, used only by the

elite.

All her invitations without exception, written in French, and delivered

by a scarlet-liveried footman that morning, ran as follows:

"If you have nothing better to do, Count (or Prince), and if the

prospect of spending an evening with a poor invalid is not too terrible,

I shall be very charmed to see you tonight between 7 and 10--Annette

Scherer."

"Heavens! what a virulent attack!" replied the prince, not in the least

disconcerted by this reception. He had just entered, wearing an

embroidered court uniform, knee breeches, and shoes, and had stars on

his breast and a serene expression on his flat face. He spoke in that

refined French in which our grandfathers not only spoke but thought, and

with the gentle, patronizing intonation natural to a man of importance

who had grown old in society and at court. He went up to Anna Pavlovna,

kissed her hand, presenting to her his bald, scented, and shining head,

and complacently seated himself on the sofa.

"First of all, dear friend, tell me how you are. Set your friend's mind

at rest," said he without altering his tone, beneath the politeness and

affected sympathy of which indifference and even irony could be

discerned.

"Can one be well while suffering morally? Can one be calm in times like

these if one has any feeling?" said Anna Pavlovna. "You are staying the

whole evening, I hope?"

"And the fete at the English ambassador's? Today is Wednesday. I must

put in an appearance there," said the prince. "My daughter is coming for

me to take me there."

"I thought today's fete had been canceled. I confess all these

festivities and fireworks are becoming wearisome."

"If they had known that you wished it, the entertainment would have been

put off," said the prince, who, like a wound-up clock, by force of habit

said things he did not even wish to be believed.

"Don't tease! Well, and what has been decided about Novosiltsev's

dispatch? You know everything."

"What can one say about it?" replied the prince in a cold, listless

tone. "What has been decided? They have decided that Buonaparte has

burnt his boats, and I believe that we are ready to burn ours."

Prince Vasili always spoke languidly, like an actor repeating a stale

part. Anna Pavlovna Scherer on the contrary, despite her forty years,

overflowed with animation and impulsiveness. To be an enthusiast had

become her social vocation and, sometimes even when she did not feel

like it, she became enthusiastic in order not to disappoint the

expectations of those who knew her. The subdued smile which, though it

did not suit her faded features, always played round her lips expressed,

as in a spoiled child, a continual consciousness of her charming defect,

which she neither wished, nor could, nor considered it necessary, to

correct.

In the midst of a conversation on political matters Anna Pavlovna burst

out:

"Oh, don't speak to me of Austria. Perhaps I don't understand things,

but Austria never has wished, and does not wish, for war. She is

betraying us! Russia alone must save Europe. Our gracious sovereign

recognizes his high vocation and will be true to it. That is the one

thing I have faith in! Our good and wonderful sovereign has to perform

the noblest role on earth, and he is so virtuous and noble that God will

not forsake him. He will fulfill his vocation and crush the hydra of

revolution, which has become more terrible than ever in the person of

this murderer and villain! We alone must avenge the blood of the just

one.... Whom, I ask you, can we rely on?... England with her commercial

spirit will not and cannot understand the Emperor Alexander's loftiness

of soul. She has refused to evacuate Malta. She wanted to find, and

still seeks, some secret motive in our actions. What answer did

Novosiltsev get? None. The English have not understood and cannot

understand the self-abnegation of our Emperor who wants nothing for

himself, but only desires the good of mankind. And what have they

promised? Nothing! And what little they have promised they will not

perform! Prussia has always declared that Buonaparte is invincible, and

that all Europe is powerless before him.... And I don't believe a word

that Hardenburg says, or Haugwitz either. This famous Prussian

neutrality is just a trap. I have faith only in God and the lofty

destiny of our adored monarch. He will save Europe!"

She suddenly paused, smiling at her own impetuosity.

"I think," said the prince with a smile, "that if you had been sent

instead of our dear Wintzingerode you would have captured the King of

Prussia's consent by assault. You are so eloquent. Will you give me a

cup of tea?"

"In a moment. A propos," she added, becoming calm again, "I am expecting

two very interesting men tonight, le Vicomte de Mortemart, who is

connected with the Montmorencys through the Rohans, one of the best

French families. He is one of the genuine emigres, the good ones. And

also the Abbe Morio. Do you know that profound thinker? He has been

received by the Emperor. Had you heard?"

"I shall be delighted to meet them," said the prince. "But tell me," he

added with studied carelessness as if it had only just occurred to him,

though the question he was about to ask was the chief motive of his

visit, "is it true that the Dowager Empress wants Baron Funke to be

appointed first secretary at Vienna? The baron by all accounts is a poor

creature."

Prince Vasili wished to obtain this post for his son, but others were

trying through the Dowager Empress Marya Fedorovna to secure it for the

baron.

Anna Pavlovna almost closed her eyes to indicate that neither she nor

anyone else had a right to criticize what the Empress desired or was

pleased with.

"Baron Funke has been recommended to the Dowager Empress by her sister,"

was all she said, in a dry and mournful tone.

As she named the Empress, Anna Pavlovna's face suddenly assumed an

expression of profound and sincere devotion and respect mingled with

sadness, and this occurred every time she mentioned her illustrious

patroness. She added that Her Majesty had deigned to show Baron Funke

beaucoup d'estime, and again her face clouded over with sadness.

The prince was silent and looked indifferent. But, with the womanly and

courtierlike quickness and tact habitual to her, Anna Pavlovna wished

both to rebuke him (for daring to speak as he had done of a man

recommended to the Empress) and at the same time to console him, so she

said:

"Now about your family. Do you know that since your daughter came out

everyone has been enraptured by her? They say she is amazingly

beautiful."

The prince bowed to signify his respect and gratitude.

"I often think," she continued after a short pause, drawing nearer to

the prince and smiling amiably at him as if to show that political and

social topics were ended and the time had come for intimate

conversation--"I often think how unfairly sometimes the joys of life are

distributed. Why has fate given you two such splendid children? I don't

speak of Anatole, your youngest. I don't like him," she added in a tone

admitting of no rejoinder and raising her eyebrows. "Two such charming

children. And really you appreciate them less than anyone, and so you

don't deserve to have them."

And she smiled her ecstatic smile.

"I can't help it," said the prince. "Lavater would have said I lack the

bump of paternity."

"Don't joke; I mean to have a serious talk with you. Do you know I am

dissatisfied with your younger son? Between ourselves" (and her face

assumed its melancholy expression), "he was mentioned at Her Majesty's

and you were pitied...."

The prince answered nothing, but she looked at him significantly,

awaiting a reply. He frowned.

"What would you have me do?" he said at last. "You know I did all a

father could for their education, and they have both turned out fools.

Hippolyte is at least a quiet fool, but Anatole is an active one. That

is the only difference between them." He said this smiling in a way more

natural and animated than usual, so that the wrinkles round his mouth

very clearly revealed something unexpectedly coarse and unpleasant.

"And why are children born to such men as you? If you were not a father

there would be nothing I could reproach you with," said Anna Pavlovna,

looking up pensively.

"I am your faithful slave and to you alone I can confess that my

children are the bane of my life. It is the cross I have to bear. That

is how I explain it to myself. It can't be helped!"

He said no more, but expressed his resignation to cruel fate by a

gesture. Anna Pavlovna meditated.

"Have you never thought of marrying your prodigal son Anatole?" she

asked. "They say old maids have a mania for matchmaking, and though I

don't feel that weakness in myself as yet, I know a little person who is

very unhappy with her father. She is a relation of yours, Princess Mary

Bolkonskaya."

Prince Vasili did not reply, though, with the quickness of memory and

perception befitting a man of the world, he indicated by a movement of

the head that he was considering this information.

"Do you know," he said at last, evidently unable to check the sad

current of his thoughts, "that Anatole is costing me forty thousand

rubles a year? And," he went on after a pause, "what will it be in five

years, if he goes on like this?" Presently he added: "That's what we

fathers have to put up with.... Is this princess of yours rich?"

"Her father is very rich and stingy. He lives in the country. He is the

well-known Prince Bolkonski who had to retire from the army under the

late Emperor, and was nicknamed 'the King of Prussia.' He is very clever

but eccentric, and a bore. The poor girl is very unhappy. She has a

brother; I think you know him, he married Lise Meinen lately. He is an

aide-de-camp of Kutuzov's and will be here tonight."

"Listen, dear Annette," said the prince, suddenly taking Anna Pavlovna's

hand and for some reason drawing it downwards. "Arrange that affair for

me and I shall always be your most devoted slave-slafe with an f, as a

village elder of mine writes in his reports. She is rich and of good

family and that's all I want."

And with the familiarity and easy grace peculiar to him, he raised the

maid of honor's hand to his lips, kissed it, and swung it to and fro as

he lay back in his armchair, looking in another direction.

"Attendez," said Anna Pavlovna, reflecting, "I'll speak to Lise, young

Bolkonski's wife, this very evening, and perhaps the thing can be

arranged. It shall be on your family's behalf that I'll start my

apprenticeship as old maid."

CHAPTER II

Anna Pavlovna's drawing room was gradually filling. The highest

Petersburg society was assembled there: people differing widely in age

and character but alike in the social circle to which they belonged.

Prince Vasili's daughter, the beautiful Helene, came to take her father

to the ambassador's entertainment; she wore a ball dress and her badge

as maid of honor. The youthful little Princess Bolkonskaya, known as la

femme la plus seduisante de Petersbourg, \* was also there. She had been

married during the previous winter, and being pregnant did not go to any

large gatherings, but only to small receptions. Prince Vasili's son,

Hippolyte, had come with Mortemart, whom he introduced. The Abbe Morio

and many others had also come.

\* The most fascinating woman in Petersburg.

To each new arrival Anna Pavlovna said, "You have not yet seen my aunt,"

or "You do not know my aunt?" and very gravely conducted him or her to a

little old lady, wearing large bows of ribbon in her cap, who had come

sailing in from another room as soon as the guests began to arrive; and

slowly turning her eyes from the visitor to her aunt, Anna Pavlovna

mentioned each one's name and then left them.

Each visitor performed the ceremony of greeting this old aunt whom not

one of them knew, not one of them wanted to know, and not one of them

cared about; Anna Pavlovna observed these greetings with mournful and

solemn interest and silent approval. The aunt spoke to each of them in

the same words, about their health and her own, and the health of Her

Majesty, "who, thank God, was better today." And each visitor, though

politeness prevented his showing impatience, left the old woman with a

sense of relief at having performed a vexatious duty and did not return

to her the whole evening.

The young Princess Bolkonskaya had brought some work in a gold-

embroidered velvet bag. Her pretty little upper lip, on which a delicate

dark down was just perceptible, was too short for her teeth, but it

lifted all the more sweetly, and was especially charming when she

occasionally drew it down to meet the lower lip. As is always the case

with a thoroughly attractive woman, her defect--the shortness of her

upper lip and her half-open mouth--seemed to be her own special and

peculiar form of beauty. Everyone brightened at the sight of this pretty

young woman, so soon to become a mother, so full of life and health, and

carrying her burden so lightly. Old men and dull dispirited young ones

who looked at her, after being in her company and talking to her a

little while, felt as if they too were becoming, like her, full of life

and health. All who talked to her, and at each word saw her bright smile

and the constant gleam of her white teeth, thought that they were in a

specially amiable mood that day.

The little princess went round the table with quick, short, swaying

steps, her workbag on her arm, and gaily spreading out her dress sat

down on a sofa near the silver samovar, as if all she was doing was a

pleasure to herself and to all around her. "I have brought my work,"

said she in French, displaying her bag and addressing all present.

"Mind, Annette, I hope you have not played a wicked trick on me," she

added, turning to her hostess. "You wrote that it was to be quite a

small reception, and just see how badly I am dressed." And she spread

out her arms to show her short-waisted, lace-trimmed, dainty gray dress,

girdled with a broad ribbon just below the breast.

"Soyez tranquille, Lise, you will always be prettier than anyone else,"

replied Anna Pavlovna.

"You know," said the princess in the same tone of voice and still in

French, turning to a general, "my husband is deserting me? He is going

to get himself killed. Tell me what this wretched war is for?" she

added, addressing Prince Vasili, and without waiting for an answer she

turned to speak to his daughter, the beautiful Helene.

"What a delightful woman this little princess is!" said Prince Vasili to

Anna Pavlovna.

One of the next arrivals was a stout, heavily built young man with

close-cropped hair, spectacles, the light-colored breeches fashionable

at that time, a very high ruffle, and a brown dress coat. This stout

young man was an illegitimate son of Count Bezukhov, a well-known

grandee of Catherine's time who now lay dying in Moscow. The young man

had not yet entered either the military or civil service, as he had only

just returned from abroad where he had been educated, and this was his

first appearance in society. Anna Pavlovna greeted him with the nod she

accorded to the lowest hierarchy in her drawing room. But in spite of

this lowest-grade greeting, a look of anxiety and fear, as at the sight

of something too large and unsuited to the place, came over her face

when she saw Pierre enter. Though he was certainly rather bigger than

the other men in the room, her anxiety could only have reference to the

clever though shy, but observant and natural, expression which

distinguished him from everyone else in that drawing room.

"It is very good of you, Monsieur Pierre, to come and visit a poor

invalid," said Anna Pavlovna, exchanging an alarmed glance with her aunt

as she conducted him to her.

Pierre murmured something unintelligible, and continued to look round as

if in search of something. On his way to the aunt he bowed to the little

princess with a pleased smile, as to an intimate acquaintance.

Anna Pavlovna's alarm was justified, for Pierre turned away from the

aunt without waiting to hear her speech about Her Majesty's health. Anna

Pavlovna in dismay detained him with the words: "Do you know the Abbe

Morio? He is a most interesting man."

"Yes, I have heard of his scheme for perpetual peace, and it is very

interesting but hardly feasible."

"You think so?" rejoined Anna Pavlovna in order to say something and get

away to attend to her duties as hostess. But Pierre now committed a

reverse act of impoliteness. First he had left a lady before she had

finished speaking to him, and now he continued to speak to another who

wished to get away. With his head bent, and his big feet spread apart,

he began explaining his reasons for thinking the abbe's plan chimerical.

"We will talk of it later," said Anna Pavlovna with a smile.

And having got rid of this young man who did not know how to behave, she

resumed her duties as hostess and continued to listen and watch, ready

to help at any point where the conversation might happen to flag. As the

foreman of a spinning mill, when he has set the hands to work, goes

round and notices here a spindle that has stopped or there one that

creaks or makes more noise than it should, and hastens to check the

machine or set it in proper motion, so Anna Pavlovna moved about her

drawing room, approaching now a silent, now a too-noisy group, and by a

word or slight rearrangement kept the conversational machine in steady,

proper, and regular motion. But amid these cares her anxiety about

Pierre was evident. She kept an anxious watch on him when he approached

the group round Mortemart to listen to what was being said there, and

again when he passed to another group whose center was the abbe.

Pierre had been educated abroad, and this reception at Anna Pavlovna's

was the first he had attended in Russia. He knew that all the

intellectual lights of Petersburg were gathered there and, like a child

in a toyshop, did not know which way to look, afraid of missing any

clever conversation that was to be heard. Seeing the self-confident and

refined expression on the faces of those present he was always expecting

to hear something very profound. At last he came up to Morio. Here the

conversation seemed interesting and he stood waiting for an opportunity

to express his own views, as young people are fond of doing.

CHAPTER III

Anna Pavlovna's reception was in full swing. The spindles hummed

steadily and ceaselessly on all sides. With the exception of the aunt,

beside whom sat only one elderly lady, who with her thin careworn face

was rather out of place in this brilliant society, the whole company had

settled into three groups. One, chiefly masculine, had formed round the

abbe. Another, of young people, was grouped round the beautiful Princess

Helene, Prince Vasili's daughter, and the little Princess Bolkonskaya,

very pretty and rosy, though rather too plump for her age. The third

group was gathered round Mortemart and Anna Pavlovna.

The vicomte was a nice-looking young man with soft features and polished

manners, who evidently considered himself a celebrity but out of

politeness modestly placed himself at the disposal of the circle in

which he found himself. Anna Pavlovna was obviously serving him up as a

treat to her guests. As a clever maitre d'hotel serves up as a specially

choice delicacy a piece of meat that no one who had seen it in the

kitchen would have cared to eat, so Anna Pavlovna served up to her

guests, first the vicomte and then the abbe, as peculiarly choice

morsels. The group about Mortemart immediately began discussing the

murder of the Duc d'Enghien. The vicomte said that the Duc d'Enghien had

perished by his own magnanimity, and that there were particular reasons

for Buonaparte's hatred of him.

"Ah, yes! Do tell us all about it, Vicomte," said Anna Pavlovna, with a

pleasant feeling that there was something a la Louis XV in the sound of

that sentence: "Contez nous cela, Vicomte."

The vicomte bowed and smiled courteously in token of his willingness to

comply. Anna Pavlovna arranged a group round him, inviting everyone to

listen to his tale.

"The vicomte knew the duc personally," whispered Anna Pavlovna to one of

the guests. "The vicomte is a wonderful raconteur," said she to another.

"How evidently he belongs to the best society," said she to a third; and

the vicomte was served up to the company in the choicest and most

advantageous style, like a well-garnished joint of roast beef on a hot

dish.

The vicomte wished to begin his story and gave a subtle smile.

"Come over here, Helene, dear," said Anna Pavlovna to the beautiful

young princess who was sitting some way off, the center of another

group.

The princess smiled. She rose with the same unchanging smile with which

she had first entered the room--the smile of a perfectly beautiful

woman. With a slight rustle of her white dress trimmed with moss and

ivy, with a gleam of white shoulders, glossy hair, and sparkling

diamonds, she passed between the men who made way for her, not looking

at any of them but smiling on all, as if graciously allowing each the

privilege of admiring her beautiful figure and shapely shoulders, back,

and bosom--which in the fashion of those days were very much exposed--

and she seemed to bring the glamour of a ballroom with her as she moved

toward Anna Pavlovna. Helene was so lovely that not only did she not

show any trace of coquetry, but on the contrary she even appeared shy of

her unquestionable and all too victorious beauty. She seemed to wish,

but to be unable, to diminish its effect.

"How lovely!" said everyone who saw her; and the vicomte lifted his

shoulders and dropped his eyes as if startled by something extraordinary

when she took her seat opposite and beamed upon him also with her

unchanging smile.

"Madame, I doubt my ability before such an audience," said he, smilingly

inclining his head.

The princess rested her bare round arm on a little table and considered

a reply unnecessary. She smilingly waited. All the time the story was

being told she sat upright, glancing now at her beautiful round arm,

altered in shape by its pressure on the table, now at her still more

beautiful bosom, on which she readjusted a diamond necklace. From time

to time she smoothed the folds of her dress, and whenever the story

produced an effect she glanced at Anna Pavlovna, at once adopted just

the expression she saw on the maid of honor's face, and again relapsed

into her radiant smile.

The little princess had also left the tea table and followed Helene.

"Wait a moment, I'll get my work.... Now then, what are you thinking

of?" she went on, turning to Prince Hippolyte. "Fetch me my workbag."

There was a general movement as the princess, smiling and talking

merrily to everyone at once, sat down and gaily arranged herself in her

seat.

"Now I am all right," she said, and asking the vicomte to begin, she

took up her work.

Prince Hippolyte, having brought the workbag, joined the circle and

moving a chair close to hers seated himself beside her.

Le charmant Hippolyte was surprising by his extraordinary resemblance to

his beautiful sister, but yet more by the fact that in spite of this

resemblance he was exceedingly ugly. His features were like his

sister's, but while in her case everything was lit up by a joyous, self-

satisfied, youthful, and constant smile of animation, and by the

wonderful classic beauty of her figure, his face on the contrary was

dulled by imbecility and a constant expression of sullen self-

confidence, while his body was thin and weak. His eyes, nose, and mouth

all seemed puckered into a vacant, wearied grimace, and his arms and

legs always fell into unnatural positions.

"It's not going to be a ghost story?" said he, sitting down beside the

princess and hastily adjusting his lorgnette, as if without this

instrument he could not begin to speak.

"Why no, my dear fellow," said the astonished narrator, shrugging his

shoulders.

"Because I hate ghost stories," said Prince Hippolyte in a tone which

showed that he only understood the meaning of his words after he had

uttered them.

He spoke with such self-confidence that his hearers could not be sure

whether what he said was very witty or very stupid. He was dressed in a

dark-green dress coat, knee breeches of the color of cuisse de nymphe

effrayee, as he called it, shoes, and silk stockings.

The vicomte told his tale very neatly. It was an anecdote, then current,

to the effect that the Duc d'Enghien had gone secretly to Paris to visit

Mademoiselle George; that at her house he came upon Bonaparte, who also

enjoyed the famous actress' favors, and that in his presence Napoleon

happened to fall into one of the fainting fits to which he was subject,

and was thus at the duc's mercy. The latter spared him, and this

magnanimity Bonaparte subsequently repaid by death.

The story was very pretty and interesting, especially at the point where

the rivals suddenly recognized one another; and the ladies looked

agitated.

"Charming!" said Anna Pavlovna with an inquiring glance at the little

princess.

"Charming!" whispered the little princess, sticking the needle into her

work as if to testify that the interest and fascination of the story

prevented her from going on with it.

The vicomte appreciated this silent praise and smiling gratefully

prepared to continue, but just then Anna Pavlovna, who had kept a

watchful eye on the young man who so alarmed her, noticed that he was

talking too loudly and vehemently with the abbe, so she hurried to the

rescue. Pierre had managed to start a conversation with the abbe about

the balance of power, and the latter, evidently interested by the young

man's simple-minded eagerness, was explaining his pet theory. Both were

talking and listening too eagerly and too naturally, which was why Anna

Pavlovna disapproved.

"The means are... the balance of power in Europe and the rights of the

people," the abbe was saying. "It is only necessary for one powerful

nation like Russia--barbaric as she is said to be--to place herself

disinterestedly at the head of an alliance having for its object the

maintenance of the balance of power of Europe, and it would save the

world!"

"But how are you to get that balance?" Pierre was beginning.

At that moment Anna Pavlovna came up and, looking severely at Pierre,

asked the Italian how he stood Russian climate. The Italian's face

instantly changed and assumed an offensively affected, sugary

expression, evidently habitual to him when conversing with women.

"I am so enchanted by the brilliancy of the wit and culture of the

society, more especially of the feminine society, in which I have had

the honor of being received, that I have not yet had time to think of

the climate," said he.

Not letting the abbe and Pierre escape, Anna Pavlovna, the more

conveniently to keep them under observation, brought them into the

larger circle.

CHAPTER IV

Just then another visitor entered the drawing room: Prince Andrew

Bolkonski, the little princess' husband. He was a very handsome young

man, of medium height, with firm, clearcut features. Everything about

him, from his weary, bored expression to his quiet, measured step,

offered a most striking contrast to his quiet, little wife. It was

evident that he not only knew everyone in the drawing room, but had

found them to be so tiresome that it wearied him to look at or listen to

them. And among all these faces that he found so tedious, none seemed to

bore him so much as that of his pretty wife. He turned away from her

with a grimace that distorted his handsome face, kissed Anna Pavlovna's

hand, and screwing up his eyes scanned the whole company.

"You are off to the war, Prince?" said Anna Pavlovna.

"General Kutuzov," said Bolkonski, speaking French and stressing the

last syllable of the general's name like a Frenchman, "has been pleased

to take me as an aide-de-camp...."

"And Lise, your wife?"

"She will go to the country."

"Are you not ashamed to deprive us of your charming wife?"

"Andre," said his wife, addressing her husband in the same coquettish

manner in which she spoke to other men, "the vicomte has been telling us

such a tale about Mademoiselle George and Buonaparte!"

Prince Andrew screwed up his eyes and turned away. Pierre, who from the

moment Prince Andrew entered the room had watched him with glad,

affectionate eyes, now came up and took his arm. Before he looked round

Prince Andrew frowned again, expressing his annoyance with whoever was

touching his arm, but when he saw Pierre's beaming face he gave him an

unexpectedly kind and pleasant smile.

"There now!... So you, too, are in the great world?" said he to Pierre.

"I knew you would be here," replied Pierre. "I will come to supper with

you. May I?" he added in a low voice so as not to disturb the vicomte

who was continuing his story.

"No, impossible!" said Prince Andrew, laughing and pressing Pierre's

hand to show that there was no need to ask the question. He wished to

say something more, but at that moment Prince Vasili and his daughter

got up to go and the two young men rose to let them pass.

"You must excuse me, dear Vicomte," said Prince Vasili to the Frenchman,

holding him down by the sleeve in a friendly way to prevent his rising.

"This unfortunate fete at the ambassador's deprives me of a pleasure,

and obliges me to interrupt you. I am very sorry to leave your

enchanting party," said he, turning to Anna Pavlovna.

His daughter, Princess Helene, passed between the chairs, lightly

holding up the folds of her dress, and the smile shone still more

radiantly on her beautiful face. Pierre gazed at her with rapturous,

almost frightened, eyes as she passed him.

"Very lovely," said Prince Andrew.

"Very," said Pierre.

In passing Prince Vasili seized Pierre's hand and said to Anna Pavlovna:

"Educate this bear for me! He has been staying with me a whole month and

this is the first time I have seen him in society. Nothing is so

necessary for a young man as the society of clever women."

Anna Pavlovna smiled and promised to take Pierre in hand. She knew his

father to be a connection of Prince Vasili's. The elderly lady who had

been sitting with the old aunt rose hurriedly and overtook Prince Vasili

in the anteroom. All the affectation of interest she had assumed had

left her kindly and tear-worn face and it now expressed only anxiety and

fear.

"How about my son Boris, Prince?" said she, hurrying after him into the

anteroom. "I can't remain any longer in Petersburg. Tell me what news I

may take back to my poor boy."

Although Prince Vasili listened reluctantly and not very politely to the

elderly lady, even betraying some impatience, she gave him an

ingratiating and appealing smile, and took his hand that he might not go

away.

"What would it cost you to say a word to the Emperor, and then he would

be transferred to the Guards at once?" said she.

"Believe me, Princess, I am ready to do all I can," answered Prince

Vasili, "but it is difficult for me to ask the Emperor. I should advise

you to appeal to Rumyantsev through Prince Golitsyn. That would be the

best way."

The elderly lady was a Princess Drubetskaya, belonging to one of the

best families in Russia, but she was poor, and having long been out of

society had lost her former influential connections. She had now come to

Petersburg to procure an appointment in the Guards for her only son. It

was, in fact, solely to meet Prince Vasili that she had obtained an

invitation to Anna Pavlovna's reception and had sat listening to the

vicomte's story. Prince Vasili's words frightened her, an embittered

look clouded her once handsome face, but only for a moment; then she

smiled again and clutched Prince Vasili's arm more tightly.

"Listen to me, Prince," said she. "I have never yet asked you for

anything and I never will again, nor have I ever reminded you of my

father's friendship for you; but now I entreat you for God's sake to do

this for my son--and I shall always regard you as a benefactor," she

added hurriedly. "No, don't be angry, but promise! I have asked Golitsyn

and he has refused. Be the kindhearted man you always were," she said,

trying to smile though tears were in her eyes.

"Papa, we shall be late," said Princess Helene, turning her beautiful

head and looking over her classically molded shoulder as she stood

waiting by the door.

Influence in society, however, is a capital which has to be economized

if it is to last. Prince Vasili knew this, and having once realized that

if he asked on behalf of all who begged of him, he would soon be unable

to ask for himself, he became chary of using his influence. But in

Princess Drubetskaya's case he felt, after her second appeal, something

like qualms of conscience. She had reminded him of what was quite true;

he had been indebted to her father for the first steps in his career.

Moreover, he could see by her manners that she was one of those women--

mostly mothers--who, having once made up their minds, will not rest

until they have gained their end, and are prepared if necessary to go on

insisting day after day and hour after hour, and even to make scenes.

This last consideration moved him.

"My dear Anna Mikhaylovna," said he with his usual familiarity and

weariness of tone, "it is almost impossible for me to do what you ask;

but to prove my devotion to you and how I respect your father's memory,

I will do the impossible--your son shall be transferred to the Guards.

Here is my hand on it. Are you satisfied?"

"My dear benefactor! This is what I expected from you--I knew your

kindness!" He turned to go.

"Wait--just a word! When he has been transferred to the Guards..." she

faltered. "You are on good terms with Michael Ilarionovich Kutuzov...

recommend Boris to him as adjutant! Then I shall be at rest, and

then..."

Prince Vasili smiled.

"No, I won't promise that. You don't know how Kutuzov is pestered since

his appointment as Commander in Chief. He told me himself that all the

Moscow ladies have conspired to give him all their sons as adjutants."

"No, but do promise! I won't let you go! My dear benefactor..."

"Papa," said his beautiful daughter in the same tone as before, "we

shall be late."

"Well, au revoir! Good-bye! You hear her?"

"Then tomorrow you will speak to the Emperor?"

"Certainly; but about Kutuzov, I don't promise."

"Do promise, do promise, Vasili!" cried Anna Mikhaylovna as he went,

with the smile of a coquettish girl, which at one time probably came

naturally to her, but was now very ill-suited to her careworn face.

Apparently she had forgotten her age and by force of habit employed all

the old feminine arts. But as soon as the prince had gone her face

resumed its former cold, artificial expression. She returned to the

group where the vicomte was still talking, and again pretended to

listen, while waiting till it would be time to leave. Her task was

accomplished.

CHAPTER V

"And what do you think of this latest comedy, the coronation at Milan?"

asked Anna Pavlovna, "and of the comedy of the people of Genoa and Lucca

laying their petitions before Monsieur Buonaparte, and Monsieur

Buonaparte sitting on a throne and granting the petitions of the

nations? Adorable! It is enough to make one's head whirl! It is as if

the whole world had gone crazy."

Prince Andrew looked Anna Pavlovna straight in the face with a sarcastic

smile.

"'Dieu me la donne, gare a qui la touche!' \* They say he was very fine

when he said that," he remarked, repeating the words in Italian: "'Dio

mi l'ha dato. Guai a chi la tocchi!'"

\* God has given it to me, let him who touches it beware!

"I hope this will prove the last drop that will make the glass run

over," Anna Pavlovna continued. "The sovereigns will not be able to

endure this man who is a menace to everything."

"The sovereigns? I do not speak of Russia," said the vicomte, polite but

hopeless: "The sovereigns, madame... What have they done for Louis XVII,

for the Queen, or for Madame Elizabeth? Nothing!" and he became more

animated. "And believe me, they are reaping the reward of their betrayal

of the Bourbon cause. The sovereigns! Why, they are sending ambassadors

to compliment the usurper."

And sighing disdainfully, he again changed his position.

Prince Hippolyte, who had been gazing at the vicomte for some time

through his lorgnette, suddenly turned completely round toward the

little princess, and having asked for a needle began tracing the Conde

coat of arms on the table. He explained this to her with as much gravity

as if she had asked him to do it.

"Baton de gueules, engrele de gueules d'azur--maison Conde," said he.

The princess listened, smiling.

"If Buonaparte remains on the throne of France a year longer," the

vicomte continued, with the air of a man who, in a matter with which he

is better acquainted than anyone else, does not listen to others but

follows the current of his own thoughts, "things will have gone too far.

By intrigues, violence, exile, and executions, French society--I mean

good French society--will have been forever destroyed, and then..."

He shrugged his shoulders and spread out his hands. Pierre wished to

make a remark, for the conversation interested him, but Anna Pavlovna,

who had him under observation, interrupted:

"The Emperor Alexander," said she, with the melancholy which always

accompanied any reference of hers to the Imperial family, "has declared

that he will leave it to the French people themselves to choose their

own form of government; and I believe that once free from the usurper,

the whole nation will certainly throw itself into the arms of its

rightful king," she concluded, trying to be amiable to the royalist

emigrant.

"That is doubtful," said Prince Andrew. "Monsieur le Vicomte quite

rightly supposes that matters have already gone too far. I think it will

be difficult to return to the old regime."

"From what I have heard," said Pierre, blushing and breaking into the

conversation, "almost all the aristocracy has already gone over to

Bonaparte's side."

"It is the Buonapartists who say that," replied the vicomte without

looking at Pierre. "At the present time it is difficult to know the real

state of French public opinion."

"Bonaparte has said so," remarked Prince Andrew with a sarcastic smile.

It was evident that he did not like the vicomte and was aiming his

remarks at him, though without looking at him.

"'I showed them the path to glory, but they did not follow it,'" Prince

Andrew continued after a short silence, again quoting Napoleon's words.

"'I opened my antechambers and they crowded in.' I do not know how far

he was justified in saying so."

"Not in the least," replied the vicomte. "After the murder of the duc

even the most partial ceased to regard him as a hero. If to some

people," he went on, turning to Anna Pavlovna, "he ever was a hero,

after the murder of the duc there was one martyr more in heaven and one

hero less on earth."

Before Anna Pavlovna and the others had time to smile their appreciation

of the vicomte's epigram, Pierre again broke into the conversation, and

though Anna Pavlovna felt sure he would say something inappropriate, she

was unable to stop him.

"The execution of the Duc d'Enghien," declared Monsieur Pierre, "was a

political necessity, and it seems to me that Napoleon showed greatness

of soul by not fearing to take on himself the whole responsibility of

that deed."

"Dieu! Mon Dieu!" muttered Anna Pavlovna in a terrified whisper.

"What, Monsieur Pierre... Do you consider that assassination shows

greatness of soul?" said the little princess, smiling and drawing her

work nearer to her.

"Oh! Oh!" exclaimed several voices.

"Capital!" said Prince Hippolyte in English, and began slapping his knee

with the palm of his hand.

The vicomte merely shrugged his shoulders. Pierre looked solemnly at his

audience over his spectacles and continued.

"I say so," he continued desperately, "because the Bourbons fled from

the Revolution leaving the people to anarchy, and Napoleon alone

understood the Revolution and quelled it, and so for the general good,

he could not stop short for the sake of one man's life."

"Won't you come over to the other table?" suggested Anna Pavlovna.

But Pierre continued his speech without heeding her.

"No," cried he, becoming more and more eager, "Napoleon is great because

he rose superior to the Revolution, suppressed its abuses, preserved all

that was good in it--equality of citizenship and freedom of speech and

of the press--and only for that reason did he obtain power."

"Yes, if having obtained power, without availing himself of it to commit

murder he had restored it to the rightful king, I should have called him

a great man," remarked the vicomte.

"He could not do that. The people only gave him power that he might rid

them of the Bourbons and because they saw that he was a great man. The

Revolution was a grand thing!" continued Monsieur Pierre, betraying by

this desperate and provocative proposition his extreme youth and his

wish to express all that was in his mind.

"What? Revolution and regicide a grand thing?... Well, after that... But

won't you come to this other table?" repeated Anna Pavlovna.

"Rousseau's Contrat Social," said the vicomte with a tolerant smile.

"I am not speaking of regicide, I am speaking about ideas."

"Yes: ideas of robbery, murder, and regicide," again interjected an

ironical voice.

"Those were extremes, no doubt, but they are not what is most important.

What is important are the rights of man, emancipation from prejudices,

and equality of citizenship, and all these ideas Napoleon has retained

in full force."

"Liberty and equality," said the vicomte contemptuously, as if at last

deciding seriously to prove to this youth how foolish his words were,

"high-sounding words which have long been discredited. Who does not love

liberty and equality? Even our Saviour preached liberty and equality.

Have people since the Revolution become happier? On the contrary. We

wanted liberty, but Buonaparte has destroyed it."

Prince Andrew kept looking with an amused smile from Pierre to the

vicomte and from the vicomte to their hostess. In the first moment of

Pierre's outburst Anna Pavlovna, despite her social experience, was

horror-struck. But when she saw that Pierre's sacrilegious words had not

exasperated the vicomte, and had convinced herself that it was

impossible to stop him, she rallied her forces and joined the vicomte in

a vigorous attack on the orator.

"But, my dear Monsieur Pierre," said she, "how do you explain the fact

of a great man executing a duc--or even an ordinary man who--is innocent

and untried?"

"I should like," said the vicomte, "to ask how monsieur explains the

18th Brumaire; was not that an imposture? It was a swindle, and not at

all like the conduct of a great man!"

"And the prisoners he killed in Africa? That was horrible!" said the

little princess, shrugging her shoulders.

"He's a low fellow, say what you will," remarked Prince Hippolyte.

Pierre, not knowing whom to answer, looked at them all and smiled. His

smile was unlike the half-smile of other people. When he smiled, his

grave, even rather gloomy, look was instantaneously replaced by another-

-a childlike, kindly, even rather silly look, which seemed to ask

forgiveness.

The vicomte who was meeting him for the first time saw clearly that this

young Jacobin was not so terrible as his words suggested. All were

silent.

"How do you expect him to answer you all at once?" said Prince Andrew.

"Besides, in the actions of a statesman one has to distinguish between

his acts as a private person, as a general, and as an emperor. So it

seems to me."

"Yes, yes, of course!" Pierre chimed in, pleased at the arrival of this

reinforcement.

"One must admit," continued Prince Andrew, "that Napoleon as a man was

great on the bridge of Arcola, and in the hospital at Jaffa where he

gave his hand to the plague-stricken; but... but there are other acts

which it is difficult to justify."

Prince Andrew, who had evidently wished to tone down the awkwardness of

Pierre's remarks, rose and made a sign to his wife that it was time to

go.

Suddenly Prince Hippolyte started up making signs to everyone to attend,

and asking them all to be seated began:

"I was told a charming Moscow story today and must treat you to it.

Excuse me, Vicomte--I must tell it in Russian or the point will be

lost...." And Prince Hippolyte began to tell his story in such Russian

as a Frenchman would speak after spending about a year in Russia.

Everyone waited, so emphatically and eagerly did he demand their

attention to his story.

"There is in Moscow a lady, une dame, and she is very stingy. She must

have two footmen behind her carriage, and very big ones. That was her

taste. And she had a lady's maid, also big. She said..."

Here Prince Hippolyte paused, evidently collecting his ideas with

difficulty.

"She said... Oh yes! She said, 'Girl,' to the maid, 'put on a livery,

get up behind the carriage, and come with me while I make some calls.'"

Here Prince Hippolyte spluttered and burst out laughing long before his

audience, which produced an effect unfavorable to the narrator. Several

persons, among them the elderly lady and Anna Pavlovna, did however

smile.

"She went. Suddenly there was a great wind. The girl lost her hat and

her long hair came down...." Here he could contain himself no longer and

went on, between gasps of laughter: "And the whole world knew...."

And so the anecdote ended. Though it was unintelligible why he had told

it, or why it had to be told in Russian, still Anna Pavlovna and the

others appreciated Prince Hippolyte's social tact in so agreeably ending

Pierre's unpleasant and unamiable outburst. After the anecdote the

conversation broke up into insignificant small talk about the last and

next balls, about theatricals, and who would meet whom, and when and

where.

CHAPTER VI

Having thanked Anna Pavlovna for her charming soiree, the guests began

to take their leave.

Pierre was ungainly. Stout, about the average height, broad, with huge

red hands; he did not know, as the saying is, how to enter a drawing

room and still less how to leave one; that is, how to say something

particularly agreeable before going away. Besides this he was absent-

minded. When he rose to go, he took up instead of his own, the general's

three-cornered hat, and held it, pulling at the plume, till the general

asked him to restore it. All his absent-mindedness and inability to

enter a room and converse in it was, however, redeemed by his kindly,

simple, and modest expression. Anna Pavlovna turned toward him and, with

a Christian mildness that expressed forgiveness of his indiscretion,

nodded and said: "I hope to see you again, but I also hope you will

change your opinions, my dear Monsieur Pierre."

When she said this, he did not reply and only bowed, but again everybody

saw his smile, which said nothing, unless perhaps, "Opinions are

opinions, but you see what a capital, good-natured fellow I am." And

everyone, including Anna Pavlovna, felt this.

Prince Andrew had gone out into the hall, and, turning his shoulders to

the footman who was helping him on with his cloak, listened

indifferently to his wife's chatter with Prince Hippolyte who had also

come into the hall. Prince Hippolyte stood close to the pretty, pregnant

princess, and stared fixedly at her through his eyeglass.

"Go in, Annette, or you will catch cold," said the little princess,

taking leave of Anna Pavlovna. "It is settled," she added in a low

voice.

Anna Pavlovna had already managed to speak to Lise about the match she

contemplated between Anatole and the little princess' sister-in-law.

"I rely on you, my dear," said Anna Pavlovna, also in a low tone. "Write

to her and let me know how her father looks at the matter. Au revoir!"--

and she left the hall.

Prince Hippolyte approached the little princess and, bending his face

close to her, began to whisper something.

Two footmen, the princess' and his own, stood holding a shawl and a

cloak, waiting for the conversation to finish. They listened to the

French sentences which to them were meaningless, with an air of

understanding but not wishing to appear to do so. The princess as usual

spoke smilingly and listened with a laugh.

"I am very glad I did not go to the ambassador's," said Prince Hippolyte

"-so dull-. It has been a delightful evening, has it not? Delightful!"

"They say the ball will be very good," replied the princess, drawing up

her downy little lip. "All the pretty women in society will be there."

"Not all, for you will not be there; not all," said Prince Hippolyte

smiling joyfully; and snatching the shawl from the footman, whom he even

pushed aside, he began wrapping it round the princess. Either from

awkwardness or intentionally (no one could have said which) after the

shawl had been adjusted he kept his arm around her for a long time, as

though embracing her.

Still smiling, she gracefully moved away, turning and glancing at her

husband. Prince Andrew's eyes were closed, so weary and sleepy did he

seem.

"Are you ready?" he asked his wife, looking past her.

Prince Hippolyte hurriedly put on his cloak, which in the latest fashion

reached to his very heels, and, stumbling in it, ran out into the porch

following the princess, whom a footman was helping into the carriage.

"Princesse, au revoir," cried he, stumbling with his tongue as well as

with his feet.

The princess, picking up her dress, was taking her seat in the dark

carriage, her husband was adjusting his saber; Prince Hippolyte, under

pretense of helping, was in everyone's way.

"Allow me, sir," said Prince Andrew in Russian in a cold, disagreeable

tone to Prince Hippolyte who was blocking his path.

"I am expecting you, Pierre," said the same voice, but gently and

affectionately.

The postilion started, the carriage wheels rattled. Prince Hippolyte

laughed spasmodically as he stood in the porch waiting for the vicomte

whom he had promised to take home.

"Well, mon cher," said the vicomte, having seated himself beside

Hippolyte in the carriage, "your little princess is very nice, very nice

indeed, quite French," and he kissed the tips of his fingers. Hippolyte

burst out laughing.

"Do you know, you are a terrible chap for all your innocent airs,"

continued the vicomte. "I pity the poor husband, that little officer who

gives himself the airs of a monarch."

Hippolyte spluttered again, and amid his laughter said, "And you were

saying that the Russian ladies are not equal to the French? One has to

know how to deal with them."

Pierre reaching the house first went into Prince Andrew's study like one

quite at home, and from habit immediately lay down on the sofa, took

from the shelf the first book that came to his hand (it was Caesar's

Commentaries), and resting on his elbow, began reading it in the middle.

"What have you done to Mlle Scherer? She will be quite ill now," said

Prince Andrew, as he entered the study, rubbing his small white hands.

Pierre turned his whole body, making the sofa creak. He lifted his eager

face to Prince Andrew, smiled, and waved his hand.

"That abbe is very interesting but he does not see the thing in the

right light.... In my opinion perpetual peace is possible but--I do not

know how to express it... not by a balance of political power...."

It was evident that Prince Andrew was not interested in such abstract

conversation.

"One can't everywhere say all one thinks, mon cher. Well, have you at

last decided on anything? Are you going to be a guardsman or a

diplomatist?" asked Prince Andrew after a momentary silence.

Pierre sat up on the sofa, with his legs tucked under him.

"Really, I don't yet know. I don't like either the one or the other."

"But you must decide on something! Your father expects it."

Pierre at the age of ten had been sent abroad with an abbe as tutor, and

had remained away till he was twenty. When he returned to Moscow his

father dismissed the abbe and said to the young man, "Now go to

Petersburg, look round, and choose your profession. I will agree to

anything. Here is a letter to Prince Vasili, and here is money. Write to

me all about it, and I will help you in everything." Pierre had already

been choosing a career for three months, and had not decided on

anything. It was about this choice that Prince Andrew was speaking.

Pierre rubbed his forehead.

"But he must be a Freemason," said he, referring to the abbe whom he had

met that evening.

"That is all nonsense." Prince Andrew again interrupted him, "let us

talk business. Have you been to the Horse Guards?"

"No, I have not; but this is what I have been thinking and wanted to

tell you. There is a war now against Napoleon. If it were a war for

freedom I could understand it and should be the first to enter the army;

but to help England and Austria against the greatest man in the world is

not right."

Prince Andrew only shrugged his shoulders at Pierre's childish words. He

put on the air of one who finds it impossible to reply to such nonsense,

but it would in fact have been difficult to give any other answer than

the one Prince Andrew gave to this naive question.

"If no one fought except on his own conviction, there would be no wars,"

he said.

"And that would be splendid," said Pierre.

Prince Andrew smiled ironically.

"Very likely it would be splendid, but it will never come about..."

"Well, why are you going to the war?" asked Pierre.

"What for? I don't know. I must. Besides that I am going..." He paused.

"I am going because the life I am leading here does not suit me!"

CHAPTER VII

The rustle of a woman's dress was heard in the next room. Prince Andrew

shook himself as if waking up, and his face assumed the look it had had

in Anna Pavlovna's drawing room. Pierre removed his feet from the sofa.

The princess came in. She had changed her gown for a house dress as

fresh and elegant as the other. Prince Andrew rose and politely placed a

chair for her.

"How is it," she began, as usual in French, settling down briskly and

fussily in the easy chair, "how is it Annette never got married? How

stupid you men all are not to have married her! Excuse me for saying so,

but you have no sense about women. What an argumentative fellow you are,

Monsieur Pierre!"

"And I am still arguing with your husband. I can't understand why he

wants to go to the war," replied Pierre, addressing the princess with

none of the embarrassment so commonly shown by young men in their

intercourse with young women.

The princess started. Evidently Pierre's words touched her to the quick.

"Ah, that is just what I tell him!" said she. "I don't understand it; I

don't in the least understand why men can't live without wars. How is it

that we women don't want anything of the kind, don't need it? Now you

shall judge between us. I always tell him: Here he is Uncle's aide-de-

camp, a most brilliant position. He is so well known, so much

appreciated by everyone. The other day at the Apraksins' I heard a lady

asking, 'Is that the famous Prince Andrew?' I did indeed." She laughed.

"He is so well received everywhere. He might easily become aide-de-camp

to the Emperor. You know the Emperor spoke to him most graciously.

Annette and I were speaking of how to arrange it. What do you think?"

Pierre looked at his friend and, noticing that he did not like the

conversation, gave no reply.

"When are you starting?" he asked.

"Oh, don't speak of his going, don't! I won't hear it spoken of," said

the princess in the same petulantly playful tone in which she had spoken

to Hippolyte in the drawing room and which was so plainly ill-suited to

the family circle of which Pierre was almost a member. "Today when I

remembered that all these delightful associations must be broken off...

and then you know, Andre..." (she looked significantly at her husband)

"I'm afraid, I'm afraid!" she whispered, and a shudder ran down her

back.

Her husband looked at her as if surprised to notice that someone besides

Pierre and himself was in the room, and addressed her in a tone of

frigid politeness.

"What is it you are afraid of, Lise? I don't understand," said he.

"There, what egotists men all are: all, all egotists! Just for a whim of

his own, goodness only knows why, he leaves me and locks me up alone in

the country."

"With my father and sister, remember," said Prince Andrew gently.

"Alone all the same, without my friends.... And he expects me not to be

afraid."

Her tone was now querulous and her lip drawn up, giving her not a

joyful, but an animal, squirrel-like expression. She paused as if she

felt it indecorous to speak of her pregnancy before Pierre, though the

gist of the matter lay in that.

"I still can't understand what you are afraid of," said Prince Andrew

slowly, not taking his eyes off his wife.

The princess blushed, and raised her arms with a gesture of despair.

"No, Andrew, I must say you have changed. Oh, how you have..."

"Your doctor tells you to go to bed earlier," said Prince Andrew. "You

had better go."

The princess said nothing, but suddenly her short downy lip quivered.

Prince Andrew rose, shrugged his shoulders, and walked about the room.

Pierre looked over his spectacles with naive surprise, now at him and

now at her, moved as if about to rise too, but changed his mind.

"Why should I mind Monsieur Pierre being here?" exclaimed the little

princess suddenly, her pretty face all at once distorted by a tearful

grimace. "I have long wanted to ask you, Andrew, why you have changed so

to me? What have I done to you? You are going to the war and have no

pity for me. Why is it?"

"Lise!" was all Prince Andrew said. But that one word expressed an

entreaty, a threat, and above all conviction that she would herself

regret her words. But she went on hurriedly:

"You treat me like an invalid or a child. I see it all! Did you behave

like that six months ago?"

"Lise, I beg you to desist," said Prince Andrew still more emphatically.

Pierre, who had been growing more and more agitated as he listened to

all this, rose and approached the princess. He seemed unable to bear the

sight of tears and was ready to cry himself.

"Calm yourself, Princess! It seems so to you because... I assure you I

myself have experienced... and so... because... No, excuse me! An

outsider is out of place here... No, don't distress yourself... Good-

bye!"

Prince Andrew caught him by the hand.

"No, wait, Pierre! The princess is too kind to wish to deprive me of the

pleasure of spending the evening with you."

"No, he thinks only of himself," muttered the princess without

restraining her angry tears.

"Lise!" said Prince Andrew dryly, raising his voice to the pitch which

indicates that patience is exhausted.

Suddenly the angry, squirrel-like expression of the princess' pretty

face changed into a winning and piteous look of fear. Her beautiful eyes

glanced askance at her husband's face, and her own assumed the timid,

deprecating expression of a dog when it rapidly but feebly wags its

drooping tail.

"Mon Dieu, mon Dieu!" she muttered, and lifting her dress with one hand

she went up to her husband and kissed him on the forehead.

"Good night, Lise," said he, rising and courteously kissing her hand as

he would have done to a stranger.

CHAPTER VIII

The friends were silent. Neither cared to begin talking. Pierre

continually glanced at Prince Andrew; Prince Andrew rubbed his forehead

with his small hand.

"Let us go and have supper," he said with a sigh, going to the door.

They entered the elegant, newly decorated, and luxurious dining room.

Everything from the table napkins to the silver, china, and glass bore

that imprint of newness found in the households of the newly married.

Halfway through supper Prince Andrew leaned his elbows on the table and,

with a look of nervous agitation such as Pierre had never before seen on

his face, began to talk--as one who has long had something on his mind

and suddenly determines to speak out.

"Never, never marry, my dear fellow! That's my advice: never marry till

you can say to yourself that you have done all you are capable of, and

until you have ceased to love the woman of your choice and have seen her

plainly as she is, or else you will make a cruel and irrevocable

mistake. Marry when you are old and good for nothing--or all that is

good and noble in you will be lost. It will all be wasted on trifles.

Yes! Yes! Yes! Don't look at me with such surprise. If you marry

expecting anything from yourself in the future, you will feel at every

step that for you all is ended, all is closed except the drawing room,

where you will be ranged side by side with a court lackey and an

idiot!... But what's the good?..." and he waved his arm.

Pierre took off his spectacles, which made his face seem different and

the good-natured expression still more apparent, and gazed at his friend

in amazement.

"My wife," continued Prince Andrew, "is an excellent woman, one of those

rare women with whom a man's honor is safe; but, O God, what would I not

give now to be unmarried! You are the first and only one to whom I

mention this, because I like you."

As he said this Prince Andrew was less than ever like that Bolkonski who

had lolled in Anna Pavlovna's easy chairs and with half-closed eyes had

uttered French phrases between his teeth. Every muscle of his thin face

was now quivering with nervous excitement; his eyes, in which the fire

of life had seemed extinguished, now flashed with brilliant light. It

was evident that the more lifeless he seemed at ordinary times, the more

impassioned he became in these moments of almost morbid irritation.

"You don't understand why I say this," he continued, "but it is the

whole story of life. You talk of Bonaparte and his career," said he

(though Pierre had not mentioned Bonaparte), "but Bonaparte when he

worked went step by step toward his goal. He was free, he had nothing

but his aim to consider, and he reached it. But tie yourself up with a

woman and, like a chained convict, you lose all freedom! And all you

have of hope and strength merely weighs you down and torments you with

regret. Drawing rooms, gossip, balls, vanity, and triviality--these are

the enchanted circle I cannot escape from. I am now going to the war,

the greatest war there ever was, and I know nothing and am fit for

nothing. I am very amiable and have a caustic wit," continued Prince

Andrew, "and at Anna Pavlovna's they listen to me. And that stupid set

without whom my wife cannot exist, and those women... If you only knew

what those society women are, and women in general! My father is right.

Selfish, vain, stupid, trivial in everything--that's what women are when

you see them in their true colors! When you meet them in society it

seems as if there were something in them, but there's nothing, nothing,

nothing! No, don't marry, my dear fellow; don't marry!" concluded Prince

Andrew.

"It seems funny to me," said Pierre, "that you, you should consider

yourself incapable and your life a spoiled life. You have everything

before you, everything. And you..."

He did not finish his sentence, but his tone showed how highly he

thought of his friend and how much he expected of him in the future.

"How can he talk like that?" thought Pierre. He considered his friend a

model of perfection because Prince Andrew possessed in the highest

degree just the very qualities Pierre lacked, and which might be best

described as strength of will. Pierre was always astonished at Prince

Andrew's calm manner of treating everybody, his extraordinary memory,

his extensive reading (he had read everything, knew everything, and had

an opinion about everything), but above all at his capacity for work and

study. And if Pierre was often struck by Andrew's lack of capacity for

philosophical meditation (to which he himself was particularly

addicted), he regarded even this not as a defect but as a sign of

strength.

Even in the best, most friendly and simplest relations of life, praise

and commendation are essential, just as grease is necessary to wheels

that they may run smoothly.

"My part is played out," said Prince Andrew. "What's the use of talking

about me? Let us talk about you," he added after a silence, smiling at

his reassuring thoughts.

That smile was immediately reflected on Pierre's face.

"But what is there to say about me?" said Pierre, his face relaxing into

a careless, merry smile. "What am I? An illegitimate son!" He suddenly

blushed crimson, and it was plain that he had made a great effort to say

this. "Without a name and without means... And it really..." But he did

not say what "it really" was. "For the present I am free and am all

right. Only I haven't the least idea what I am to do; I wanted to

consult you seriously."

Prince Andrew looked kindly at him, yet his glance--friendly and

affectionate as it was--expressed a sense of his own superiority.

"I am fond of you, especially as you are the one live man among our

whole set. Yes, you're all right! Choose what you will; it's all the

same. You'll be all right anywhere. But look here: give up visiting

those Kuragins and leading that sort of life. It suits you so badly--all

this debauchery, dissipation, and the rest of it!"

"What would you have, my dear fellow?" answered Pierre, shrugging his

shoulders. "Women, my dear fellow; women!"

"I don't understand it," replied Prince Andrew. "Women who are comme il

faut, that's a different matter; but the Kuragins' set of women, 'women

and wine' I don't understand!"

Pierre was staying at Prince Vasili Kuragin's and sharing the dissipated

life of his son Anatole, the son whom they were planning to reform by

marrying him to Prince Andrew's sister.

"Do you know?" said Pierre, as if suddenly struck by a happy thought,

"seriously, I have long been thinking of it.... Leading such a life I

can't decide or think properly about anything. One's head aches, and one

spends all one's money. He asked me for tonight, but I won't go."

"You give me your word of honor not to go?"

"On my honor!"

CHAPTER IX

It was past one o'clock when Pierre left his friend. It was a cloudless,

northern, summer night. Pierre took an open cab intending to drive

straight home. But the nearer he drew to the house the more he felt the

impossibility of going to sleep on such a night. It was light enough to

see a long way in the deserted street and it seemed more like morning or

evening than night. On the way Pierre remembered that Anatole Kuragin

was expecting the usual set for cards that evening, after which there

was generally a drinking bout, finishing with visits of a kind Pierre

was very fond of.

"I should like to go to Kuragin's," thought he.

But he immediately recalled his promise to Prince Andrew not to go

there. Then, as happens to people of weak character, he desired so

passionately once more to enjoy that dissipation he was so accustomed to

that he decided to go. The thought immediately occurred to him that his

promise to Prince Andrew was of no account, because before he gave it he

had already promised Prince Anatole to come to his gathering; "besides,"

thought he, "all such 'words of honor' are conventional things with no

definite meaning, especially if one considers that by tomorrow one may

be dead, or something so extraordinary may happen to one that honor and

dishonor will be all the same!" Pierre often indulged in reflections of

this sort, nullifying all his decisions and intentions. He went to

Kuragin's.

Reaching the large house near the Horse Guards' barracks, in which

Anatole lived, Pierre entered the lighted porch, ascended the stairs,

and went in at the open door. There was no one in the anteroom; empty

bottles, cloaks, and overshoes were lying about; there was a smell of

alcohol, and sounds of voices and shouting in the distance.

Cards and supper were over, but the visitors had not yet dispersed.

Pierre threw off his cloak and entered the first room, in which were the

remains of supper. A footman, thinking no one saw him, was drinking on

the sly what was left in the glasses. From the third room came sounds of

laughter, the shouting of familiar voices, the growling of a bear, and

general commotion. Some eight or nine young men were crowding anxiously

round an open window. Three others were romping with a young bear, one

pulling him by the chain and trying to set him at the others.

"I bet a hundred on Stevens!" shouted one.

"Mind, no holding on!" cried another.

"I bet on Dolokhov!" cried a third. "Kuragin, you part our hands."

"There, leave Bruin alone; here's a bet on."

"At one draught, or he loses!" shouted a fourth.

"Jacob, bring a bottle!" shouted the host, a tall, handsome fellow who

stood in the midst of the group, without a coat, and with his fine linen

shirt unfastened in front. "Wait a bit, you fellows.... Here is Petya!

Good man!" cried he, addressing Pierre.

Another voice, from a man of medium height with clear blue eyes,

particularly striking among all these drunken voices by its sober ring,

cried from the window: "Come here; part the bets!" This was Dolokhov, an

officer of the Semenov regiment, a notorious gambler and duelist, who

was living with Anatole. Pierre smiled, looking about him merrily.

"I don't understand. What's it all about?"

"Wait a bit, he is not drunk yet! A bottle here," said Anatole, taking a

glass from the table he went up to Pierre.

"First of all you must drink!"

Pierre drank one glass after another, looking from under his brows at

the tipsy guests who were again crowding round the window, and listening

to their chatter. Anatole kept on refilling Pierre's glass while

explaining that Dolokhov was betting with Stevens, an English naval

officer, that he would drink a bottle of rum sitting on the outer ledge

of the third floor window with his legs hanging out.

"Go on, you must drink it all," said Anatole, giving Pierre the last

glass, "or I won't let you go!"

"No, I won't," said Pierre, pushing Anatole aside, and he went up to the

window.

Dolokhov was holding the Englishman's hand and clearly and distinctly

repeating the terms of the bet, addressing himself particularly to

Anatole and Pierre.

Dolokhov was of medium height, with curly hair and light-blue eyes. He

was about twenty-five. Like all infantry officers he wore no mustache,

so that his mouth, the most striking feature of his face, was clearly

seen. The lines of that mouth were remarkably finely curved. The middle

of the upper lip formed a sharp wedge and closed firmly on the firm

lower one, and something like two distinct smiles played continually

round the two corners of the mouth; this, together with the resolute,

insolent intelligence of his eyes, produced an effect which made it

impossible not to notice his face. Dolokhov was a man of small means and

no connections. Yet, though Anatole spent tens of thousands of rubles,

Dolokhov lived with him and had placed himself on such a footing that

all who knew them, including Anatole himself, respected him more than

they did Anatole. Dolokhov could play all games and nearly always won.

However much he drank, he never lost his clearheadedness. Both Kuragin

and Dolokhov were at that time notorious among the rakes and scapegraces

of Petersburg.

The bottle of rum was brought. The window frame which prevented anyone

from sitting on the outer sill was being forced out by two footmen, who

were evidently flurried and intimidated by the directions and shouts of

the gentlemen around.

Anatole with his swaggering air strode up to the window. He wanted to

smash something. Pushing away the footmen he tugged at the frame, but

could not move it. He smashed a pane.

"You have a try, Hercules," said he, turning to Pierre.

Pierre seized the crossbeam, tugged, and wrenched the oak frame out with

a crash.

"Take it right out, or they'll think I'm holding on," said Dolokhov.

"Is the Englishman bragging?... Eh? Is it all right?" said Anatole.

"First-rate," said Pierre, looking at Dolokhov, who with a bottle of rum

in his hand was approaching the window, from which the light of the sky,

the dawn merging with the afterglow of sunset, was visible.

Dolokhov, the bottle of rum still in his hand, jumped onto the window

sill. "Listen!" cried he, standing there and addressing those in the

room. All were silent.

"I bet fifty imperials"--he spoke French that the Englishman might

understand him, but he did not speak it very well--"I bet fifty

imperials... or do you wish to make it a hundred?" added he, addressing

the Englishman.

"No, fifty," replied the latter.

"All right. Fifty imperials... that I will drink a whole bottle of rum

without taking it from my mouth, sitting outside the window on this

spot" (he stooped and pointed to the sloping ledge outside the window)

"and without holding on to anything. Is that right?"

"Quite right," said the Englishman.

Anatole turned to the Englishman and taking him by one of the buttons of

his coat and looking down at him--the Englishman was short--began

repeating the terms of the wager to him in English.

"Wait!" cried Dolokhov, hammering with the bottle on the window sill to

attract attention. "Wait a bit, Kuragin. Listen! If anyone else does the

same, I will pay him a hundred imperials. Do you understand?"

The Englishman nodded, but gave no indication whether he intended to

accept this challenge or not. Anatole did not release him, and though he

kept nodding to show that he understood, Anatole went on translating

Dolokhov's words into English. A thin young lad, an hussar of the Life

Guards, who had been losing that evening, climbed on the window sill,

leaned over, and looked down.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" he muttered, looking down from the window at the stones of

the pavement.

"Shut up!" cried Dolokhov, pushing him away from the window. The lad

jumped awkwardly back into the room, tripping over his spurs.

Placing the bottle on the window sill where he could reach it easily,

Dolokhov climbed carefully and slowly through the window and lowered his

legs. Pressing against both sides of the window, he adjusted himself on

his seat, lowered his hands, moved a little to the right and then to the

left, and took up the bottle. Anatole brought two candles and placed

them on the window sill, though it was already quite light. Dolokhov's

back in his white shirt, and his curly head, were lit up from both

sides. Everyone crowded to the window, the Englishman in front. Pierre

stood smiling but silent. One man, older than the others present,

suddenly pushed forward with a scared and angry look and wanted to seize

hold of Dolokhov's shirt.

"I say, this is folly! He'll be killed," said this more sensible man.

Anatole stopped him.

"Don't touch him! You'll startle him and then he'll be killed. Eh?...

What then?... Eh?"

Dolokhov turned round and, again holding on with both hands, arranged

himself on his seat.

"If anyone comes meddling again," said he, emitting the words separately

through his thin compressed lips, "I will throw him down there. Now

then!"

Saying this he again turned round, dropped his hands, took the bottle

and lifted it to his lips, threw back his head, and raised his free hand

to balance himself. One of the footmen who had stooped to pick up some

broken glass remained in that position without taking his eyes from the

window and from Dolokhov's back. Anatole stood erect with staring eyes.

The Englishman looked on sideways, pursing up his lips. The man who had

wished to stop the affair ran to a corner of the room and threw himself

on a sofa with his face to the wall. Pierre hid his face, from which a

faint smile forgot to fade though his features now expressed horror and

fear. All were still. Pierre took his hands from his eyes. Dolokhov

still sat in the same position, only his head was thrown further back

till his curly hair touched his shirt collar, and the hand holding the

bottle was lifted higher and higher and trembled with the effort. The

bottle was emptying perceptibly and rising still higher and his head

tilting yet further back. "Why is it so long?" thought Pierre. It seemed

to him that more than half an hour had elapsed. Suddenly Dolokhov made a

backward movement with his spine, and his arm trembled nervously; this

was sufficient to cause his whole body to slip as he sat on the sloping

ledge. As he began slipping down, his head and arm wavered still more

with the strain. One hand moved as if to clutch the window sill, but

refrained from touching it. Pierre again covered his eyes and thought he

would never open them again. Suddenly he was aware of a stir all around.

He looked up: Dolokhov was standing on the window sill, with a pale but

radiant face.

"It's empty."

He threw the bottle to the Englishman, who caught it neatly. Dolokhov

jumped down. He smelt strongly of rum.

"Well done!... Fine fellow!... There's a bet for you!... Devil take

you!" came from different sides.

The Englishman took out his purse and began counting out the money.

Dolokhov stood frowning and did not speak. Pierre jumped upon the window

sill.

"Gentlemen, who wishes to bet with me? I'll do the same thing!" he

suddenly cried. "Even without a bet, there! Tell them to bring me a

bottle. I'll do it.... Bring a bottle!"

"Let him do it, let him do it," said Dolokhov, smiling.

"What next? Have you gone mad?... No one would let you!... Why, you go

giddy even on a staircase," exclaimed several voices.

"I'll drink it! Let's have a bottle of rum!" shouted Pierre, banging the

table with a determined and drunken gesture and preparing to climb out

of the window.

They seized him by his arms; but he was so strong that everyone who

touched him was sent flying.

"No, you'll never manage him that way," said Anatole. "Wait a bit and

I'll get round him.... Listen! I'll take your bet tomorrow, but now we

are all going to ----'s."

"Come on then," cried Pierre. "Come on!... And we'll take Bruin with

us."

And he caught the bear, took it in his arms, lifted it from the ground,

and began dancing round the room with it.

CHAPTER X

Prince Vasili kept the promise he had given to Princess Drubetskaya who

had spoken to him on behalf of her only son Boris on the evening of Anna

Pavlovna's soiree. The matter was mentioned to the Emperor, an exception

made, and Boris transferred into the regiment of Semenov Guards with the

rank of cornet. He received, however, no appointment to Kutuzov's staff

despite all Anna Mikhaylovna's endeavors and entreaties. Soon after Anna

Pavlovna's reception Anna Mikhaylovna returned to Moscow and went

straight to her rich relations, the Rostovs, with whom she stayed when

in the town and where her darling Bory, who had only just entered a

regiment of the line and was being at once transferred to the Guards as

a cornet, had been educated from childhood and lived for years at a

time. The Guards had already left Petersburg on the tenth of August, and

her son, who had remained in Moscow for his equipment, was to join them

on the march to Radzivilov.

It was St. Natalia's day and the name day of two of the Rostovs--the

mother and the youngest daughter--both named Nataly. Ever since the

morning, carriages with six horses had been coming and going

continually, bringing visitors to the Countess Rostova's big house on

the Povarskaya, so well known to all Moscow. The countess herself and

her handsome eldest daughter were in the drawing-room with the visitors

who came to congratulate, and who constantly succeeded one another in

relays.

The countess was a woman of about forty-five, with a thin Oriental type

of face, evidently worn out with childbearing--she had had twelve. A

languor of motion and speech, resulting from weakness, gave her a

distinguished air which inspired respect. Princess Anna Mikhaylovna

Drubetskaya, who as a member of the household was also seated in the

drawing room, helped to receive and entertain the visitors. The young

people were in one of the inner rooms, not considering it necessary to

take part in receiving the visitors. The count met the guests and saw

them off, inviting them all to dinner.

"I am very, very grateful to you, mon cher," or "ma chere"--he called

everyone without exception and without the slightest variation in his

tone, "my dear," whether they were above or below him in rank--"I thank

you for myself and for our two dear ones whose name day we are keeping.

But mind you come to dinner or I shall be offended, ma chere! On behalf

of the whole family I beg you to come, mon cher!" These words he

repeated to everyone without exception or variation, and with the same

expression on his full, cheerful, clean-shaven face, the same firm

pressure of the hand and the same quick, repeated bows. As soon as he

had seen a visitor off he returned to one of those who were still in the

drawing room, drew a chair toward him or her, and jauntily spreading out

his legs and putting his hands on his knees with the air of a man who

enjoys life and knows how to live, he swayed to and fro with dignity,

offered surmises about the weather, or touched on questions of health,

sometimes in Russian and sometimes in very bad but self-confident

French; then again, like a man weary but unflinching in the fulfillment

of duty, he rose to see some visitors off and, stroking his scanty gray

hairs over his bald patch, also asked them to dinner. Sometimes on his

way back from the anteroom he would pass through the conservatory and

pantry into the large marble dining hall, where tables were being set

out for eighty people; and looking at the footmen, who were bringing in

silver and china, moving tables, and unfolding damask table linen, he

would call Dmitri Vasilevich, a man of good family and the manager of

all his affairs, and while looking with pleasure at the enormous table

would say: "Well, Dmitri, you'll see that things are all as they should

be? That's right! The great thing is the serving, that's it." And with a

complacent sigh he would return to the drawing room.

"Marya Lvovna Karagina and her daughter!" announced the countess'

gigantic footman in his bass voice, entering the drawing room. The

countess reflected a moment and took a pinch from a gold snuffbox with

her husband's portrait on it.

"I'm quite worn out by these callers. However, I'll see her and no more.

She is so affected. Ask her in," she said to the footman in a sad voice,

as if saying: "Very well, finish me off."

A tall, stout, and proud-looking woman, with a round-faced smiling

daughter, entered the drawing room, their dresses rustling.

"Dear Countess, what an age... She has been laid up, poor child... at

the Razumovski's ball... and Countess Apraksina... I was so

delighted..." came the sounds of animated feminine voices, interrupting

one another and mingling with the rustling of dresses and the scraping

of chairs. Then one of those conversations began which last out until,

at the first pause, the guests rise with a rustle of dresses and say, "I

am so delighted... Mamma's health... and Countess Apraksina..." and

then, again rustling, pass into the anteroom, put on cloaks or mantles,

and drive away. The conversation was on the chief topic of the day: the

illness of the wealthy and celebrated beau of Catherine's day, Count

Bezukhov, and about his illegitimate son Pierre, the one who had behaved

so improperly at Anna Pavlovna's reception.

"I am so sorry for the poor count," said the visitor. "He is in such bad

health, and now this vexation about his son is enough to kill him!"

"What is that?" asked the countess as if she did not know what the

visitor alluded to, though she had already heard about the cause of

Count Bezukhov's distress some fifteen times.

"That's what comes of a modern education," exclaimed the visitor. "It

seems that while he was abroad this young man was allowed to do as he

liked, now in Petersburg I hear he has been doing such terrible things

that he has been expelled by the police."

"You don't say so!" replied the countess.

"He chose his friends badly," interposed Anna Mikhaylovna. "Prince

Vasili's son, he, and a certain Dolokhov have, it is said, been up to

heaven only knows what! And they have had to suffer for it. Dolokhov has

been degraded to the ranks and Bezukhov's son sent back to Moscow.

Anatole Kuragin's father managed somehow to get his son's affair hushed

up, but even he was ordered out of Petersburg."

"But what have they been up to?" asked the countess.

"They are regular brigands, especially Dolokhov," replied the visitor.

"He is a son of Marya Ivanovna Dolokhova, such a worthy woman, but

there, just fancy! Those three got hold of a bear somewhere, put it in a

carriage, and set off with it to visit some actresses! The police tried

to interfere, and what did the young men do? They tied a policeman and

the bear back to back and put the bear into the Moyka Canal. And there

was the bear swimming about with the policeman on his back!"

"What a nice figure the policeman must have cut, my dear!" shouted the

count, dying with laughter.

"Oh, how dreadful! How can you laugh at it, Count?"

Yet the ladies themselves could not help laughing.

"It was all they could do to rescue the poor man," continued the

visitor. "And to think it is Cyril Vladimirovich Bezukhov's son who

amuses himself in this sensible manner! And he was said to be so well

educated and clever. This is all that his foreign education has done for

him! I hope that here in Moscow no one will receive him, in spite of his

money. They wanted to introduce him to me, but I quite declined: I have

my daughters to consider."

"Why do you say this young man is so rich?" asked the countess, turning

away from the girls, who at once assumed an air of inattention. "His

children are all illegitimate. I think Pierre also is illegitimate."

The visitor made a gesture with her hand.

"I should think he has a score of them."

Princess Anna Mikhaylovna intervened in the conversation, evidently

wishing to show her connections and knowledge of what went on in

society.

"The fact of the matter is," said she significantly, and also in a half

whisper, "everyone knows Count Cyril's reputation.... He has lost count

of his children, but this Pierre was his favorite."

"How handsome the old man still was only a year ago!" remarked the

countess. "I have never seen a handsomer man."

"He is very much altered now," said Anna Mikhaylovna. "Well, as I was

saying, Prince Vasili is the next heir through his wife, but the count

is very fond of Pierre, looked after his education, and wrote to the

Emperor about him; so that in the case of his death--and he is so ill

that he may die at any moment, and Dr. Lorrain has come from Petersburg-

-no one knows who will inherit his immense fortune, Pierre or Prince

Vasili. Forty thousand serfs and millions of rubles! I know it all very

well for Prince Vasili told me himself. Besides, Cyril Vladimirovich is

my mother's second cousin. He's also my Bory's godfather," she added, as

if she attached no importance at all to the fact.

"Prince Vasili arrived in Moscow yesterday. I hear he has come on some

inspection business," remarked the visitor.

"Yes, but between ourselves," said the princess, "that is a pretext. The

fact is he has come to see Count Cyril Vladimirovich, hearing how ill he

is."

"But do you know, my dear, that was a capital joke," said the count; and

seeing that the elder visitor was not listening, he turned to the young

ladies. "I can just imagine what a funny figure that policeman cut!"

And as he waved his arms to impersonate the policeman, his portly form

again shook with a deep ringing laugh, the laugh of one who always eats

well and, in particular, drinks well. "So do come and dine with us!" he

said.

CHAPTER XI

Silence ensued. The countess looked at her callers, smiling affably, but

not concealing the fact that she would not be distressed if they now

rose and took their leave. The visitor's daughter was already smoothing

down her dress with an inquiring look at her mother, when suddenly from

the next room were heard the footsteps of boys and girls running to the

door and the noise of a chair falling over, and a girl of thirteen,

hiding something in the folds of her short muslin frock, darted in and

stopped short in the middle of the room. It was evident that she had not

intended her flight to bring her so far. Behind her in the doorway

appeared a student with a crimson coat collar, an officer of the Guards,

a girl of fifteen, and a plump rosy-faced boy in a short jacket.

The count jumped up and, swaying from side to side, spread his arms wide

and threw them round the little girl who had run in.

"Ah, here she is!" he exclaimed laughing. "My pet, whose name day it is.

My dear pet!"

"Ma chere, there is a time for everything," said the countess with

feigned severity. "You spoil her, Ilya," she added, turning to her

husband.

"How do you do, my dear? I wish you many happy returns of your name

day," said the visitor. "What a charming child," she added, addressing

the mother.

This black-eyed, wide-mouthed girl, not pretty but full of life--with

childish bare shoulders which after her run heaved and shook her bodice,

with black curls tossed backward, thin bare arms, little legs in lace-

frilled drawers, and feet in low slippers--was just at that charming age

when a girl is no longer a child, though the child is not yet a young

woman. Escaping from her father she ran to hide her flushed face in the

lace of her mother's mantilla--not paying the least attention to her

severe remark--and began to laugh. She laughed, and in fragmentary

sentences tried to explain about a doll which she produced from the

folds of her frock.

"Do you see?... My doll... Mimi... You see..." was all Natasha managed

to utter (to her everything seemed funny). She leaned against her mother

and burst into such a loud, ringing fit of laughter that even the prim

visitor could not help joining in.

"Now then, go away and take your monstrosity with you," said the mother,

pushing away her daughter with pretended sternness, and turning to the

visitor she added: "She is my youngest girl."

Natasha, raising her face for a moment from her mother's mantilla,

glanced up at her through tears of laughter, and again hid her face.

The visitor, compelled to look on at this family scene, thought it

necessary to take some part in it.

"Tell me, my dear," said she to Natasha, "is Mimi a relation of yours? A

daughter, I suppose?"

Natasha did not like the visitor's tone of condescension to childish

things. She did not reply, but looked at her seriously.

Meanwhile the younger generation: Boris, the officer, Anna Mikhaylovna's

son; Nicholas, the undergraduate, the count's eldest son; Sonya, the

count's fifteen-year-old niece, and little Petya, his youngest boy, had

all settled down in the drawing room and were obviously trying to

restrain within the bounds of decorum the excitement and mirth that

shone in all their faces. Evidently in the back rooms, from which they

had dashed out so impetuously, the conversation had been more amusing

than the drawing-room talk of society scandals, the weather, and

Countess Apraksina. Now and then they glanced at one another, hardly

able to suppress their laughter.

The two young men, the student and the officer, friends from childhood,

were of the same age and both handsome fellows, though not alike. Boris

was tall and fair, and his calm and handsome face had regular, delicate

features. Nicholas was short with curly hair and an open expression.

Dark hairs were already showing on his upper lip, and his whole face

expressed impetuosity and enthusiasm. Nicholas blushed when he entered

the drawing room. He evidently tried to find something to say, but

failed. Boris on the contrary at once found his footing, and related

quietly and humorously how he had known that doll Mimi when she was

still quite a young lady, before her nose was broken; how she had aged

during the five years he had known her, and how her head had cracked

right across the skull. Having said this he glanced at Natasha. She

turned away from him and glanced at her younger brother, who was

screwing up his eyes and shaking with suppressed laughter, and unable to

control herself any longer, she jumped up and rushed from the room as

fast as her nimble little feet would carry her. Boris did not laugh.

"You were meaning to go out, weren't you, Mamma? Do you want the

carriage?" he asked his mother with a smile.

"Yes, yes, go and tell them to get it ready," she answered, returning

his smile.

Boris quietly left the room and went in search of Natasha. The plump boy

ran after them angrily, as if vexed that their program had been

disturbed.

CHAPTER XII

The only young people remaining in the drawing room, not counting the

young lady visitor and the countess' eldest daughter (who was four years

older than her sister and behaved already like a grown-up person), were

Nicholas and Sonya, the niece. Sonya was a slender little brunette with

a tender look in her eyes which were veiled by long lashes, thick black

plaits coiling twice round her head, and a tawny tint in her complexion

and especially in the color of her slender but graceful and muscular

arms and neck. By the grace of her movements, by the softness and

flexibility of her small limbs, and by a certain coyness and reserve of

manner, she reminded one of a pretty, half-grown kitten which promises

to become a beautiful little cat. She evidently considered it proper to

show an interest in the general conversation by smiling, but in spite of

herself her eyes under their thick long lashes watched her cousin who

was going to join the army, with such passionate girlish adoration that

her smile could not for a single instant impose upon anyone, and it was

clear that the kitten had settled down only to spring up with more

energy and again play with her cousin as soon as they too could, like

Natasha and Boris, escape from the drawing room.

"Ah yes, my dear," said the count, addressing the visitor and pointing

to Nicholas, "his friend Boris has become an officer, and so for

friendship's sake he is leaving the university and me, his old father,

and entering the military service, my dear. And there was a place and

everything waiting for him in the Archives Department! Isn't that

friendship?" remarked the count in an inquiring tone.

"But they say that war has been declared," replied the visitor.

"They've been saying so a long while," said the count, "and they'll say

so again and again, and that will be the end of it. My dear, there's

friendship for you," he repeated. "He's joining the hussars."

The visitor, not knowing what to say, shook her head.

"It's not at all from friendship," declared Nicholas, flaring up and

turning away as if from a shameful aspersion. "It is not from friendship

at all; I simply feel that the army is my vocation."

He glanced at his cousin and the young lady visitor; and they were both

regarding him with a smile of approbation.

"Schubert, the colonel of the Pavlograd Hussars, is dining with us

today. He has been here on leave and is taking Nicholas back with him.

It can't be helped!" said the count, shrugging his shoulders and

speaking playfully of a matter that evidently distressed him.

"I have already told you, Papa," said his son, "that if you don't wish

to let me go, I'll stay. But I know I am no use anywhere except in the

army; I am not a diplomat or a government clerk.--I don't know how to

hide what I feel." As he spoke he kept glancing with the flirtatiousness

of a handsome youth at Sonya and the young lady visitor.

The little kitten, feasting her eyes on him, seemed ready at any moment

to start her gambols again and display her kittenish nature.

"All right, all right!" said the old count. "He always flares up! This

Buonaparte has turned all their heads; they all think of how he rose

from an ensign and became Emperor. Well, well, God grant it," he added,

not noticing his visitor's sarcastic smile.

The elders began talking about Bonaparte. Julie Karagina turned to young

Rostov.

"What a pity you weren't at the Arkharovs' on Thursday. It was so dull

without you," said she, giving him a tender smile.

The young man, flattered, sat down nearer to her with a coquettish

smile, and engaged the smiling Julie in a confidential conversation

without at all noticing that his involuntary smile had stabbed the heart

of Sonya, who blushed and smiled unnaturally. In the midst of his talk

he glanced round at her. She gave him a passionately angry glance, and

hardly able to restrain her tears and maintain the artificial smile on

her lips, she got up and left the room. All Nicholas' animation

vanished. He waited for the first pause in the conversation, and then

with a distressed face left the room to find Sonya.

"How plainly all these young people wear their hearts on their sleeves!"

said Anna Mikhaylovna, pointing to Nicholas as he went out. "Cousinage--

dangereux voisinage;" \* she added.

\* Cousinhood is a dangerous neighborhood.

"Yes," said the countess when the brightness these young people had

brought into the room had vanished; and as if answering a question no

one had put but which was always in her mind, "and how much suffering,

how much anxiety one has had to go through that we might rejoice in them

now! And yet really the anxiety is greater now than the joy. One is

always, always anxious! Especially just at this age, so dangerous both

for girls and boys."

"It all depends on the bringing up," remarked the visitor.

"Yes, you're quite right," continued the countess. "Till now I have

always, thank God, been my children's friend and had their full

confidence," said she, repeating the mistake of so many parents who

imagine that their children have no secrets from them. "I know I shall

always be my daughters' first confidante, and that if Nicholas, with his

impulsive nature, does get into mischief (a boy can't help it), he will

all the same never be like those Petersburg young men."

"Yes, they are splendid, splendid youngsters," chimed in the count, who

always solved questions that seemed to him perplexing by deciding that

everything was splendid. "Just fancy: wants to be an hussar. What's one

to do, my dear?"

"What a charming creature your younger girl is," said the visitor; "a

little volcano!"

"Yes, a regular volcano," said the count. "Takes after me! And what a

voice she has; though she's my daughter, I tell the truth when I say

she'll be a singer, a second Salomoni! We have engaged an Italian to

give her lessons."

"Isn't she too young? I have heard that it harms the voice to train it

at that age."

"Oh no, not at all too young!" replied the count. "Why, our mothers used

to be married at twelve or thirteen."

"And she's in love with Boris already. Just fancy!" said the countess

with a gentle smile, looking at Boris and went on, evidently concerned

with a thought that always occupied her: "Now you see if I were to be

severe with her and to forbid it... goodness knows what they might be up

to on the sly" (she meant that they would be kissing), "but as it is, I

know every word she utters. She will come running to me of her own

accord in the evening and tell me everything. Perhaps I spoil her, but

really that seems the best plan. With her elder sister I was stricter."

"Yes, I was brought up quite differently," remarked the handsome elder

daughter, Countess Vera, with a smile.

But the smile did not enhance Vera's beauty as smiles generally do; on

the contrary it gave her an unnatural, and therefore unpleasant,

expression. Vera was good-looking, not at all stupid, quick at learning,

was well-brought up, and had a pleasant voice; what she said was true

and appropriate, yet, strange to say, everyone--the visitors and

countess alike--turned to look at her as if wondering why she had said

it, and they all felt awkward.

"People are always too clever with their eldest children and try to make

something exceptional of them," said the visitor.

"What's the good of denying it, my dear? Our dear countess was too

clever with Vera," said the count. "Well, what of that? She's turned out

splendidly all the same," he added, winking at Vera.

The guests got up and took their leave, promising to return to dinner.

"What manners! I thought they would never go," said the countess, when

she had seen her guests out.

CHAPTER XIII

When Natasha ran out of the drawing room she only went as far as the

conservatory. There she paused and stood listening to the conversation

in the drawing room, waiting for Boris to come out. She was already

growing impatient, and stamped her foot, ready to cry at his not coming

at once, when she heard the young man's discreet steps approaching

neither quickly nor slowly. At this Natasha dashed swiftly among the

flower tubs and hid there.

Boris paused in the middle of the room, looked round, brushed a little

dust from the sleeve of his uniform, and going up to a mirror examined

his handsome face. Natasha, very still, peered out from her ambush,

waiting to see what he would do. He stood a little while before the

glass, smiled, and walked toward the other door. Natasha was about to

call him but changed her mind. "Let him look for me," thought she.

Hardly had Boris gone than Sonya, flushed, in tears, and muttering

angrily, came in at the other door. Natasha checked her first impulse to

run out to her, and remained in her hiding place, watching--as under an

invisible cap--to see what went on in the world. She was experiencing a

new and peculiar pleasure. Sonya, muttering to herself, kept looking

round toward the drawing-room door. It opened and Nicholas came in.

"Sonya, what is the matter with you? How can you?" said he, running up

to her.

"It's nothing, nothing; leave me alone!" sobbed Sonya.

"Ah, I know what it is."

"Well, if you do, so much the better, and you can go back to her!"

"So-o-onya! Look here! How can you torture me and yourself like that,

for a mere fancy?" said Nicholas taking her hand.

Sonya did not pull it away, and left off crying. Natasha, not stirring

and scarcely breathing, watched from her ambush with sparkling eyes.

"What will happen now?" thought she.

"Sonya! What is anyone in the world to me? You alone are everything!"

said Nicholas. "And I will prove it to you."

"I don't like you to talk like that."

"Well, then, I won't; only forgive me, Sonya!" He drew her to him and

kissed her.

"Oh, how nice," thought Natasha; and when Sonya and Nicholas had gone

out of the conservatory she followed and called Boris to her.

"Boris, come here," said she with a sly and significant look. "I have

something to tell you. Here, here!" and she led him into the

conservatory to the place among the tubs where she had been hiding.

Boris followed her, smiling.

"What is the something?" asked he.

She grew confused, glanced round, and, seeing the doll she had thrown

down on one of the tubs, picked it up.

"Kiss the doll," said she.

Boris looked attentively and kindly at her eager face, but did not

reply.

"Don't you want to? Well, then, come here," said she, and went further

in among the plants and threw down the doll. "Closer, closer!" she

whispered.

She caught the young officer by his cuffs, and a look of solemnity and

fear appeared on her flushed face.

"And me? Would you like to kiss me?" she whispered almost inaudibly,

glancing up at him from under her brows, smiling, and almost crying from

excitement.

Boris blushed.

"How funny you are!" he said, bending down to her and blushing still

more, but he waited and did nothing.

Suddenly she jumped up onto a tub to be higher than he, embraced him so

that both her slender bare arms clasped him above his neck, and, tossing

back her hair, kissed him full on the lips.

Then she slipped down among the flowerpots on the other side of the tubs

and stood, hanging her head.

"Natasha," he said, "you know that I love you, but..."

"You are in love with me?" Natasha broke in.

"Yes, I am, but please don't let us do like that.... In another four

years... then I will ask for your hand."

Natasha considered.

"Thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen," she counted on her slender

little fingers. "All right! Then it's settled?"

A smile of joy and satisfaction lit up her eager face.

"Settled!" replied Boris.

"Forever?" said the little girl. "Till death itself?"

She took his arm and with a happy face went with him into the adjoining

sitting room.

CHAPTER XIV

After receiving her visitors, the countess was so tired that she gave

orders to admit no more, but the porter was told to be sure to invite to

dinner all who came "to congratulate." The countess wished to have a

tête-à-tête talk with the friend of her childhood, Princess Anna

Mikhaylovna, whom she had not seen properly since she returned from

Petersburg. Anna Mikhaylovna, with her tear-worn but pleasant face, drew

her chair nearer to that of the countess.

"With you I will be quite frank," said Anna Mikhaylovna. "There are not

many left of us old friends! That's why I so value your friendship."

Anna Mikhaylovna looked at Vera and paused. The countess pressed her

friend's hand.

"Vera," she said to her eldest daughter who was evidently not a

favorite, "how is it you have so little tact? Don't you see you are not

wanted here? Go to the other girls, or..."

The handsome Vera smiled contemptuously but did not seem at all hurt.

"If you had told me sooner, Mamma, I would have gone," she replied as

she rose to go to her own room.

But as she passed the sitting room she noticed two couples sitting, one

pair at each window. She stopped and smiled scornfully. Sonya was

sitting close to Nicholas who was copying out some verses for her, the

first he had ever written. Boris and Natasha were at the other window

and ceased talking when Vera entered. Sonya and Natasha looked at Vera

with guilty, happy faces.

It was pleasant and touching to see these little girls in love; but

apparently the sight of them roused no pleasant feeling in Vera.

"How often have I asked you not to take my things?" she said. "You have

a room of your own," and she took the inkstand from Nicholas.

"In a minute, in a minute," he said, dipping his pen.

"You always manage to do things at the wrong time," continued Vera. "You

came rushing into the drawing room so that everyone felt ashamed of

you."

Though what she said was quite just, perhaps for that very reason no one

replied, and the four simply looked at one another. She lingered in the

room with the inkstand in her hand.

"And at your age what secrets can there be between Natasha and Boris, or

between you two? It's all nonsense!"

"Now, Vera, what does it matter to you?" said Natasha in defense,

speaking very gently.

She seemed that day to be more than ever kind and affectionate to

everyone.

"Very silly," said Vera. "I am ashamed of you. Secrets indeed!"

"All have secrets of their own," answered Natasha, getting warmer. "We

don't interfere with you and Berg."

"I should think not," said Vera, "because there can never be anything

wrong in my behavior. But I'll just tell Mamma how you are behaving with

Boris."

"Natalya Ilynichna behaves very well to me," remarked Boris. "I have

nothing to complain of."

"Don't, Boris! You are such a diplomat that it is really tiresome," said

Natasha in a mortified voice that trembled slightly. (She used the word

"diplomat," which was just then much in vogue among the children, in the

special sense they attached to it.) "Why does she bother me?" And she

added, turning to Vera, "You'll never understand it, because you've

never loved anyone. You have no heart! You are a Madame de Genlis and

nothing more" (this nickname, bestowed on Vera by Nicholas, was

considered very stinging), "and your greatest pleasure is to be

unpleasant to people! Go and flirt with Berg as much as you please," she

finished quickly.

"I shall at any rate not run after a young man before visitors..."

"Well, now you've done what you wanted," put in Nicholas--"said

unpleasant things to everyone and upset them. Let's go to the nursery."

All four, like a flock of scared birds, got up and left the room.

"The unpleasant things were said to me," remarked Vera, "I said none to

anyone."

"Madame de Genlis! Madame de Genlis!" shouted laughing voices through

the door.

The handsome Vera, who produced such an irritating and unpleasant effect

on everyone, smiled and, evidently unmoved by what had been said to her,

went to the looking glass and arranged her hair and scarf. Looking at

her own handsome face she seemed to become still colder and calmer.

In the drawing room the conversation was still going on.

"Ah, my dear," said the countess, "my life is not all roses either.

Don't I know that at the rate we are living our means won't last long?

It's all the Club and his easygoing nature. Even in the country do we

get any rest? Theatricals, hunting, and heaven knows what besides! But

don't let's talk about me; tell me how you managed everything. I often

wonder at you, Annette--how at your age you can rush off alone in a

carriage to Moscow, to Petersburg, to those ministers and great people,

and know how to deal with them all! It's quite astonishing. How did you

get things settled? I couldn't possibly do it."

"Ah, my love," answered Anna Mikhaylovna, "God grant you never know what

it is to be left a widow without means and with a son you love to

distraction! One learns many things then," she added with a certain

pride. "That lawsuit taught me much. When I want to see one of those big

people I write a note: 'Princess So-and-So desires an interview with So

and-So,' and then I take a cab and go myself two, three, or four times--

till I get what I want. I don't mind what they think of me."

"Well, and to whom did you apply about Bory?" asked the countess. "You

see yours is already an officer in the Guards, while my Nicholas is

going as a cadet. There's no one to interest himself for him. To whom

did you apply?"

"To Prince Vasili. He was so kind. He at once agreed to everything, and

put the matter before the Emperor," said Princess Anna Mikhaylovna

enthusiastically, quite forgetting all the humiliation she had endured

to gain her end.

"Has Prince Vasili aged much?" asked the countess. "I have not seen him

since we acted together at the Rumyantsovs' theatricals. I expect he has

forgotten me. He paid me attentions in those days," said the countess,

with a smile.

"He is just the same as ever," replied Anna Mikhaylovna, "overflowing

with amiability. His position has not turned his head at all. He said to

me, 'I am sorry I can do so little for you, dear Princess. I am at your

command.' Yes, he is a fine fellow and a very kind relation. But,

Nataly, you know my love for my son: I would do anything for his

happiness! And my affairs are in such a bad way that my position is now

a terrible one," continued Anna Mikhaylovna, sadly, dropping her voice.

"My wretched lawsuit takes all I have and makes no progress. Would you

believe it, I have literally not a penny and don't know how to equip

Boris." She took out her handkerchief and began to cry. "I need five

hundred rubles, and have only one twenty-five-ruble note. I am in such a

state.... My only hope now is in Count Cyril Vladimirovich Bezukhov. If

he will not assist his godson--you know he is Bory's godfather--and

allow him something for his maintenance, all my trouble will have been

thrown away.... I shall not be able to equip him."

The countess' eyes filled with tears and she pondered in silence.

"I often think, though, perhaps it's a sin," said the princess, "that

here lives Count Cyril Vladimirovich Bezukhov so rich, all alone... that

tremendous fortune... and what is his life worth? It's a burden to him,

and Bory's life is only just beginning...."

"Surely he will leave something to Boris," said the countess.

"Heaven only knows, my dear! These rich grandees are so selfish. Still,

I will take Boris and go to see him at once, and I shall speak to him

straight out. Let people think what they will of me, it's really all the

same to me when my son's fate is at stake." The princess rose. "It's now

two o'clock and you dine at four. There will just be time."

And like a practical Petersburg lady who knows how to make the most of

time, Anna Mikhaylovna sent someone to call her son, and went into the

anteroom with him.

"Good-bye, my dear," said she to the countess who saw her to the door,

and added in a whisper so that her son should not hear, "Wish me good

luck."

"Are you going to Count Cyril Vladimirovich, my dear?" said the count

coming out from the dining hall into the anteroom, and he added: "If he

is better, ask Pierre to dine with us. He has been to the house, you

know, and danced with the children. Be sure to invite him, my dear. We

will see how Taras distinguishes himself today. He says Count Orlov

never gave such a dinner as ours will be!"

CHAPTER XV

"My dear Boris," said Princess Anna Mikhaylovna to her son as Countess

Rostova's carriage in which they were seated drove over the straw

covered street and turned into the wide courtyard of Count Cyril

Vladimirovich Bezukhov's house. "My dear Boris," said the mother,

drawing her hand from beneath her old mantle and laying it timidly and

tenderly on her son's arm, "be affectionate and attentive to him. Count

Cyril Vladimirovich is your godfather after all, your future depends on

him. Remember that, my dear, and be nice to him, as you so well know how

to be."

"If only I knew that anything besides humiliation would come of it..."

answered her son coldly. "But I have promised and will do it for your

sake."

Although the hall porter saw someone's carriage standing at the

entrance, after scrutinizing the mother and son (who without asking to

be announced had passed straight through the glass porch between the

rows of statues in niches) and looking significantly at the lady's old

cloak, he asked whether they wanted the count or the princesses, and,

hearing that they wished to see the count, said his excellency was worse

today, and that his excellency was not receiving anyone.

"We may as well go back," said the son in French.

"My dear!" exclaimed his mother imploringly, again laying her hand on

his arm as if that touch might soothe or rouse him.

Boris said no more, but looked inquiringly at his mother without taking

off his cloak.

"My friend," said Anna Mikhaylovna in gentle tones, addressing the hall

porter, "I know Count Cyril Vladimirovich is very ill... that's why I

have come... I am a relation. I shall not disturb him, my friend... I

only need see Prince Vasili Sergeevich: he is staying here, is he not?

Please announce me."

The hall porter sullenly pulled a bell that rang upstairs, and turned

away.

"Princess Drubetskaya to see Prince Vasili Sergeevich," he called to a

footman dressed in knee breeches, shoes, and a swallow-tail coat, who

ran downstairs and looked over from the halfway landing.

The mother smoothed the folds of her dyed silk dress before a large

Venetian mirror in the wall, and in her trodden-down shoes briskly

ascended the carpeted stairs.

"My dear," she said to her son, once more stimulating him by a touch,

"you promised me!"

The son, lowering his eyes, followed her quietly.

They entered the large hall, from which one of the doors led to the

apartments assigned to Prince Vasili.

Just as the mother and son, having reached the middle of the hall, were

about to ask their way of an elderly footman who had sprung up as they

entered, the bronze handle of one of the doors turned and Prince Vasili

came out--wearing a velvet coat with a single star on his breast, as was

his custom when at home--taking leave of a good-looking, dark-haired

man. This was the celebrated Petersburg doctor, Lorrain.

"Then it is certain?" said the prince.

"Prince, humanum est errare, \* but..." replied the doctor, swallowing

his r's, and pronouncing the Latin words with a French accent.

\* To err is human.

"Very well, very well..."

Seeing Anna Mikhaylovna and her son, Prince Vasili dismissed the doctor

with a bow and approached them silently and with a look of inquiry. The

son noticed that an expression of profound sorrow suddenly clouded his

mother's face, and he smiled slightly.

"Ah, Prince! In what sad circumstances we meet again! And how is our

dear invalid?" said she, as though unaware of the cold offensive look

fixed on her.

Prince Vasili stared at her and at Boris questioningly and perplexed.

Boris bowed politely. Prince Vasili without acknowledging the bow turned

to Anna Mikhaylovna, answering her query by a movement of the head and

lips indicating very little hope for the patient.

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Anna Mikhaylovna. "Oh, how awful! It is

terrible to think.... This is my son," she added, indicating Boris. "He

wanted to thank you himself."

Boris bowed again politely.

"Believe me, Prince, a mother's heart will never forget what you have

done for us."

"I am glad I was able to do you a service, my dear Anna Mikhaylovna,"

said Prince Vasili, arranging his lace frill, and in tone and manner,

here in Moscow to Anna Mikhaylovna whom he had placed under an

obligation, assuming an air of much greater importance than he had done

in Petersburg at Anna Scherer's reception.

"Try to serve well and show yourself worthy," added he, addressing Boris

with severity. "I am glad.... Are you here on leave?" he went on in his

usual tone of indifference.

"I am awaiting orders to join my new regiment, your excellency," replied

Boris, betraying neither annoyance at the prince's brusque manner nor a

desire to enter into conversation, but speaking so quietly and

respectfully that the prince gave him a searching glance.

"Are you living with your mother?"

"I am living at Countess Rostova's," replied Boris, again adding, "your

excellency."

"That is, with Ilya Rostov who married Nataly Shinshina," said Anna

Mikhaylovna.

"I know, I know," answered Prince Vasili in his monotonous voice. "I

never could understand how Nataly made up her mind to marry that

unlicked bear! A perfectly absurd and stupid fellow, and a gambler too,

I am told."

"But a very kind man, Prince," said Anna Mikhaylovna with a pathetic

smile, as though she too knew that Count Rostov deserved this censure,

but asked him not to be too hard on the poor old man. "What do the

doctors say?" asked the princess after a pause, her worn face again

expressing deep sorrow.

"They give little hope," replied the prince.

"And I should so like to thank Uncle once for all his kindness to me and

Boris. He is his godson," she added, her tone suggesting that this fact

ought to give Prince Vasili much satisfaction.

Prince Vasili became thoughtful and frowned. Anna Mikhaylovna saw that

he was afraid of finding in her a rival for Count Bezukhov's fortune,

and hastened to reassure him.

"If it were not for my sincere affection and devotion to Uncle," said

she, uttering the word with peculiar assurance and unconcern, "I know

his character: noble, upright... but you see he has no one with him

except the young princesses.... They are still young...." She bent her

head and continued in a whisper: "Has he performed his final duty,

Prince? How priceless are those last moments! It can make things no

worse, and it is absolutely necessary to prepare him if he is so ill. We

women, Prince," and she smiled tenderly, "always know how to say these

things. I absolutely must see him, however painful it may be for me. I

am used to suffering."

Evidently the prince understood her, and also understood, as he had done

at Anna Pavlovna's, that it would be difficult to get rid of Anna

Mikhaylovna.

"Would not such a meeting be too trying for him, dear Anna Mikhaylovna?"

said he. "Let us wait until evening. The doctors are expecting a

crisis."

"But one cannot delay, Prince, at such a moment! Consider that the

welfare of his soul is at stake. Ah, it is awful: the duties of a

Christian..."

A door of one of the inner rooms opened and one of the princesses, the

count's niece, entered with a cold, stern face. The length of her body

was strikingly out of proportion to her short legs. Prince Vasili turned

to her.

"Well, how is he?"

"Still the same; but what can you expect, this noise..." said the

princess, looking at Anna Mikhaylovna as at a stranger.

"Ah, my dear, I hardly knew you," said Anna Mikhaylovna with a happy

smile, ambling lightly up to the count's niece. "I have come, and am at

your service to help you nurse my uncle. I imagine what you have gone

through," and she sympathetically turned up her eyes.

The princess gave no reply and did not even smile, but left the room as

Anna Mikhaylovna took off her gloves and, occupying the position she had

conquered, settled down in an armchair, inviting Prince Vasili to take a

seat beside her.

"Boris," she said to her son with a smile, "I shall go in to see the

count, my uncle; but you, my dear, had better go to Pierre meanwhile and

don't forget to give him the Rostovs' invitation. They ask him to

dinner. I suppose he won't go?" she continued, turning to the prince.

"On the contrary," replied the prince, who had plainly become depressed,

"I shall be only too glad if you relieve me of that young man.... Here

he is, and the count has not once asked for him."

He shrugged his shoulders. A footman conducted Boris down one flight of

stairs and up another, to Pierre's rooms.

CHAPTER XVI

Pierre, after all, had not managed to choose a career for himself in

Petersburg, and had been expelled from there for riotous conduct and

sent to Moscow. The story told about him at Count Rostov's was true.

Pierre had taken part in tying a policeman to a bear. He had now been

for some days in Moscow and was staying as usual at his father's house.

Though he expected that the story of his escapade would be already known

in Moscow and that the ladies about his father--who were never favorably

disposed toward him--would have used it to turn the count against him,

he nevertheless on the day of his arrival went to his father's part of

the house. Entering the drawing room, where the princesses spent most of

their time, he greeted the ladies, two of whom were sitting at

embroidery frames while a third read aloud. It was the eldest who was

reading--the one who had met Anna Mikhaylovna. The two younger ones were

embroidering: both were rosy and pretty and they differed only in that

one had a little mole on her lip which made her much prettier. Pierre

was received as if he were a corpse or a leper. The eldest princess

paused in her reading and silently stared at him with frightened eyes;

the second assumed precisely the same expression; while the youngest,

the one with the mole, who was of a cheerful and lively disposition,

bent over her frame to hide a smile probably evoked by the amusing scene

she foresaw. She drew her wool down through the canvas and, scarcely

able to refrain from laughing, stooped as if trying to make out the

pattern.

"How do you do, cousin?" said Pierre. "You don't recognize me?"

"I recognize you only too well, too well."

"How is the count? Can I see him?" asked Pierre, awkwardly as usual, but

unabashed.

"The count is suffering physically and mentally, and apparently you have

done your best to increase his mental sufferings."

"Can I see the count?" Pierre again asked.

"Hm.... If you wish to kill him, to kill him outright, you can see

him... Olga, go and see whether Uncle's beef tea is ready--it is almost

time," she added, giving Pierre to understand that they were busy, and

busy making his father comfortable, while evidently he, Pierre, was only

busy causing him annoyance.

Olga went out. Pierre stood looking at the sisters; then he bowed and

said: "Then I will go to my rooms. You will let me know when I can see

him."

And he left the room, followed by the low but ringing laughter of the

sister with the mole.

Next day Prince Vasili had arrived and settled in the count's house. He

sent for Pierre and said to him: "My dear fellow, if you are going to

behave here as you did in Petersburg, you will end very badly; that is

all I have to say to you. The count is very, very ill, and you must not

see him at all."

Since then Pierre had not been disturbed and had spent the whole time in

his rooms upstairs.

When Boris appeared at his door Pierre was pacing up and down his room,

stopping occasionally at a corner to make menacing gestures at the wall,

as if running a sword through an invisible foe, and glaring savagely

over his spectacles, and then again resuming his walk, muttering

indistinct words, shrugging his shoulders and gesticulating.

"England is done for," said he, scowling and pointing his finger at

someone unseen. "Mr. Pitt, as a traitor to the nation and to the rights

of man, is sentenced to..." But before Pierre--who at that moment

imagined himself to be Napoleon in person and to have just effected the

dangerous crossing of the Straits of Dover and captured London--could

pronounce Pitt's sentence, he saw a well-built and handsome young

officer entering his room. Pierre paused. He had left Moscow when Boris

was a boy of fourteen, and had quite forgotten him, but in his usual

impulsive and hearty way he took Boris by the hand with a friendly

smile.

"Do you remember me?" asked Boris quietly with a pleasant smile. "I have

come with my mother to see the count, but it seems he is not well."

"Yes, it seems he is ill. People are always disturbing him," answered

Pierre, trying to remember who this young man was.

Boris felt that Pierre did not recognize him but did not consider it

necessary to introduce himself, and without experiencing the least

embarrassment looked Pierre straight in the face.

"Count Rostov asks you to come to dinner today," said he, after a

considerable pause which made Pierre feel uncomfortable.

"Ah, Count Rostov!" exclaimed Pierre joyfully. "Then you are his son,

Ilya? Only fancy, I didn't know you at first. Do you remember how we

went to the Sparrow Hills with Madame Jacquot?... It's such an age..."

"You are mistaken," said Boris deliberately, with a bold and slightly

sarcastic smile. "I am Boris, son of Princess Anna Mikhaylovna

Drubetskaya. Rostov, the father, is Ilya, and his son is Nicholas. I

never knew any Madame Jacquot."

Pierre shook his head and arms as if attacked by mosquitoes or bees.

"Oh dear, what am I thinking about? I've mixed everything up. One has so

many relatives in Moscow! So you are Boris? Of course. Well, now we know

where we are. And what do you think of the Boulogne expedition? The

English will come off badly, you know, if Napoleon gets across the

Channel. I think the expedition is quite feasible. If only Villeneuve

doesn't make a mess of things!"

Boris knew nothing about the Boulogne expedition; he did not read the

papers and it was the first time he had heard Villeneuve's name.

"We here in Moscow are more occupied with dinner parties and scandal

than with politics," said he in his quiet ironical tone. "I know nothing

about it and have not thought about it. Moscow is chiefly busy with

gossip," he continued. "Just now they are talking about you and your

father."

Pierre smiled in his good-natured way as if afraid for his companion's

sake that the latter might say something he would afterwards regret. But

Boris spoke distinctly, clearly, and dryly, looking straight into

Pierre's eyes.

"Moscow has nothing else to do but gossip," Boris went on. "Everybody is

wondering to whom the count will leave his fortune, though he may

perhaps outlive us all, as I sincerely hope he will..."

"Yes, it is all very horrid," interrupted Pierre, "very horrid."

Pierre was still afraid that this officer might inadvertently say

something disconcerting to himself.

"And it must seem to you," said Boris flushing slightly, but not

changing his tone or attitude, "it must seem to you that everyone is

trying to get something out of the rich man?"

"So it does," thought Pierre.

"But I just wish to say, to avoid misunderstandings, that you are quite

mistaken if you reckon me or my mother among such people. We are very

poor, but for my own part at any rate, for the very reason that your

father is rich, I don't regard myself as a relation of his, and neither

I nor my mother would ever ask or take anything from him."

For a long time Pierre could not understand, but when he did, he jumped

up from the sofa, seized Boris under the elbow in his quick, clumsy way,

and, blushing far more than Boris, began to speak with a feeling of

mingled shame and vexation.

"Well, this is strange! Do you suppose I... who could think?... I know

very well..."

But Boris again interrupted him.

"I am glad I have spoken out fully. Perhaps you did not like it? You

must excuse me," said he, putting Pierre at ease instead of being put at

ease by him, "but I hope I have not offended you. I always make it a

rule to speak out... Well, what answer am I to take? Will you come to

dinner at the Rostovs'?"

And Boris, having apparently relieved himself of an onerous duty and

extricated himself from an awkward situation and placed another in it,

became quite pleasant again.

"No, but I say," said Pierre, calming down, "you are a wonderful fellow!

What you have just said is good, very good. Of course you don't know me.

We have not met for such a long time... not since we were children. You

might think that I... I understand, quite understand. I could not have

done it myself, I should not have had the courage, but it's splendid. I

am very glad to have made your acquaintance. It's queer," he added after

a pause, "that you should have suspected me!" He began to laugh. "Well,

what of it! I hope we'll get better acquainted," and he pressed Boris'

hand. "Do you know, I have not once been in to see the count. He has not

sent for me.... I am sorry for him as a man, but what can one do?"

"And so you think Napoleon will manage to get an army across?" asked

Boris with a smile.

Pierre saw that Boris wished to change the subject, and being of the

same mind he began explaining the advantages and disadvantages of the

Boulogne expedition.

A footman came in to summon Boris--the princess was going. Pierre, in

order to make Boris' better acquaintance, promised to come to dinner,

and warmly pressing his hand looked affectionately over his spectacles

into Boris' eyes. After he had gone Pierre continued pacing up and down

the room for a long time, no longer piercing an imaginary foe with his

imaginary sword, but smiling at the remembrance of that pleasant,

intelligent, and resolute young man.

As often happens in early youth, especially to one who leads a lonely

life, he felt an unaccountable tenderness for this young man and made up

his mind that they would be friends.

Prince Vasili saw the princess off. She held a handkerchief to her eyes

and her face was tearful.

"It is dreadful, dreadful!" she was saying, "but cost me what it may I

shall do my duty. I will come and spend the night. He must not be left

like this. Every moment is precious. I can't think why his nieces put it

off. Perhaps God will help me to find a way to prepare him!... Adieu,

Prince! May God support you..."

"Adieu, ma bonne," answered Prince Vasili turning away from her.

"Oh, he is in a dreadful state," said the mother to her son when they

were in the carriage. "He hardly recognizes anybody."

"I don't understand, Mamma--what is his attitude to Pierre?" asked the

son.

"The will will show that, my dear; our fate also depends on it."

"But why do you expect that he will leave us anything?"

"Ah, my dear! He is so rich, and we are so poor!"

"Well, that is hardly a sufficient reason, Mamma..."

"Oh, Heaven! How ill he is!" exclaimed the mother.

CHAPTER XVII

After Anna Mikhaylovna had driven off with her son to visit Count Cyril

Vladimirovich Bezukhov, Countess Rostova sat for a long time all alone

applying her handkerchief to her eyes. At last she rang.

"What is the matter with you, my dear?" she said crossly to the maid who

kept her waiting some minutes. "Don't you wish to serve me? Then I'll

find you another place."

The countess was upset by her friend's sorrow and humiliating poverty,

and was therefore out of sorts, a state of mind which with her always

found expression in calling her maid "my dear" and speaking to her with

exaggerated politeness.

"I am very sorry, ma'am," answered the maid.

"Ask the count to come to me."

The count came waddling in to see his wife with a rather guilty look as

usual.

"Well, little countess? What a saute of game au madere we are to have,

my dear! I tasted it. The thousand rubles I paid for Taras were not ill-

spent. He is worth it!"

He sat down by his wife, his elbows on his knees and his hands ruffling

his gray hair.

"What are your commands, little countess?"

"You see, my dear... What's that mess?" she said, pointing to his

waistcoat. "It's the saute, most likely," she added with a smile. "Well,

you see, Count, I want some money."

Her face became sad.

"Oh, little countess!"... and the count began bustling to get out his

pocketbook.

"I want a great deal, Count! I want five hundred rubles," and taking out

her cambric handkerchief she began wiping her husband's waistcoat.

"Yes, immediately, immediately! Hey, who's there?" he called out in a

tone only used by persons who are certain that those they call will rush

to obey the summons. "Send Dmitri to me!"

Dmitri, a man of good family who had been brought up in the count's

house and now managed all his affairs, stepped softly into the room.

"This is what I want, my dear fellow," said the count to the deferential

young man who had entered. "Bring me..." he reflected a moment, "yes,

bring me seven hundred rubles, yes! But mind, don't bring me such

tattered and dirty notes as last time, but nice clean ones for the

countess."

"Yes, Dmitri, clean ones, please," said the countess, sighing deeply.

"When would you like them, your excellency?" asked Dmitri. "Allow me to

inform you... But, don't be uneasy," he added, noticing that the count

was beginning to breathe heavily and quickly which was always a sign of

approaching anger. "I was forgetting... Do you wish it brought at once?"

"Yes, yes; just so! Bring it. Give it to the countess."

"What a treasure that Dmitri is," added the count with a smile when the

young man had departed. "There is never any 'impossible' with him.

That's a thing I hate! Everything is possible."

"Ah, money, Count, money! How much sorrow it causes in the world," said

the countess. "But I am in great need of this sum."

"You, my little countess, are a notorious spendthrift," said the count,

and having kissed his wife's hand he went back to his study.

When Anna Mikhaylovna returned from Count Bezukhov's the money, all in

clean notes, was lying ready under a handkerchief on the countess'

little table, and Anna Mikhaylovna noticed that something was agitating

her.

"Well, my dear?" asked the countess.

"Oh, what a terrible state he is in! One would not know him, he is so

ill! I was only there a few moments and hardly said a word..."

"Annette, for heaven's sake don't refuse me," the countess began, with a

blush that looked very strange on her thin, dignified, elderly face, and

she took the money from under the handkerchief.

Anna Mikhaylovna instantly guessed her intention and stooped to be ready

to embrace the countess at the appropriate moment.

"This is for Boris from me, for his outfit."

Anna Mikhaylovna was already embracing her and weeping. The countess

wept too. They wept because they were friends, and because they were

kindhearted, and because they--friends from childhood--had to think

about such a base thing as money, and because their youth was over....

But those tears were pleasant to them both.

CHAPTER XVIII

Countess Rostova, with her daughters and a large number of guests, was

already seated in the drawing room. The count took the gentlemen into

his study and showed them his choice collection of Turkish pipes. From

time to time he went out to ask: "Hasn't she come yet?" They were

expecting Marya Dmitrievna Akhrosimova, known in society as le terrible

dragon, a lady distinguished not for wealth or rank, but for common

sense and frank plainness of speech. Marya Dmitrievna was known to the

Imperial family as well as to all Moscow and Petersburg, and both cities

wondered at her, laughed privately at her rudenesses, and told good

stories about her, while none the less all without exception respected

and feared her.

In the count's room, which was full of tobacco smoke, they talked of war

that had been announced in a manifesto, and about the recruiting. None

of them had yet seen the manifesto, but they all knew it had appeared.

The count sat on the sofa between two guests who were smoking and

talking. He neither smoked nor talked, but bending his head first to one

side and then to the other watched the smokers with evident pleasure and

listened to the conversation of his two neighbors, whom he egged on

against each other.

One of them was a sallow, clean-shaven civilian with a thin and wrinkled

face, already growing old, though he was dressed like a most fashionable

young man. He sat with his legs up on the sofa as if quite at home and,

having stuck an amber mouthpiece far into his mouth, was inhaling the

smoke spasmodically and screwing up his eyes. This was an old bachelor,

Shinshin, a cousin of the countess', a man with "a sharp tongue" as they

said in Moscow society. He seemed to be condescending to his companion.

The latter, a fresh, rosy officer of the Guards, irreproachably washed,

brushed, and buttoned, held his pipe in the middle of his mouth and with

red lips gently inhaled the smoke, letting it escape from his handsome

mouth in rings. This was Lieutenant Berg, an officer in the Semenov

regiment with whom Boris was to travel to join the army, and about whom

Natasha had teased her elder sister Vera, speaking of Berg as her

"intended." The count sat between them and listened attentively. His

favorite occupation when not playing boston, a card game he was very

fond of, was that of listener, especially when he succeeded in setting

two loquacious talkers at one another.

"Well, then, old chap, mon tres honorable Alphonse Karlovich," said

Shinshin, laughing ironically and mixing the most ordinary Russian

expressions with the choicest French phrases--which was a peculiarity of

his speech. "Vous comptez vous faire des rentes sur l'etat; \* you want

to make something out of your company?"

\* You expect to make an income out of the government.

"No, Peter Nikolaevich; I only want to show that in the cavalry the

advantages are far less than in the infantry. Just consider my own

position now, Peter Nikolaevich..."

Berg always spoke quietly, politely, and with great precision. His

conversation always related entirely to himself; he would remain calm

and silent when the talk related to any topic that had no direct bearing

on himself. He could remain silent for hours without being at all put

out of countenance himself or making others uncomfortable, but as soon

as the conversation concerned himself he would begin to talk

circumstantially and with evident satisfaction.

"Consider my position, Peter Nikolaevich. Were I in the cavalry I should

get not more than two hundred rubles every four months, even with the

rank of lieutenant; but as it is I receive two hundred and thirty," said

he, looking at Shinshin and the count with a joyful, pleasant smile, as

if it were obvious to him that his success must always be the chief

desire of everyone else.

"Besides that, Peter Nikolaevich, by exchanging into the Guards I shall

be in a more prominent position," continued Berg, "and vacancies occur

much more frequently in the Foot Guards. Then just think what can be

done with two hundred and thirty rubles! I even manage to put a little

aside and to send something to my father," he went on, emitting a smoke

ring.

"La balance y est... \* A German knows how to skin a flint, as the

proverb says," remarked Shinshin, moving his pipe to the other side of

his mouth and winking at the count.

\* So that squares matters.

The count burst out laughing. The other guests seeing that Shinshin was

talking came up to listen. Berg, oblivious of irony or indifference,

continued to explain how by exchanging into the Guards he had already

gained a step on his old comrades of the Cadet Corps; how in wartime the

company commander might get killed and he, as senior in the company,

might easily succeed to the post; how popular he was with everyone in

the regiment, and how satisfied his father was with him. Berg evidently

enjoyed narrating all this, and did not seem to suspect that others,

too, might have their own interests. But all he said was so prettily

sedate, and the naivete of his youthful egotism was so obvious, that he

disarmed his hearers.

"Well, my boy, you'll get along wherever you go--foot or horse--that

I'll warrant," said Shinshin, patting him on the shoulder and taking his

feet off the sofa.

Berg smiled joyously. The count, by his guests, went into the drawing

room.

It was just the moment before a big dinner when the assembled guests,

expecting the summons to zakuska, \* avoid engaging in any long

conversation but think it necessary to move about and talk, in order to

show that they are not at all impatient for their food. The host and

hostess look toward the door, and now and then glance at one another,

and the visitors try to guess from these glances who, or what, they are

waiting for--some important relation who has not yet arrived, or a dish

that is not yet ready.

\* Hors d'oeuvres.

Pierre had come just at dinnertime and was sitting awkwardly in the

middle of the drawing room on the first chair he had come across,

blocking the way for everyone. The countess tried to make him talk, but

he went on naively looking around through his spectacles as if in search

of somebody and answered all her questions in monosyllables. He was in

the way and was the only one who did not notice the fact. Most of the

guests, knowing of the affair with the bear, looked with curiosity at

this big, stout, quiet man, wondering how such a clumsy, modest fellow

could have played such a prank on a policeman.

"You have only lately arrived?" the countess asked him.

"Oui, madame," replied he, looking around him.

"You have not yet seen my husband?"

"Non, madame." He smiled quite inappropriately.

"You have been in Paris recently, I believe? I suppose it's very

interesting."

"Very interesting."

The countess exchanged glances with Anna Mikhaylovna. The latter

understood that she was being asked to entertain this young man, and

sitting down beside him she began to speak about his father; but he

answered her, as he had the countess, only in monosyllables. The other

guests were all conversing with one another. "The Razumovskis... It was

charming... You are very kind... Countess Apraksina..." was heard on all

sides. The countess rose and went into the ballroom.

"Marya Dmitrievna?" came her voice from there.

"Herself," came the answer in a rough voice, and Marya Dmitrievna

entered the room.

All the unmarried ladies and even the married ones except the very

oldest rose. Marya Dmitrievna paused at the door. Tall and stout,

holding high her fifty-year-old head with its gray curls, she stood

surveying the guests, and leisurely arranged her wide sleeves as if

rolling them up. Marya Dmitrievna always spoke in Russian.

"Health and happiness to her whose name day we are keeping and to her

children," she said, in her loud, full-toned voice which drowned all

others. "Well, you old sinner," she went on, turning to the count who

was kissing her hand, "you're feeling dull in Moscow, I daresay? Nowhere

to hunt with your dogs? But what is to be done, old man? Just see how

these nestlings are growing up," and she pointed to the girls. "You must

look for husbands for them whether you like it or not...."

"Well," said she, "how's my Cossack?" (Marya Dmitrievna always called

Natasha a Cossack) and she stroked the child's arm as she came up

fearless and gay to kiss her hand. "I know she's a scamp of a girl, but

I like her."

She took a pair of pear-shaped ruby earrings from her huge reticule and,

having given them to the rosy Natasha, who beamed with the pleasure of

her saint's-day fete, turned away at once and addressed herself to

Pierre.

"Eh, eh, friend! Come here a bit," said she, assuming a soft high tone

of voice. "Come here, my friend..." and she ominously tucked up her

sleeves still higher. Pierre approached, looking at her in a childlike

way through his spectacles.

"Come nearer, come nearer, friend! I used to be the only one to tell

your father the truth when he was in favor, and in your case it's my

evident duty." She paused. All were silent, expectant of what was to

follow, for this was clearly only a prelude.

"A fine lad! My word! A fine lad!... His father lies on his deathbed and

he amuses himself setting a policeman astride a bear! For shame, sir,

for shame! It would be better if you went to the war."

She turned away and gave her hand to the count, who could hardly keep

from laughing.

"Well, I suppose it is time we were at table?" said Marya Dmitrievna.

The count went in first with Marya Dmitrievna, the countess followed on

the arm of a colonel of hussars, a man of importance to them because

Nicholas was to go with him to the regiment; then came Anna Mikhaylovna

with Shinshin. Berg gave his arm to Vera. The smiling Julie Karagina

went in with Nicholas. After them other couples followed, filling the

whole dining hall, and last of all the children, tutors, and governesses

followed singly. The footmen began moving about, chairs scraped, the

band struck up in the gallery, and the guests settled down in their

places. Then the strains of the count's household band were replaced by

the clatter of knives and forks, the voices of visitors, and the soft

steps of the footmen. At one end of the table sat the countess with

Marya Dmitrievna on her right and Anna Mikhaylovna on her left, the

other lady visitors were farther down. At the other end sat the count,

with the hussar colonel on his left and Shinshin and the other male

visitors on his right. Midway down the long table on one side sat the

grownup young people: Vera beside Berg, and Pierre beside Boris; and on

the other side, the children, tutors, and governesses. From behind the

crystal decanters and fruit vases, the count kept glancing at his wife

and her tall cap with its light-blue ribbons, and busily filled his

neighbors' glasses, not neglecting his own. The countess in turn,

without omitting her duties as hostess, threw significant glances from

behind the pineapples at her husband whose face and bald head seemed by

their redness to contrast more than usual with his gray hair. At the

ladies' end an even chatter of voices was heard all the time, at the

men's end the voices sounded louder and louder, especially that of the

colonel of hussars who, growing more and more flushed, ate and drank so

much that the count held him up as a pattern to the other guests. Berg

with tender smiles was saying to Vera that love is not an earthly but a

heavenly feeling. Boris was telling his new friend Pierre who the guests

were and exchanging glances with Natasha, who was sitting opposite.

Pierre spoke little but examined the new faces, and ate a great deal. Of

the two soups he chose turtle with savory patties and went on to the

game without omitting a single dish or one of the wines. These latter

the butler thrust mysteriously forward, wrapped in a napkin, from behind

the next man's shoulders and whispered: "Dry Madeira"... "Hungarian"...

or "Rhine wine" as the case might be. Of the four crystal glasses

engraved with the count's monogram that stood before his plate, Pierre

held out one at random and drank with enjoyment, gazing with ever-

increasing amiability at the other guests. Natasha, who sat opposite,

was looking at Boris as girls of thirteen look at the boy they are in

love with and have just kissed for the first time. Sometimes that same

look fell on Pierre, and that funny lively little girl's look made him

inclined to laugh without knowing why.

Nicholas sat at some distance from Sonya, beside Julie Karagina, to whom

he was again talking with the same involuntary smile. Sonya wore a

company smile but was evidently tormented by jealousy; now she turned

pale, now blushed and strained every nerve to overhear what Nicholas and

Julie were saying to one another. The governess kept looking round

uneasily as if preparing to resent any slight that might be put upon the

children. The German tutor was trying to remember all the dishes, wines,

and kinds of dessert, in order to send a full description of the dinner

to his people in Germany; and he felt greatly offended when the butler

with a bottle wrapped in a napkin passed him by. He frowned, trying to

appear as if he did not want any of that wine, but was mortified because

no one would understand that it was not to quench his thirst or from

greediness that he wanted it, but simply from a conscientious desire for

knowledge.

CHAPTER XIX

At the men's end of the table the talk grew more and more animated. The

colonel told them that the declaration of war had already appeared in

Petersburg and that a copy, which he had himself seen, had that day been

forwarded by courier to the commander-in-chief.

"And why the deuce are we going to fight Bonaparte?" remarked Shinshin.

"He has stopped Austria's cackle and I fear it will be our turn next."

The colonel was a stout, tall, plethoric German, evidently devoted to

the service and patriotically Russian. He resented Shinshin's remark.

"It is for the reasson, my goot sir," said he, speaking with a German

accent, "for the reasson zat ze Emperor knows zat. He declares in ze

manifessto zat he cannot fiew wiz indifference ze danger vreatening

Russia and zat ze safety and dignity of ze Empire as vell as ze sanctity

of its alliances..." he spoke this last word with particular emphasis as

if in it lay the gist of the matter.

Then with the unerring official memory that characterized him he

repeated from the opening words of the manifesto:

... and the wish, which constitutes the Emperor's sole and absolute aim-

-to establish peace in Europe on firm foundations--has now decided him

to despatch part of the army abroad and to create a new condition for

the attainment of that purpose.

"Zat, my dear sir, is vy..." he concluded, drinking a tumbler of wine

with dignity and looking to the count for approval.

"Connaissez-vous le Proverbe: \* 'Jerome, Jerome, do not roam, but turn

spindles at home!'?" said Shinshin, puckering his brows and smiling.

"Cela nous convient a merveille.\*(2) Suvorov now--he knew what he was

about; yet they beat him a plate couture,\*(3) and where are we to find

Suvorovs now? Je vous demande un peu,"\*(4) said he, continually changing

from French to Russian.

\*Do you know the proverb?

\*(2) That suits us down to the ground.

\*(3) Hollow.

\*(4) I just ask you that.

"Ve must vight to the last tr-r-op of our plood!" said the colonel,

thumping the table; "and ve must tie for our Emperor, and zen all vill

pe vell. And ve must discuss it as little as po-o-ossible"... he dwelt

particularly on the word possible... "as po-o-ossible," he ended, again

turning to the count. "Zat is how ve old hussars look at it, and zere's

an end of it! And how do you, a young man and a young hussar, how do you

judge of it?" he added, addressing Nicholas, who when he heard that the

war was being discussed had turned from his partner with eyes and ears

intent on the colonel.

"I am quite of your opinion," replied Nicholas, flaming up, turning his

plate round and moving his wineglasses about with as much decision and

desperation as though he were at that moment facing some great danger.

"I am convinced that we Russians must die or conquer," he concluded,

conscious--as were others--after the words were uttered that his remarks

were too enthusiastic and emphatic for the occasion and were therefore

awkward.

"What you said just now was splendid!" said his partner Julie.

Sonya trembled all over and blushed to her ears and behind them and down

to her neck and shoulders while Nicholas was speaking.

Pierre listened to the colonel's speech and nodded approvingly.

"That's fine," said he.

"The young man's a real hussar!" shouted the colonel, again thumping the

table.

"What are you making such a noise about over there?" Marya Dmitrievna's

deep voice suddenly inquired from the other end of the table. "What are

you thumping the table for?" she demanded of the hussar, "and why are

you exciting yourself? Do you think the French are here?"

"I am speaking ze truce," replied the hussar with a smile.

"It's all about the war," the count shouted down the table. "You know my

son's going, Marya Dmitrievna? My son is going."

"I have four sons in the army but still I don't fret. It is all in God's

hands. You may die in your bed or God may spare you in a battle,"

replied Marya Dmitrievna's deep voice, which easily carried the whole

length of the table.

"That's true!"

Once more the conversations concentrated, the ladies' at the one end and

the men's at the other.

"You won't ask," Natasha's little brother was saying; "I know you won't

ask!"

"I will," replied Natasha.

Her face suddenly flushed with reckless and joyous resolution. She half

rose, by a glance inviting Pierre, who sat opposite, to listen to what

was coming, and turning to her mother:

"Mamma!" rang out the clear contralto notes of her childish voice,

audible the whole length of the table.

"What is it?" asked the countess, startled; but seeing by her daughter's

face that it was only mischief, she shook a finger at her sternly with a

threatening and forbidding movement of her head.

The conversation was hushed.

"Mamma! What sweets are we going to have?" and Natasha's voice sounded

still more firm and resolute.

The countess tried to frown, but could not. Marya Dmitrievna shook her

fat finger.

"Cossack!" she said threateningly.

Most of the guests, uncertain how to regard this sally, looked at the

elders.

"You had better take care!" said the countess.

"Mamma! What sweets are we going to have?" Natasha again cried boldly,

with saucy gaiety, confident that her prank would be taken in good part.

Sonya and fat little Petya doubled up with laughter.

"You see! I have asked," whispered Natasha to her little brother and to

Pierre, glancing at him again.

"Ice pudding, but you won't get any," said Marya Dmitrievna.

Natasha saw there was nothing to be afraid of and so she braved even

Marya Dmitrievna.

"Marya Dmitrievna! What kind of ice pudding? I don't like ice cream."

"Carrot ices."

"No! What kind, Marya Dmitrievna? What kind?" she almost screamed; "I

want to know!"

Marya Dmitrievna and the countess burst out laughing, and all the guests

joined in. Everyone laughed, not at Marya Dmitrievna's answer but at the

incredible boldness and smartness of this little girl who had dared to

treat Marya Dmitrievna in this fashion.

Natasha only desisted when she had been told that there would be

pineapple ice. Before the ices, champagne was served round. The band

again struck up, the count and countess kissed, and the guests, leaving

their seats, went up to "congratulate" the countess, and reached across

the table to clink glasses with the count, with the children, and with

one another. Again the footmen rushed about, chairs scraped, and in the

same order in which they had entered but with redder faces, the guests

returned to the drawing room and to the count's study.

CHAPTER XX

The card tables were drawn out, sets made up for boston, and the count's

visitors settled themselves, some in the two drawing rooms, some in the

sitting room, some in the library.

The count, holding his cards fanwise, kept himself with difficulty from

dropping into his usual after-dinner nap, and laughed at everything. The

young people, at the countess' instigation, gathered round the

clavichord and harp. Julie by general request played first. After she

had played a little air with variations on the harp, she joined the

other young ladies in begging Natasha and Nicholas, who were noted for

their musical talent, to sing something. Natasha, who was treated as

though she were grown up, was evidently very proud of this but at the

same time felt shy.

"What shall we sing?" she said.

"'The Brook,'" suggested Nicholas.

"Well, then, let's be quick. Boris, come here," said Natasha. "But where

is Sonya?"

She looked round and seeing that her friend was not in the room ran to

look for her.

Running into Sonya's room and not finding her there, Natasha ran to the

nursery, but Sonya was not there either. Natasha concluded that she must

be on the chest in the passage. The chest in the passage was the place

of mourning for the younger female generation in the Rostov household.

And there in fact was Sonya lying face downward on Nurse's dirty feather

bed on the top of the chest, crumpling her gauzy pink dress under her,

hiding her face with her slender fingers, and sobbing so convulsively

that her bare little shoulders shook. Natasha's face, which had been so

radiantly happy all that saint's day, suddenly changed: her eyes became

fixed, and then a shiver passed down her broad neck and the corners of

her mouth drooped.

"Sonya! What is it? What is the matter?... Oo... Oo... Oo...!" And

Natasha's large mouth widened, making her look quite ugly, and she began

to wail like a baby without knowing why, except that Sonya was crying.

Sonya tried to lift her head to answer but could not, and hid her face

still deeper in the bed. Natasha wept, sitting on the blue-striped

feather bed and hugging her friend. With an effort Sonya sat up and

began wiping her eyes and explaining.

"Nicholas is going away in a week's time, his... papers... have come...

he told me himself... but still I should not cry," and she showed a

paper she held in her hand--with the verses Nicholas had written,

"still, I should not cry, but you can't... no one can understand... what

a soul he has!"

And she began to cry again because he had such a noble soul.

"It's all very well for you... I am not envious... I love you and Boris

also," she went on, gaining a little strength; "he is nice... there are

no difficulties in your way.... But Nicholas is my cousin... one would

have to... the Metropolitan himself... and even then it can't be done.

And besides, if she tells Mamma" (Sonya looked upon the countess as her

mother and called her so) "that I am spoiling Nicholas' career and am

heartless and ungrateful, while truly... God is my witness," and she

made the sign of the cross, "I love her so much, and all of you, only

Vera... And what for? What have I done to her? I am so grateful to you

that I would willingly sacrifice everything, only I have nothing...."

Sonya could not continue, and again hid her face in her hands and in the

feather bed. Natasha began consoling her, but her face showed that she

understood all the gravity of her friend's trouble.

"Sonya," she suddenly exclaimed, as if she had guessed the true reason

of her friend's sorrow, "I'm sure Vera has said something to you since

dinner? Hasn't she?"

"Yes, these verses Nicholas wrote himself and I copied some others, and

she found them on my table and said she'd show them to Mamma, and that I

was ungrateful, and that Mamma would never allow him to marry me, but

that he'll marry Julie. You see how he's been with her all day...

Natasha, what have I done to deserve it?..."

And again she began to sob, more bitterly than before. Natasha lifted

her up, hugged her, and, smiling through her tears, began comforting

her.

"Sonya, don't believe her, darling! Don't believe her! Do you remember

how we and Nicholas, all three of us, talked in the sitting room after

supper? Why, we settled how everything was to be. I don't quite remember

how, but don't you remember that it could all be arranged and how nice

it all was? There's Uncle Shinshin's brother has married his first

cousin. And we are only second cousins, you know. And Boris says it is

quite possible. You know I have told him all about it. And he is so

clever and so good!" said Natasha. "Don't you cry, Sonya, dear love,

darling Sonya!" and she kissed her and laughed. "Vera's spiteful; never

mind her! And all will come right and she won't say anything to Mamma.

Nicholas will tell her himself, and he doesn't care at all for Julie."

Natasha kissed her on the hair.

Sonya sat up. The little kitten brightened, its eyes shone, and it

seemed ready to lift its tail, jump down on its soft paws, and begin

playing with the ball of worsted as a kitten should.

"Do you think so?... Really? Truly?" she said, quickly smoothing her

frock and hair.

"Really, truly!" answered Natasha, pushing in a crisp lock that had

strayed from under her friend's plaits.

Both laughed.

"Well, let's go and sing 'The Brook.'"

"Come along!"

"Do you know, that fat Pierre who sat opposite me is so funny!" said

Natasha, stopping suddenly. "I feel so happy!"

And she set off at a run along the passage.

Sonya, shaking off some down which clung to her and tucking away the

verses in the bosom of her dress close to her bony little chest, ran

after Natasha down the passage into the sitting room with flushed face

and light, joyous steps. At the visitors' request the young people sang

the quartette, "The Brook," with which everyone was delighted. Then

Nicholas sang a song he had just learned:

At nighttime in the moon's fair glow How sweet, as fancies wander free,

To feel that in this world there's one Who still is thinking but of

thee!

That while her fingers touch the harp Wafting sweet music o'er the lea,

It is for thee thus swells her heart, Sighing its message out to thee...

A day or two, then bliss unspoilt, But oh! till then I cannot live!...

He had not finished the last verse before the young people began to get

ready to dance in the large hall, and the sound of the feet and the

coughing of the musicians were heard from the gallery.

Pierre was sitting in the drawing-room where Shinshin had engaged him,

as a man recently returned from abroad, in a political conversation in

which several others joined but which bored Pierre. When the music began

Natasha came in and walking straight up to Pierre said, laughing and

blushing:

"Mamma told me to ask you to join the dancers."

"I am afraid of mixing the figures," Pierre replied; "but if you will be

my teacher..." And lowering his big arm he offered it to the slender

little girl.

While the couples were arranging themselves and the musicians tuning up,

Pierre sat down with his little partner. Natasha was perfectly happy;

she was dancing with a grown-up man, who had been abroad. She was

sitting in a conspicuous place and talking to him like a grown-up lady.

She had a fan in her hand that one of the ladies had given her to hold.

Assuming quite the pose of a society woman (heaven knows when and where

she had learned it) she talked with her partner, fanning herself and

smiling over the fan.

"Dear, dear! Just look at her!" exclaimed the countess as she crossed

the ballroom, pointing to Natasha.

Natasha blushed and laughed.

"Well, really, Mamma! Why should you? What is there to be surprised at?"

In the midst of the third ecossaise there was a clatter of chairs being

pushed back in the sitting room where the count and Marya Dmitrievna had

been playing cards with the majority of the more distinguished and older

visitors. They now, stretching themselves after sitting so long, and

replacing their purses and pocketbooks, entered the ballroom. First came

Marya Dmitrievna and the count, both with merry countenances. The count,

with playful ceremony somewhat in ballet style, offered his bent arm to

Marya Dmitrievna. He drew himself up, a smile of debonair gallantry lit

up his face and as soon as the last figure of the ecossaise was ended,

he clapped his hands to the musicians and shouted up to their gallery,

addressing the first violin:

"Semen! Do you know the Daniel Cooper?"

This was the count's favorite dance, which he had danced in his youth.

(Strictly speaking, Daniel Cooper was one figure of the anglaise.)

"Look at Papa!" shouted Natasha to the whole company, and quite

forgetting that she was dancing with a grown-up partner she bent her

curly head to her knees and made the whole room ring with her laughter.

And indeed everybody in the room looked with a smile of pleasure at the

jovial old gentleman, who standing beside his tall and stout partner,

Marya Dmitrievna, curved his arms, beat time, straightened his

shoulders, turned out his toes, tapped gently with his foot, and, by a

smile that broadened his round face more and more, prepared the

onlookers for what was to follow. As soon as the provocatively gay

strains of Daniel Cooper (somewhat resembling those of a merry peasant

dance) began to sound, all the doorways of the ballroom were suddenly

filled by the domestic serfs--the men on one side and the women on the

other--who with beaming faces had come to see their master making merry.

"Just look at the master! A regular eagle he is!" loudly remarked the

nurse, as she stood in one of the doorways.

The count danced well and knew it. But his partner could not and did not

want to dance well. Her enormous figure stood erect, her powerful arms

hanging down (she had handed her reticule to the countess), and only her

stern but handsome face really joined in the dance. What was expressed

by the whole of the count's plump figure, in Marya Dmitrievna found

expression only in her more and more beaming face and quivering nose.

But if the count, getting more and more into the swing of it, charmed

the spectators by the unexpectedness of his adroit maneuvers and the

agility with which he capered about on his light feet, Marya Dmitrievna

produced no less impression by slight exertions--the least effort to

move her shoulders or bend her arms when turning, or stamp her foot--

which everyone appreciated in view of her size and habitual severity.

The dance grew livelier and livelier. The other couples could not

attract a moment's attention to their own evolutions and did not even

try to do so. All were watching the count and Marya Dmitrievna. Natasha

kept pulling everyone by sleeve or dress, urging them to "look at Papa!"

though as it was they never took their eyes off the couple. In the

intervals of the dance the count, breathing deeply, waved and shouted to

the musicians to play faster. Faster, faster, and faster; lightly, more

lightly, and yet more lightly whirled the count, flying round Marya

Dmitrievna, now on his toes, now on his heels; until, turning his

partner round to her seat, he executed the final pas, raising his soft

foot backwards, bowing his perspiring head, smiling and making a wide

sweep with his arm, amid a thunder of applause and laughter led by

Natasha. Both partners stood still, breathing heavily and wiping their

faces with their cambric handkerchiefs.

"That's how we used to dance in our time, ma chere," said the count.

"That was a Daniel Cooper!" exclaimed Marya Dmitrievna, tucking up her

sleeves and puffing heavily.

CHAPTER XXI

While in the Rostovs' ballroom the sixth anglaise was being danced, to a

tune in which the weary musicians blundered, and while tired footmen and

cooks were getting the supper, Count Bezukhov had a sixth stroke. The

doctors pronounced recovery impossible. After a mute confession,

communion was administered to the dying man, preparations made for the

sacrament of unction, and in his house there was the bustle and thrill

of suspense usual at such moments. Outside the house, beyond the gates,

a group of undertakers, who hid whenever a carriage drove up, waited in

expectation of an important order for an expensive funeral. The Military

Governor of Moscow, who had been assiduous in sending aides-de-camp to

inquire after the count's health, came himself that evening to bid a

last farewell to the celebrated grandee of Catherine's court, Count

Bezukhov.

The magnificent reception room was crowded. Everyone stood up

respectfully when the Military Governor, having stayed about half an

hour alone with the dying man, passed out, slightly acknowledging their

bows and trying to escape as quickly as possible from the glances fixed

on him by the doctors, clergy, and relatives of the family. Prince

Vasili, who had grown thinner and paler during the last few days,

escorted him to the door, repeating something to him several times in

low tones.

When the Military Governor had gone, Prince Vasili sat down all alone on

a chair in the ballroom, crossing one leg high over the other, leaning

his elbow on his knee and covering his face with his hand. After sitting

so for a while he rose, and, looking about him with frightened eyes,

went with unusually hurried steps down the long corridor leading to the

back of the house, to the room of the eldest princess.

Those who were in the dimly lit reception room spoke in nervous

whispers, and, whenever anyone went into or came from the dying man's

room, grew silent and gazed with eyes full of curiosity or expectancy at

his door, which creaked slightly when opened.

"The limits of human life... are fixed and may not be o'erpassed," said

an old priest to a lady who had taken a seat beside him and was

listening naively to his words.

"I wonder, is it not too late to administer unction?" asked the lady,

adding the priest's clerical title, as if she had no opinion of her own

on the subject.

"Ah, madam, it is a great sacrament," replied the priest, passing his

hand over the thin grizzled strands of hair combed back across his bald

head.

"Who was that? The Military Governor himself?" was being asked at the

other side of the room. "How young-looking he is!"

"Yes, and he is over sixty. I hear the count no longer recognizes

anyone. They wished to administer the sacrament of unction."

"I knew someone who received that sacrament seven times."

The second princess had just come from the sickroom with her eyes red

from weeping and sat down beside Dr. Lorrain, who was sitting in a

graceful pose under a portrait of Catherine, leaning his elbow on a

table.

"Beautiful," said the doctor in answer to a remark about the weather.

"The weather is beautiful, Princess; and besides, in Moscow one feels as

if one were in the country."

"Yes, indeed," replied the princess with a sigh. "So he may have

something to drink?"

Lorrain considered.

"Has he taken his medicine?"

"Yes."

The doctor glanced at his watch.

"Take a glass of boiled water and put a pinch of cream of tartar," and

he indicated with his delicate fingers what he meant by a pinch.

"Dere has neffer been a gase," a German doctor was saying to an aide-de-

camp, "dat one liffs after de sird stroke."

"And what a well-preserved man he was!" remarked the aide-de-camp. "And

who will inherit his wealth?" he added in a whisper.

"It von't go begging," replied the German with a smile.

Everyone again looked toward the door, which creaked as the second

princess went in with the drink she had prepared according to Lorrain's

instructions. The German doctor went up to Lorrain.

"Do you think he can last till morning?" asked the German, addressing

Lorrain in French which he pronounced badly.

Lorrain, pursing up his lips, waved a severely negative finger before

his nose.

"Tonight, not later," said he in a low voice, and he moved away with a

decorous smile of self-satisfaction at being able clearly to understand

and state the patient's condition.

Meanwhile Prince Vasili had opened the door into the princess' room.

In this room it was almost dark; only two tiny lamps were burning before

the icons and there was a pleasant scent of flowers and burnt pastilles.

The room was crowded with small pieces of furniture, whatnots,

cupboards, and little tables. The quilt of a high, white feather bed was

just visible behind a screen. A small dog began to bark.

"Ah, is it you, cousin?"

She rose and smoothed her hair, which was as usual so extremely smooth

that it seemed to be made of one piece with her head and covered with

varnish.

"Has anything happened?" she asked. "I am so terrified."

"No, there is no change. I only came to have a talk about business,

Catiche," \* muttered the prince, seating himself wearily on the chair

she had just vacated. "You have made the place warm, I must say," he

remarked. "Well, sit down: let's have a talk."

\*Catherine.

"I thought perhaps something had happened," she said with her unchanging

stonily severe expression; and, sitting down opposite the prince, she

prepared to listen.

"I wished to get a nap, mon cousin, but I can't."

"Well, my dear?" said Prince Vasili, taking her hand and bending it

downwards as was his habit.

It was plain that this "well?" referred to much that they both

understood without naming.

The princess, who had a straight, rigid body, abnormally long for her

legs, looked directly at Prince Vasili with no sign of emotion in her

prominent gray eyes. Then she shook her head and glanced up at the icons

with a sigh. This might have been taken as an expression of sorrow and

devotion, or of weariness and hope of resting before long. Prince Vasili

understood it as an expression of weariness.

"And I?" he said; "do you think it is easier for me? I am as worn out as

a post horse, but still I must have a talk with you, Catiche, a very

serious talk."

Prince Vasili said no more and his cheeks began to twitch nervously, now

on one side, now on the other, giving his face an unpleasant expression

which was never to be seen on it in a drawing room. His eyes too seemed

strange; at one moment they looked impudently sly and at the next

glanced round in alarm.

The princess, holding her little dog on her lap with her thin bony

hands, looked attentively into Prince Vasili's eyes evidently resolved

not to be the first to break silence, if she had to wait till morning.

"Well, you see, my dear princess and cousin, Catherine Semenovna,"

continued Prince Vasili, returning to his theme, apparently not without

an inner struggle; "at such a moment as this one must think of

everything. One must think of the future, of all of you... I love you

all, like children of my own, as you know."

The princess continued to look at him without moving, and with the same

dull expression.

"And then of course my family has also to be considered," Prince Vasili

went on, testily pushing away a little table without looking at her.

"You know, Catiche, that we--you three sisters, Mamontov, and my wife--

are the count's only direct heirs. I know, I know how hard it is for you

to talk or think of such matters. It is no easier for me; but, my dear,

I am getting on for sixty and must be prepared for anything. Do you know

I have sent for Pierre? The count," pointing to his portrait,

"definitely demanded that he should be called."

Prince Vasili looked questioningly at the princess, but could not make

out whether she was considering what he had just said or whether she was

simply looking at him.

"There is one thing I constantly pray God to grant, mon cousin," she

replied, "and it is that He would be merciful to him and would allow his

noble soul peacefully to leave this..."

"Yes, yes, of course," interrupted Prince Vasili impatiently, rubbing

his bald head and angrily pulling back toward him the little table that

he had pushed away. "But... in short, the fact is... you know yourself

that last winter the count made a will by which he left all his

property, not to us his direct heirs, but to Pierre."

"He has made wills enough!" quietly remarked the princess. "But he

cannot leave the estate to Pierre. Pierre is illegitimate."

"But, my dear," said Prince Vasili suddenly, clutching the little table

and becoming more animated and talking more rapidly: "what if a letter

has been written to the Emperor in which the count asks for Pierre's

legitimation? Do you understand that in consideration of the count's

services, his request would be granted?..."

The princess smiled as people do who think they know more about the

subject under discussion than those they are talking with.

"I can tell you more," continued Prince Vasili, seizing her hand, "that

letter was written, though it was not sent, and the Emperor knew of it.

The only question is, has it been destroyed or not? If not, then as soon

as all is over," and Prince Vasili sighed to intimate what he meant by

the words all is over, "and the count's papers are opened, the will and

letter will be delivered to the Emperor, and the petition will certainly

be granted. Pierre will get everything as the legitimate son."

"And our share?" asked the princess smiling ironically, as if anything

might happen, only not that.

"But, my poor Catiche, it is as clear as daylight! He will then be the

legal heir to everything and you won't get anything. You must know, my

dear, whether the will and letter were written, and whether they have

been destroyed or not. And if they have somehow been overlooked, you

ought to know where they are, and must find them, because..."

"What next?" the princess interrupted, smiling sardonically and not

changing the expression of her eyes. "I am a woman, and you think we are

all stupid; but I know this: an illegitimate son cannot inherit... un

batard!" \* she added, as if supposing that this translation of the word

would effectively prove to Prince Vasili the invalidity of his

contention.

\* A bastard.

"Well, really, Catiche! Can't you understand! You are so intelligent,

how is it you don't see that if the count has written a letter to the

Emperor begging him to recognize Pierre as legitimate, it follows that

Pierre will not be Pierre but will become Count Bezukhov, and will then

inherit everything under the will? And if the will and letter are not

destroyed, then you will have nothing but the consolation of having been

dutiful et tout ce qui s'ensuit! \* That's certain."

\* And all that follows therefrom.

"I know the will was made, but I also know that it is invalid; and you,

mon cousin, seem to consider me a perfect fool," said the princess with

the expression women assume when they suppose they are saying something

witty and stinging.

"My dear Princess Catherine Semenovna," began Prince Vasili impatiently,

"I came here not to wrangle with you, but to talk about your interests

as with a kinswoman, a good, kind, true relation. And I tell you for the

tenth time that if the letter to the Emperor and the will in Pierre's

favor are among the count's papers, then, my dear girl, you and your

sisters are not heiresses! If you don't believe me, then believe an

expert. I have just been talking to Dmitri Onufrich" (the family

solicitor) "and he says the same."

At this a sudden change evidently took place in the princess' ideas; her

thin lips grew white, though her eyes did not change, and her voice when

she began to speak passed through such transitions as she herself

evidently did not expect.

"That would be a fine thing!" said she. "I never wanted anything and I

don't now."

She pushed the little dog off her lap and smoothed her dress.

"And this is gratitude--this is recognition for those who have

sacrificed everything for his sake!" she cried. "It's splendid! Fine! I

don't want anything, Prince."

"Yes, but you are not the only one. There are your sisters..." replied

Prince Vasili.

But the princess did not listen to him.

"Yes, I knew it long ago but had forgotten. I knew that I could expect

nothing but meanness, deceit, envy, intrigue, and ingratitude--the

blackest ingratitude--in this house..."

"Do you or do you not know where that will is?" insisted Prince Vasili,

his cheeks twitching more than ever.

"Yes, I was a fool! I still believed in people, loved them, and

sacrificed myself. But only the base, the vile succeed! I know who has

been intriguing!"

The princess wished to rise, but the prince held her by the hand. She

had the air of one who has suddenly lost faith in the whole human race.

She gave her companion an angry glance.

"There is still time, my dear. You must remember, Catiche, that it was

all done casually in a moment of anger, of illness, and was afterwards

forgotten. Our duty, my dear, is to rectify his mistake, to ease his

last moments by not letting him commit this injustice, and not to let

him die feeling that he is rendering unhappy those who..."

"Who sacrificed everything for him," chimed in the princess, who would

again have risen had not the prince still held her fast, "though he

never could appreciate it. No, mon cousin," she added with a sigh, "I

shall always remember that in this world one must expect no reward, that

in this world there is neither honor nor justice. In this world one has

to be cunning and cruel."

"Now come, come! Be reasonable. I know your excellent heart."

"No, I have a wicked heart."

"I know your heart," repeated the prince. "I value your friendship and

wish you to have as good an opinion of me. Don't upset yourself, and let

us talk sensibly while there is still time, be it a day or be it but an

hour.... Tell me all you know about the will, and above all where it is.

You must know. We will take it at once and show it to the count. He has,

no doubt, forgotten it and will wish to destroy it. You understand that

my sole desire is conscientiously to carry out his wishes; that is my

only reason for being here. I came simply to help him and you."

"Now I see it all! I know who has been intriguing--I know!" cried the

princess.

"That's not the point, my dear."

"It's that protege of yours, that sweet Princess Drubetskaya, that Anna

Mikhaylovna whom I would not take for a housemaid... the infamous, vile

woman!"

"Do not let us lose any time..."

"Ah, don't talk to me! Last winter she wheedled herself in here and told

the count such vile, disgraceful things about us, especially about

Sophie--I can't repeat them--that it made the count quite ill and he

would not see us for a whole fortnight. I know it was then he wrote this

vile, infamous paper, but I thought the thing was invalid."

"We've got to it at last--why did you not tell me about it sooner?"

"It's in the inlaid portfolio that he keeps under his pillow," said the

princess, ignoring his question. "Now I know! Yes; if I have a sin, a

great sin, it is hatred of that vile woman!" almost shrieked the

princess, now quite changed. "And what does she come worming herself in

here for? But I will give her a piece of my mind. The time will come!"

CHAPTER XXII

While these conversations were going on in the reception room and the

princess' room, a carriage containing Pierre (who had been sent for) and

Anna Mikhaylovna (who found it necessary to accompany him) was driving

into the court of Count Bezukhov's house. As the wheels rolled softly

over the straw beneath the windows, Anna Mikhaylovna, having turned with

words of comfort to her companion, realized that he was asleep in his

corner and woke him up. Rousing himself, Pierre followed Anna

Mikhaylovna out of the carriage, and only then began to think of the

interview with his dying father which awaited him. He noticed that they

had not come to the front entrance but to the back door. While he was

getting down from the carriage steps two men, who looked like

tradespeople, ran hurriedly from the entrance and hid in the shadow of

the wall. Pausing for a moment, Pierre noticed several other men of the

same kind hiding in the shadow of the house on both sides. But neither

Anna Mikhaylovna nor the footman nor the coachman, who could not help

seeing these people, took any notice of them. "It seems to be all

right," Pierre concluded, and followed Anna Mikhaylovna. She hurriedly

ascended the narrow dimly lit stone staircase, calling to Pierre, who

was lagging behind, to follow. Though he did not see why it was

necessary for him to go to the count at all, still less why he had to go

by the back stairs, yet judging by Anna Mikhaylovna's air of assurance

and haste, Pierre concluded that it was all absolutely necessary.

Halfway up the stairs they were almost knocked over by some men who,

carrying pails, came running downstairs, their boots clattering. These

men pressed close to the wall to let Pierre and Anna Mikhaylovna pass

and did not evince the least surprise at seeing them there.

"Is this the way to the princesses' apartments?" asked Anna Mikhaylovna

of one of them.

"Yes," replied a footman in a bold loud voice, as if anything were now

permissible; "the door to the left, ma'am."

"Perhaps the count did not ask for me," said Pierre when he reached the

landing. "I'd better go to my own room."

Anna Mikhaylovna paused and waited for him to come up.

"Ah, my friend!" she said, touching his arm as she had done her son's

when speaking to him that afternoon, "believe me I suffer no less than

you do, but be a man!"

"But really, hadn't I better go away?" he asked, looking kindly at her

over his spectacles.

"Ah, my dear friend! Forget the wrongs that may have been done you.

Think that he is your father... perhaps in the agony of death." She

sighed. "I have loved you like a son from the first. Trust yourself to

me, Pierre. I shall not forget your interests."

Pierre did not understand a word, but the conviction that all this had

to be grew stronger, and he meekly followed Anna Mikhaylovna who was

already opening a door.

This door led into a back anteroom. An old man, a servant of the

princesses, sat in a corner knitting a stocking. Pierre had never been

in this part of the house and did not even know of the existence of

these rooms. Anna Mikhaylovna, addressing a maid who was hurrying past

with a decanter on a tray as "my dear" and "my sweet," asked about the

princess' health and then led Pierre along a stone passage. The first

door on the left led into the princesses' apartments. The maid with the

decanter in her haste had not closed the door (everything in the house

was done in haste at that time), and Pierre and Anna Mikhaylovna in

passing instinctively glanced into the room, where Prince Vasili and the

eldest princess were sitting close together talking. Seeing them pass,

Prince Vasili drew back with obvious impatience, while the princess

jumped up and with a gesture of desperation slammed the door with all

her might.

This action was so unlike her usual composure and the fear depicted on

Prince Vasili's face so out of keeping with his dignity that Pierre

stopped and glanced inquiringly over his spectacles at his guide. Anna

Mikhaylovna evinced no surprise, she only smiled faintly and sighed, as

if to say that this was no more than she had expected.

"Be a man, my friend. I will look after your interests," said she in

reply to his look, and went still faster along the passage.

Pierre could not make out what it was all about, and still less what

"watching over his interests" meant, but he decided that all these

things had to be. From the passage they went into a large, dimly lit

room adjoining the count's reception room. It was one of those sumptuous

but cold apartments known to Pierre only from the front approach, but

even in this room there now stood an empty bath, and water had been

spilled on the carpet. They were met by a deacon with a censer and by a

servant who passed out on tiptoe without heeding them. They went into

the reception room familiar to Pierre, with two Italian windows opening

into the conservatory, with its large bust and full length portrait of

Catherine the Great. The same people were still sitting here in almost

the same positions as before, whispering to one another. All became

silent and turned to look at the pale tear-worn Anna Mikhaylovna as she

entered, and at the big stout figure of Pierre who, hanging his head,

meekly followed her.

Anna Mikhaylovna's face expressed a consciousness that the decisive

moment had arrived. With the air of a practical Petersburg lady she now,

keeping Pierre close beside her, entered the room even more boldly than

that afternoon. She felt that as she brought with her the person the

dying man wished to see, her own admission was assured. Casting a rapid

glance at all those in the room and noticing the count's confessor

there, she glided up to him with a sort of amble, not exactly bowing yet

seeming to grow suddenly smaller, and respectfully received the blessing

first of one and then of another priest.

"God be thanked that you are in time," said she to one of the priests;

"all we relatives have been in such anxiety. This young man is the

count's son," she added more softly. "What a terrible moment!"

Having said this she went up to the doctor.

"Dear doctor," said she, "this young man is the count's son. Is there

any hope?"

The doctor cast a rapid glance upwards and silently shrugged his

shoulders. Anna Mikhaylovna with just the same movement raised her

shoulders and eyes, almost closing the latter, sighed, and moved away

from the doctor to Pierre. To him, in a particularly respectful and

tenderly sad voice, she said:

"Trust in His mercy!" and pointing out a small sofa for him to sit and

wait for her, she went silently toward the door that everyone was

watching and it creaked very slightly as she disappeared behind it.

Pierre, having made up his mind to obey his monitress implicitly, moved

toward the sofa she had indicated. As soon as Anna Mikhaylovna had

disappeared he noticed that the eyes of all in the room turned to him

with something more than curiosity and sympathy. He noticed that they

whispered to one another, casting significant looks at him with a kind

of awe and even servility. A deference such as he had never before

received was shown him. A strange lady, the one who had been talking to

the priests, rose and offered him her seat; an aide-de-camp picked up

and returned a glove Pierre had dropped; the doctors became respectfully

silent as he passed by, and moved to make way for him. At first Pierre

wished to take another seat so as not to trouble the lady, and also to

pick up the glove himself and to pass round the doctors who were not

even in his way; but all at once he felt that this would not do, and

that tonight he was a person obliged to perform some sort of awful rite

which everyone expected of him, and that he was therefore bound to

accept their services. He took the glove in silence from the aide-de-

camp, and sat down in the lady's chair, placing his huge hands

symmetrically on his knees in the naive attitude of an Egyptian statue,

and decided in his own mind that all was as it should be, and that in

order not to lose his head and do foolish things he must not act on his

own ideas tonight, but must yield himself up entirely to the will of

those who were guiding him.

Not two minutes had passed before Prince Vasili with head erect

majestically entered the room. He was wearing his long coat with three

stars on his breast. He seemed to have grown thinner since the morning;

his eyes seemed larger than usual when he glanced round and noticed

Pierre. He went up to him, took his hand (a thing he never used to do),

and drew it downwards as if wishing to ascertain whether it was firmly

fixed on.

"Courage, courage, my friend! He has asked to see you. That is well!"

and he turned to go.

But Pierre thought it necessary to ask: "How is..." and hesitated, not

knowing whether it would be proper to call the dying man "the count,"

yet ashamed to call him "father."

"He had another stroke about half an hour ago. Courage, my friend..."

Pierre's mind was in such a confused state that the word "stroke"

suggested to him a blow from something. He looked at Prince Vasili in

perplexity, and only later grasped that a stroke was an attack of

illness. Prince Vasili said something to Lorrain in passing and went

through the door on tiptoe. He could not walk well on tiptoe and his

whole body jerked at each step. The eldest princess followed him, and

the priests and deacons and some servants also went in at the door.

Through that door was heard a noise of things being moved about, and at

last Anna Mikhaylovna, still with the same expression, pale but resolute

in the discharge of duty, ran out and touching Pierre lightly on the arm

said:

"The divine mercy is inexhaustible! Unction is about to be administered.

Come."

Pierre went in at the door, stepping on the soft carpet, and noticed

that the strange lady, the aide-de-camp, and some of the servants, all

followed him in, as if there were now no further need for permission to

enter that room.

CHAPTER XXIII

Pierre well knew this large room divided by columns and an arch, its

walls hung round with Persian carpets. The part of the room behind the

columns, with a high silk-curtained mahogany bedstead on one side and on

the other an immense case containing icons, was brightly illuminated

with red light like a Russian church during evening service. Under the

gleaming icons stood a long invalid chair, and in that chair on snowy-

white smooth pillows, evidently freshly changed, Pierre saw--covered to

the waist by a bright green quilt--the familiar, majestic figure of his

father, Count Bezukhov, with that gray mane of hair above his broad

forehead which reminded one of a lion, and the deep characteristically

noble wrinkles of his handsome, ruddy face. He lay just under the icons;

his large thick hands outside the quilt. Into the right hand, which was

lying palm downwards, a wax taper had been thrust between forefinger and

thumb, and an old servant, bending over from behind the chair, held it

in position. By the chair stood the priests, their long hair falling

over their magnificent glittering vestments, with lighted tapers in

their hands, slowly and solemnly conducting the service. A little behind

them stood the two younger princesses holding handkerchiefs to their

eyes, and just in front of them their eldest sister, Catiche, with a

vicious and determined look steadily fixed on the icons, as though

declaring to all that she could not answer for herself should she glance

round. Anna Mikhaylovna, with a meek, sorrowful, and all-forgiving

expression on her face, stood by the door near the strange lady. Prince

Vasili in front of the door, near the invalid chair, a wax taper in his

left hand, was leaning his left arm on the carved back of a velvet chair

he had turned round for the purpose, and was crossing himself with his

right hand, turning his eyes upward each time he touched his forehead.

His face wore a calm look of piety and resignation to the will of God.

"If you do not understand these sentiments," he seemed to be saying, "so

much the worse for you!"

Behind him stood the aide-de-camp, the doctors, and the menservants; the

men and women had separated as in church. All were silently crossing

themselves, and the reading of the church service, the subdued chanting

of deep bass voices, and in the intervals sighs and the shuffling of

feet were the only sounds that could be heard. Anna Mikhaylovna, with an

air of importance that showed that she felt she quite knew what she was

about, went across the room to where Pierre was standing and gave him a

taper. He lit it and, distracted by observing those around him, began

crossing himself with the hand that held the taper.

Sophie, the rosy, laughter-loving, youngest princess with the mole,

watched him. She smiled, hid her face in her handkerchief, and remained

with it hidden for awhile; then looking up and seeing Pierre she again

began to laugh. She evidently felt unable to look at him without

laughing, but could not resist looking at him: so to be out of

temptation she slipped quietly behind one of the columns. In the midst

of the service the voices of the priests suddenly ceased, they whispered

to one another, and the old servant who was holding the count's hand got

up and said something to the ladies. Anna Mikhaylovna stepped forward

and, stooping over the dying man, beckoned to Lorrain from behind her

back. The French doctor held no taper; he was leaning against one of the

columns in a respectful attitude implying that he, a foreigner, in spite

of all differences of faith, understood the full importance of the rite

now being performed and even approved of it. He now approached the sick

man with the noiseless step of one in full vigor of life, with his

delicate white fingers raised from the green quilt the hand that was

free, and turning sideways felt the pulse and reflected a moment. The

sick man was given something to drink, there was a stir around him, then

the people resumed their places and the service continued. During this

interval Pierre noticed that Prince Vasili left the chair on which he

had been leaning, and--with an air which intimated that he knew what he

was about and if others did not understand him it was so much the worse

for them--did not go up to the dying man, but passed by him, joined the

eldest princess, and moved with her to the side of the room where stood

the high bedstead with its silken hangings. On leaving the bed both

Prince Vasili and the princess passed out by a back door, but returned

to their places one after the other before the service was concluded.

Pierre paid no more attention to this occurrence than to the rest of

what went on, having made up his mind once for all that what he saw

happening around him that evening was in some way essential.

The chanting of the service ceased, and the voice of the priest was

heard respectfully congratulating the dying man on having received the

sacrament. The dying man lay as lifeless and immovable as before. Around

him everyone began to stir: steps were audible and whispers, among which

Anna Mikhaylovna's was the most distinct.

Pierre heard her say:

"Certainly he must be moved onto the bed; here it will be impossible..."

The sick man was so surrounded by doctors, princesses, and servants that

Pierre could no longer see the reddish-yellow face with its gray mane--

which, though he saw other faces as well, he had not lost sight of for a

single moment during the whole service. He judged by the cautious

movements of those who crowded round the invalid chair that they had

lifted the dying man and were moving him.

"Catch hold of my arm or you'll drop him!" he heard one of the servants

say in a frightened whisper. "Catch hold from underneath. Here!"

exclaimed different voices; and the heavy breathing of the bearers and

the shuffling of their feet grew more hurried, as if the weight they

were carrying were too much for them.

As the bearers, among whom was Anna Mikhaylovna, passed the young man he

caught a momentary glimpse between their heads and backs of the dying

man's high, stout, uncovered chest and powerful shoulders, raised by

those who were holding him under the armpits, and of his gray, curly,

leonine head. This head, with its remarkably broad brow and cheekbones,

its handsome, sensual mouth, and its cold, majestic expression, was not

disfigured by the approach of death. It was the same as Pierre

remembered it three months before, when the count had sent him to

Petersburg. But now this head was swaying helplessly with the uneven

movements of the bearers, and the cold listless gaze fixed itself upon

nothing.

After a few minutes' bustle beside the high bedstead, those who had

carried the sick man dispersed. Anna Mikhaylovna touched Pierre's hand

and said, "Come." Pierre went with her to the bed on which the sick man

had been laid in a stately pose in keeping with the ceremony just

completed. He lay with his head propped high on the pillows. His hands

were symmetrically placed on the green silk quilt, the palms downward.

When Pierre came up the count was gazing straight at him, but with a

look the significance of which could not be understood by mortal man.

Either this look meant nothing but that as long as one has eyes they

must look somewhere, or it meant too much. Pierre hesitated, not knowing

what to do, and glanced inquiringly at his guide. Anna Mikhaylovna made

a hurried sign with her eyes, glancing at the sick man's hand and moving

her lips as if to send it a kiss. Pierre, carefully stretching his neck

so as not to touch the quilt, followed her suggestion and pressed his

lips to the large boned, fleshy hand. Neither the hand nor a single

muscle of the count's face stirred. Once more Pierre looked

questioningly at Anna Mikhaylovna to see what he was to do next. Anna

Mikhaylovna with her eyes indicated a chair that stood beside the bed.

Pierre obediently sat down, his eyes asking if he were doing right. Anna

Mikhaylovna nodded approvingly. Again Pierre fell into the naively

symmetrical pose of an Egyptian statue, evidently distressed that his

stout and clumsy body took up so much room and doing his utmost to look

as small as possible. He looked at the count, who still gazed at the

spot where Pierre's face had been before he sat down. Anna Mikhaylovna

indicated by her attitude her consciousness of the pathetic importance

of these last moments of meeting between the father and son. This lasted

about two minutes, which to Pierre seemed an hour. Suddenly the broad

muscles and lines of the count's face began to twitch. The twitching

increased, the handsome mouth was drawn to one side (only now did Pierre

realize how near death his father was), and from that distorted mouth

issued an indistinct, hoarse sound. Anna Mikhaylovna looked attentively

at the sick man's eyes, trying to guess what he wanted; she pointed

first to Pierre, then to some drink, then named Prince Vasili in an

inquiring whisper, then pointed to the quilt. The eyes and face of the

sick man showed impatience. He made an effort to look at the servant who

stood constantly at the head of the bed.

"Wants to turn on the other side," whispered the servant, and got up to

turn the count's heavy body toward the wall.

Pierre rose to help him.

While the count was being turned over, one of his arms fell back

helplessly and he made a fruitless effort to pull it forward. Whether he

noticed the look of terror with which Pierre regarded that lifeless arm,

or whether some other thought flitted across his dying brain, at any

rate he glanced at the refractory arm, at Pierre's terror-stricken face,

and again at the arm, and on his face a feeble, piteous smile appeared,

quite out of keeping with his features, that seemed to deride his own

helplessness. At sight of this smile Pierre felt an unexpected quivering

in his breast and a tickling in his nose, and tears dimmed his eyes. The

sick man was turned on to his side with his face to the wall. He sighed.

"He is dozing," said Anna Mikhaylovna, observing that one of the

princesses was coming to take her turn at watching. "Let us go."

Pierre went out.

CHAPTER XXIV

There was now no one in the reception room except Prince Vasili and the

eldest princess, who were sitting under the portrait of Catherine the

Great and talking eagerly. As soon as they saw Pierre and his companion

they became silent, and Pierre thought he saw the princess hide

something as she whispered:

"I can't bear the sight of that woman."

"Catiche has had tea served in the small drawing room," said Prince

Vasili to Anna Mikhaylovna. "Go and take something, my poor Anna

Mikhaylovna, or you will not hold out."

To Pierre he said nothing, merely giving his arm a sympathetic squeeze

below the shoulder. Pierre went with Anna Mikhaylovna into the small

drawing room.

"There is nothing so refreshing after a sleepless night as a cup of this

delicious Russian tea," Lorrain was saying with an air of restrained

animation as he stood sipping tea from a delicate Chinese handleless cup

before a table on which tea and a cold supper were laid in the small

circular room. Around the table all who were at Count Bezukhov's house

that night had gathered to fortify themselves. Pierre well remembered

this small circular drawing room with its mirrors and little tables.

During balls given at the house Pierre, who did not know how to dance,

had liked sitting in this room to watch the ladies who, as they passed

through in their ball dresses with diamonds and pearls on their bare

shoulders, looked at themselves in the brilliantly lighted mirrors which

repeated their reflections several times. Now this same room was dimly

lighted by two candles. On one small table tea things and supper dishes

stood in disorder, and in the middle of the night a motley throng of

people sat there, not merrymaking, but somberly whispering, and

betraying by every word and movement that they none of them forgot what

was happening and what was about to happen in the bedroom. Pierre did

not eat anything though he would very much have liked to. He looked

inquiringly at his monitress and saw that she was again going on tiptoe

to the reception room where they had left Prince Vasili and the eldest

princess. Pierre concluded that this also was essential, and after a

short interval followed her. Anna Mikhaylovna was standing beside the

princess, and they were both speaking in excited whispers.

"Permit me, Princess, to know what is necessary and what is not

necessary," said the younger of the two speakers, evidently in the same

state of excitement as when she had slammed the door of her room.

"But, my dear princess," answered Anna Mikhaylovna blandly but

impressively, blocking the way to the bedroom and preventing the other

from passing, "won't this be too much for poor Uncle at a moment when he

needs repose? Worldly conversation at a moment when his soul is already

prepared..."

Prince Vasili was seated in an easy chair in his familiar attitude, with

one leg crossed high above the other. His cheeks, which were so flabby

that they looked heavier below, were twitching violently; but he wore

the air of a man little concerned in what the two ladies were saying.

"Come, my dear Anna Mikhaylovna, let Catiche do as she pleases. You know

how fond the count is of her."

"I don't even know what is in this paper," said the younger of the two

ladies, addressing Prince Vasili and pointing to an inlaid portfolio she

held in her hand. "All I know is that his real will is in his writing

table, and this is a paper he has forgotten...."

She tried to pass Anna Mikhaylovna, but the latter sprang so as to bar

her path.

"I know, my dear, kind princess," said Anna Mikhaylovna, seizing the

portfolio so firmly that it was plain she would not let go easily. "Dear

princess, I beg and implore you, have some pity on him! Je vous en

conjure..."

The princess did not reply. Their efforts in the struggle for the

portfolio were the only sounds audible, but it was evident that if the

princess did speak, her words would not be flattering to Anna

Mikhaylovna. Though the latter held on tenaciously, her voice lost none

of its honeyed firmness and softness.

"Pierre, my dear, come here. I think he will not be out of place in a

family consultation; is it not so, Prince?"

"Why don't you speak, cousin?" suddenly shrieked the princess so loud

that those in the drawing room heard her and were startled. "Why do you

remain silent when heaven knows who permits herself to interfere, making

a scene on the very threshold of a dying man's room? Intriguer!" she

hissed viciously, and tugged with all her might at the portfolio.

But Anna Mikhaylovna went forward a step or two to keep her hold on the

portfolio, and changed her grip.

Prince Vasili rose. "Oh!" said he with reproach and surprise, "this is

absurd! Come, let go I tell you."

The princess let go.

"And you too!"

But Anna Mikhaylovna did not obey him.

"Let go, I tell you! I will take the responsibility. I myself will go

and ask him, I!... does that satisfy you?"

"But, Prince," said Anna Mikhaylovna, "after such a solemn sacrament,

allow him a moment's peace! Here, Pierre, tell them your opinion," said

she, turning to the young man who, having come quite close, was gazing

with astonishment at the angry face of the princess which had lost all

dignity, and at the twitching cheeks of Prince Vasili.

"Remember that you will answer for the consequences," said Prince Vasili

severely. "You don't know what you are doing."

"Vile woman!" shouted the princess, darting unexpectedly at Anna

Mikhaylovna and snatching the portfolio from her.

Prince Vasili bent his head and spread out his hands.

At this moment that terrible door, which Pierre had watched so long and

which had always opened so quietly, burst noisily open and banged

against the wall, and the second of the three sisters rushed out

wringing her hands.

"What are you doing!" she cried vehemently. "He is dying and you leave

me alone with him!"

Her sister dropped the portfolio. Anna Mikhaylovna, stooping, quickly

caught up the object of contention and ran into the bedroom. The eldest

princess and Prince Vasili, recovering themselves, followed her. A few

minutes later the eldest sister came out with a pale hard face, again

biting her underlip. At sight of Pierre her expression showed an

irrepressible hatred.

"Yes, now you may be glad!" said she; "this is what you have been

waiting for." And bursting into tears she hid her face in her

handkerchief and rushed from the room.

Prince Vasili came next. He staggered to the sofa on which Pierre was

sitting and dropped onto it, covering his face with his hand. Pierre

noticed that he was pale and that his jaw quivered and shook as if in an

ague.

"Ah, my friend!" said he, taking Pierre by the elbow; and there was in

his voice a sincerity and weakness Pierre had never observed in it

before. "How often we sin, how much we deceive, and all for what? I am

near sixty, dear friend... I too... All will end in death, all! Death is

awful..." and he burst into tears.

Anna Mikhaylovna came out last. She approached Pierre with slow, quiet

steps.

"Pierre!" she said.

Pierre gave her an inquiring look. She kissed the young man on his

forehead, wetting him with her tears. Then after a pause she said:

"He is no more...."

Pierre looked at her over his spectacles.

"Come, I will go with you. Try to weep, nothing gives such relief as

tears."

She led him into the dark drawing room and Pierre was glad no one could

see his face. Anna Mikhaylovna left him, and when she returned he was

fast asleep with his head on his arm.

In the morning Anna Mikhaylovna said to Pierre:

"Yes, my dear, this is a great loss for us all, not to speak of you. But

God will support you: you are young, and are now, I hope, in command of

an immense fortune. The will has not yet been opened. I know you well

enough to be sure that this will not turn your head, but it imposes

duties on you, and you must be a man."

Pierre was silent.

"Perhaps later on I may tell you, my dear boy, that if I had not been

there, God only knows what would have happened! You know, Uncle promised

me only the day before yesterday not to forget Boris. But he had no

time. I hope, my dear friend, you will carry out your father's wish?"

Pierre understood nothing of all this and coloring shyly looked in

silence at Princess Anna Mikhaylovna. After her talk with Pierre, Anna

Mikhaylovna returned to the Rostovs' and went to bed. On waking in the

morning she told the Rostovs and all her acquaintances the details of

Count Bezukhov's death. She said the count had died as she would herself

wish to die, that his end was not only touching but edifying. As to the

last meeting between father and son, it was so touching that she could

not think of it without tears, and did not know which had behaved better

during those awful moments--the father who so remembered everything and

everybody at last and had spoken such pathetic words to the son, or

Pierre, whom it had been pitiful to see, so stricken was he with grief,

though he tried hard to hide it in order not to sadden his dying father.

"It is painful, but it does one good. It uplifts the soul to see such

men as the old count and his worthy son," said she. Of the behavior of

the eldest princess and Prince Vasili she spoke disapprovingly, but in

whispers and as a great secret.

CHAPTER XXV

At Bald Hills, Prince Nicholas Andreevich Bolkonski's estate, the

arrival of young Prince Andrew and his wife was daily expected, but this

expectation did not upset the regular routine of life in the old

prince's household. General in Chief Prince Nicholas Andreevich

(nicknamed in society, "the King of Prussia") ever since the Emperor

Paul had exiled him to his country estate had lived there continuously

with his daughter, Princess Mary, and her companion, Mademoiselle

Bourienne. Though in the new reign he was free to return to the

capitals, he still continued to live in the country, remarking that

anyone who wanted to see him could come the hundred miles from Moscow to

Bald Hills, while he himself needed no one and nothing. He used to say

that there are only two sources of human vice--idleness and

superstition, and only two virtues--activity and intelligence. He

himself undertook his daughter's education, and to develop these two

cardinal virtues in her gave her lessons in algebra and geometry till

she was twenty, and arranged her life so that her whole time was

occupied. He was himself always occupied: writing his memoirs, solving

problems in higher mathematics, turning snuffboxes on a lathe, working

in the garden, or superintending the building that was always going on

at his estate. As regularity is a prime condition facilitating activity,

regularity in his household was carried to the highest point of

exactitude. He always came to table under precisely the same conditions,

and not only at the same hour but at the same minute. With those about

him, from his daughter to his serfs, the prince was sharp and invariably

exacting, so that without being a hardhearted man he inspired such fear

and respect as few hardhearted men would have aroused. Although he was

in retirement and had now no influence in political affairs, every high

official appointed to the province in which the prince's estate lay

considered it his duty to visit him and waited in the lofty antechamber

just as the architect, gardener, or Princess Mary did, till the prince

appeared punctually to the appointed hour. Everyone sitting in this

antechamber experienced the same feeling of respect and even fear when

the enormously high study door opened and showed the figure of a rather

small old man, with powdered wig, small withered hands, and bushy gray

eyebrows which, when he frowned, sometimes hid the gleam of his shrewd,

youthfully glittering eyes.

On the morning of the day that the young couple were to arrive, Princess

Mary entered the antechamber as usual at the time appointed for the

morning greeting, crossing herself with trepidation and repeating a

silent prayer. Every morning she came in like that, and every morning

prayed that the daily interview might pass off well.

An old powdered manservant who was sitting in the antechamber rose

quietly and said in a whisper: "Please walk in."

Through the door came the regular hum of a lathe. The princess timidly

opened the door which moved noiselessly and easily. She paused at the

entrance. The prince was working at the lathe and after glancing round

continued his work.

The enormous study was full of things evidently in constant use. The

large table covered with books and plans, the tall glass-fronted

bookcases with keys in the locks, the high desk for writing while

standing up, on which lay an open exercise book, and the lathe with

tools laid ready to hand and shavings scattered around--all indicated

continuous, varied, and orderly activity. The motion of the small foot

shod in a Tartar boot embroidered with silver, and the firm pressure of

the lean sinewy hand, showed that the prince still possessed the

tenacious endurance and vigor of hardy old age. After a few more turns

of the lathe he removed his foot from the pedal, wiped his chisel,

dropped it into a leather pouch attached to the lathe, and, approaching

the table, summoned his daughter. He never gave his children a blessing,

so he simply held out his bristly cheek (as yet unshaven) and, regarding

her tenderly and attentively, said severely:

"Quite well? All right then, sit down." He took the exercise book

containing lessons in geometry written by himself and drew up a chair

with his foot.

"For tomorrow!" said he, quickly finding the page and making a scratch

from one paragraph to another with his hard nail.

The princess bent over the exercise book on the table.

"Wait a bit, here's a letter for you," said the old man suddenly, taking

a letter addressed in a woman's hand from a bag hanging above the table,

onto which he threw it.

At the sight of the letter red patches showed themselves on the

princess' face. She took it quickly and bent her head over it.

"From Heloise?" asked the prince with a cold smile that showed his still

sound, yellowish teeth.

"Yes, it's from Julie," replied the princess with a timid glance and a

timid smile.

"I'll let two more letters pass, but the third I'll read," said the

prince sternly; "I'm afraid you write much nonsense. I'll read the

third!"

"Read this if you like, Father," said the princess, blushing still more

and holding out the letter.

"The third, I said the third!" cried the prince abruptly, pushing the

letter away, and leaning his elbows on the table he drew toward him the

exercise book containing geometrical figures.

"Well, madam," he began, stooping over the book close to his daughter

and placing an arm on the back of the chair on which she sat, so that

she felt herself surrounded on all sides by the acrid scent of old age

and tobacco, which she had known so long. "Now, madam, these triangles

are equal; please note that the angle ABC..."

The princess looked in a scared way at her father's eyes glittering

close to her; the red patches on her face came and went, and it was

plain that she understood nothing and was so frightened that her fear

would prevent her understanding any of her father's further

explanations, however clear they might be. Whether it was the teacher's

fault or the pupil's, this same thing happened every day: the princess'

eyes grew dim, she could not see and could not hear anything, but was

only conscious of her stern father's withered face close to her, of his

breath and the smell of him, and could think only of how to get away

quickly to her own room to make out the problem in peace. The old man

was beside himself: moved the chair on which he was sitting noisily

backward and forward, made efforts to control himself and not become

vehement, but almost always did become vehement, scolded, and sometimes

flung the exercise book away.

The princess gave a wrong answer.

"Well now, isn't she a fool!" shouted the prince, pushing the book aside

and turning sharply away; but rising immediately, he paced up and down,

lightly touched his daughter's hair and sat down again.

He drew up his chair, and continued to explain.

"This won't do, Princess; it won't do," said he, when Princess Mary,

having taken and closed the exercise book with the next day's lesson,

was about to leave: "Mathematics are most important, madam! I don't want

to have you like our silly ladies. Get used to it and you'll like it,"

and he patted her cheek. "It will drive all the nonsense out of your

head."

She turned to go, but he stopped her with a gesture and took an uncut

book from the high desk.

"Here is some sort of Key to the Mysteries that your Heloise has sent

you. Religious! I don't interfere with anyone's belief... I have looked

at it. Take it. Well, now go. Go."

He patted her on the shoulder and himself closed the door after her.

Princess Mary went back to her room with the sad, scared expression that

rarely left her and which made her plain, sickly face yet plainer. She

sat down at her writing table, on which stood miniature portraits and

which was littered with books and papers. The princess was as untidy as

her father was tidy. She put down the geometry book and eagerly broke

the seal of her letter. It was from her most intimate friend from

childhood; that same Julie Karagina who had been at the Rostovs' name-

day party.

Julie wrote in French:

Dear and precious Friend, How terrible and frightful a thing is

separation! Though I tell myself that half my life and half my happiness

are wrapped up in you, and that in spite of the distance separating us

our hearts are united by indissoluble bonds, my heart rebels against

fate and in spite of the pleasures and distractions around me I cannot

overcome a certain secret sorrow that has been in my heart ever since we

parted. Why are we not together as we were last summer, in your big

study, on the blue sofa, the confidential sofa? Why cannot I now, as

three months ago, draw fresh moral strength from your look, so gentle,

calm, and penetrating, a look I loved so well and seem to see before me

as I write?

Having read thus far, Princess Mary sighed and glanced into the mirror

which stood on her right. It reflected a weak, ungraceful figure and

thin face. Her eyes, always sad, now looked with particular hopelessness

at her reflection in the glass. "She flatters me," thought the princess,

turning away and continuing to read. But Julie did not flatter her

friend, the princess' eyes--large, deep and luminous (it seemed as if at

times there radiated from them shafts of warm light)--were so beautiful

that very often in spite of the plainness of her face they gave her an

attraction more powerful than that of beauty. But the princess never saw

the beautiful expression of her own eyes--the look they had when she was

not thinking of herself. As with everyone, her face assumed a forced

unnatural expression as soon as she looked in a glass. She went on

reading:

All Moscow talks of nothing but war. One of my two brothers is already

abroad, the other is with the Guards, who are starting on their march to

the frontier. Our dear Emperor has left Petersburg and it is thought

intends to expose his precious person to the chances of war. God grant

that the Corsican monster who is destroying the peace of Europe may be

overthrown by the angel whom it has pleased the Almighty, in His

goodness, to give us as sovereign! To say nothing of my brothers, this

war has deprived me of one of the associations nearest my heart. I mean

young Nicholas Rostov, who with his enthusiasm could not bear to remain

inactive and has left the university to join the army. I will confess to

you, dear Mary, that in spite of his extreme youth his departure for the

army was a great grief to me. This young man, of whom I spoke to you

last summer, is so noble-minded and full of that real youthfulness which

one seldom finds nowadays among our old men of twenty and, particularly,

he is so frank and has so much heart. He is so pure and poetic that my

relations with him, transient as they were, have been one of the

sweetest comforts to my poor heart, which has already suffered so much.

Someday I will tell you about our parting and all that was said then.

That is still too fresh. Ah, dear friend, you are happy not to know

these poignant joys and sorrows. You are fortunate, for the latter are

generally the stronger! I know very well that Count Nicholas is too

young ever to be more to me than a friend, but this sweet friendship,

this poetic and pure intimacy, were what my heart needed. But enough of

this! The chief news, about which all Moscow gossips, is the death of

old Count Bezukhov, and his inheritance. Fancy! The three princesses

have received very little, Prince Vasili nothing, and it is Monsieur

Pierre who has inherited all the property and has besides been

recognized as legitimate; so that he is now Count Bezukhov and possessor

of the finest fortune in Russia. It is rumored that Prince Vasili played

a very despicable part in this affair and that he returned to Petersburg

quite crestfallen.

I confess I understand very little about all these matters of wills and

inheritance; but I do know that since this young man, whom we all used

to know as plain Monsieur Pierre, has become Count Bezukhov and the

owner of one of the largest fortunes in Russia, I am much amused to

watch the change in the tone and manners of the mammas burdened by

marriageable daughters, and of the young ladies themselves, toward him,

though, between you and me, he always seemed to me a poor sort of

fellow. As for the past two years people have amused themselves by

finding husbands for me (most of whom I don't even know), the

matchmaking chronicles of Moscow now speak of me as the future Countess

Bezukhova. But you will understand that I have no desire for the post. A

propos of marriages: do you know that a while ago that universal auntie

Anna Mikhaylovna told me, under the seal of strict secrecy, of a plan of

marriage for you. It is neither more nor less than with Prince Vasili's

son Anatole, whom they wish to reform by marrying him to someone rich

and distinguee, and it is on you that his relations' choice has fallen.

I don't know what you will think of it, but I consider it my duty to let

you know of it. He is said to be very handsome and a terrible

scapegrace. That is all I have been able to find out about him.

But enough of gossip. I am at the end of my second sheet of paper, and

Mamma has sent for me to go and dine at the Apraksins'. Read the

mystical book I am sending you; it has an enormous success here. Though

there are things in it difficult for the feeble human mind to grasp, it

is an admirable book which calms and elevates the soul. Adieu! Give my

respects to monsieur your father and my compliments to Mademoiselle

Bourienne. I embrace you as I love you.

JULIE

P.S. Let me have news of your brother and his charming little wife.

The princess pondered awhile with a thoughtful smile and her luminous

eyes lit up so that her face was entirely transformed. Then she suddenly

rose and with her heavy tread went up to the table. She took a sheet of

paper and her hand moved rapidly over it. This is the reply she wrote,

also in French:

Dear and precious Friend, Your letter of the 13th has given me great

delight. So you still love me, my romantic Julie? Separation, of which

you say so much that is bad, does not seem to have had its usual effect

on you. You complain of our separation. What then should I say, if I

dared complain, I who am deprived of all who are dear to me? Ah, if we

had not religion to console us life would be very sad. Why do you

suppose that I should look severely on your affection for that young

man? On such matters I am only severe with myself. I understand such

feelings in others, and if never having felt them I cannot approve of

them, neither do I condemn them. Only it seems to me that Christian

love, love of one's neighbor, love of one's enemy, is worthier, sweeter,

and better than the feelings which the beautiful eyes of a young man can

inspire in a romantic and loving young girl like yourself.

The news of Count Bezukhov's death reached us before your letter and my

father was much affected by it. He says the count was the last

representative but one of the great century, and that it is his own turn

now, but that he will do all he can to let his turn come as late as

possible. God preserve us from that terrible misfortune!

I cannot agree with you about Pierre, whom I knew as a child. He always

seemed to me to have an excellent heart, and that is the quality I value

most in people. As to his inheritance and the part played by Prince

Vasili, it is very sad for both. Ah, my dear friend, our divine

Saviour's words, that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of

a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God, are terribly

true. I pity Prince Vasili but am still more sorry for Pierre. So young,

and burdened with such riches--to what temptations he will be exposed!

If I were asked what I desire most on earth, it would be to be poorer

than the poorest beggar. A thousand thanks, dear friend, for the volume

you have sent me and which has such success in Moscow. Yet since you

tell me that among some good things it contains others which our weak

human understanding cannot grasp, it seems to me rather useless to spend

time in reading what is unintelligible and can therefore bear no fruit.

I never could understand the fondness some people have for confusing

their minds by dwelling on mystical books that merely awaken their

doubts and excite their imagination, giving them a bent for exaggeration

quite contrary to Christian simplicity. Let us rather read the Epistles

and Gospels. Let us not seek to penetrate what mysteries they contain;

for how can we, miserable sinners that we are, know the terrible and

holy secrets of Providence while we remain in this flesh which forms an

impenetrable veil between us and the Eternal? Let us rather confine

ourselves to studying those sublime rules which our divine Saviour has

left for our guidance here below. Let us try to conform to them and

follow them, and let us be persuaded that the less we let our feeble

human minds roam, the better we shall please God, who rejects all

knowledge that does not come from Him; and the less we seek to fathom

what He has been pleased to conceal from us, the sooner will He

vouchsafe its revelation to us through His divine Spirit.

My father has not spoken to me of a suitor, but has only told me that he

has received a letter and is expecting a visit from Prince Vasili. In

regard to this project of marriage for me, I will tell you, dear sweet

friend, that I look on marriage as a divine institution to which we must

conform. However painful it may be to me, should the Almighty lay the

duties of wife and mother upon me I shall try to perform them as

faithfully as I can, without disquieting myself by examining my feelings

toward him whom He may give me for husband.

I have had a letter from my brother, who announces his speedy arrival at

Bald Hills with his wife. This pleasure will be but a brief one,

however, for he will leave us again to take part in this unhappy war

into which we have been drawn, God knows how or why. Not only where you

are--at the heart of affairs and of the world--is the talk all of war,

even here amid fieldwork and the calm of nature--which townsfolk

consider characteristic of the country--rumors of war are heard and

painfully felt. My father talks of nothing but marches and

countermarches, things of which I understand nothing; and the day before

yesterday during my daily walk through the village I witnessed a

heartrending scene.... It was a convoy of conscripts enrolled from our

people and starting to join the army. You should have seen the state of

the mothers, wives, and children of the men who were going and should

have heard the sobs. It seems as though mankind has forgotten the laws

of its divine Saviour, Who preached love and forgiveness of injuries--

and that men attribute the greatest merit to skill in killing one

another.

Adieu, dear and kind friend; may our divine Saviour and His most Holy

Mother keep you in their holy and all-powerful care!

MARY

"Ah, you are sending off a letter, Princess? I have already dispatched

mine. I have written to my poor mother," said the smiling Mademoiselle

Bourienne rapidly, in her pleasant mellow tones and with guttural r's.

She brought into Princess Mary's strenuous, mournful, and gloomy world a

quite different atmosphere, careless, lighthearted, and self-satisfied.

"Princess, I must warn you," she added, lowering her voice and evidently

listening to herself with pleasure, and speaking with exaggerated

grasseyement, "the prince has been scolding Michael Ivanovich. He is in

a very bad humor, very morose. Be prepared."

"Ah, dear friend," replied Princess Mary, "I have asked you never to

warn me of the humor my father is in. I do not allow myself to judge him

and would not have others do so."

The princess glanced at her watch and, seeing that she was five minutes

late in starting her practice on the clavichord, went into the sitting

room with a look of alarm. Between twelve and two o'clock, as the day

was mapped out, the prince rested and the princess played the

clavichord.

CHAPTER XXVI

The gray-haired valet was sitting drowsily listening to the snoring of

the prince, who was in his large study. From the far side of the house

through the closed doors came the sound of difficult passages--twenty

times repeated--of a sonata by Dussek.

Just then a closed carriage and another with a hood drove up to the

porch. Prince Andrew got out of the carriage, helped his little wife to

alight, and let her pass into the house before him. Old Tikhon, wearing

a wig, put his head out of the door of the antechamber, reported in a

whisper that the prince was sleeping, and hastily closed the door.

Tikhon knew that neither the son's arrival nor any other unusual event

must be allowed to disturb the appointed order of the day. Prince Andrew

apparently knew this as well as Tikhon; he looked at his watch as if to

ascertain whether his father's habits had changed since he was at home

last, and, having assured himself that they had not, he turned to his

wife.

"He will get up in twenty minutes. Let us go across to Mary's room," he

said.

The little princess had grown stouter during this time, but her eyes and

her short, downy, smiling lip lifted when she began to speak just as

merrily and prettily as ever.

"Why, this is a palace!" she said to her husband, looking around with

the expression with which people compliment their host at a ball. "Let's

come, quick, quick!" And with a glance round, she smiled at Tikhon, at

her husband, and at the footman who accompanied them.

"Is that Mary practicing? Let's go quietly and take her by surprise."

Prince Andrew followed her with a courteous but sad expression.

"You've grown older, Tikhon," he said in passing to the old man, who

kissed his hand.

Before they reached the room from which the sounds of the clavichord

came, the pretty, fair haired Frenchwoman, Mademoiselle Bourienne,

rushed out apparently beside herself with delight.

"Ah! what joy for the princess!" exclaimed she: "At last! I must let her

know."

"No, no, please not... You are Mademoiselle Bourienne," said the little

princess, kissing her. "I know you already through my sister-in-law's

friendship for you. She was not expecting us?"

They went up to the door of the sitting room from which came the sound

of the oft-repeated passage of the sonata. Prince Andrew stopped and

made a grimace, as if expecting something unpleasant.

The little princess entered the room. The passage broke off in the

middle, a cry was heard, then Princess Mary's heavy tread and the sound

of kissing. When Prince Andrew went in the two princesses, who had only

met once before for a short time at his wedding, were in each other's

arms warmly pressing their lips to whatever place they happened to

touch. Mademoiselle Bourienne stood near them pressing her hand to her

heart, with a beatific smile and obviously equally ready to cry or to

laugh. Prince Andrew shrugged his shoulders and frowned, as lovers of

music do when they hear a false note. The two women let go of one

another, and then, as if afraid of being too late, seized each other's

hands, kissing them and pulling them away, and again began kissing each

other on the face, and then to Prince Andrew's surprise both began to

cry and kissed again. Mademoiselle Bourienne also began to cry. Prince

Andrew evidently felt ill at ease, but to the two women it seemed quite

natural that they should cry, and apparently it never entered their

heads that it could have been otherwise at this meeting.

"Ah! my dear!... Ah! Mary!" they suddenly exclaimed, and then laughed.

"I dreamed last night..."--"You were not expecting us?..." "Ah! Mary,

you have got thinner?..." "And you have grown stouter!..."

"I knew the princess at once," put in Mademoiselle Bourienne.

"And I had no idea!..." exclaimed Princess Mary. "Ah, Andrew, I did not

see you."

Prince Andrew and his sister, hand in hand, kissed one another, and he

told her she was still the same crybaby as ever. Princess Mary had

turned toward her brother, and through her tears the loving, warm,

gentle look of her large luminous eyes, very beautiful at that moment,

rested on Prince Andrew's face.

The little princess talked incessantly, her short, downy upper lip

continually and rapidly touching her rosy nether lip when necessary and

drawing up again next moment when her face broke into a smile of

glittering teeth and sparkling eyes. She told of an accident they had

had on the Spasski Hill which might have been serious for her in her

condition, and immediately after that informed them that she had left

all her clothes in Petersburg and that heaven knew what she would have

to dress in here; and that Andrew had quite changed, and that Kitty

Odyntsova had married an old man, and that there was a suitor for Mary,

a real one, but that they would talk of that later. Princess Mary was

still looking silently at her brother and her beautiful eyes were full

of love and sadness. It was plain that she was following a train of

thought independent of her sister-in-law's words. In the midst of a

description of the last Petersburg fete she addressed her brother:

"So you are really going to the war, Andrew?" she said sighing.

Lise sighed too.

"Yes, and even tomorrow," replied her brother.

"He is leaving me here, God knows why, when he might have had

promotion..."

Princess Mary did not listen to the end, but continuing her train of

thought turned to her sister-in-law with a tender glance at her figure.

"Is it certain?" she said.

The face of the little princess changed. She sighed and said: "Yes,

quite certain. Ah! it is very dreadful..."

Her lip descended. She brought her face close to her sister-in-law's and

unexpectedly again began to cry.

"She needs rest," said Prince Andrew with a frown. "Don't you, Lise?

Take her to your room and I'll go to Father. How is he? Just the same?"

"Yes, just the same. Though I don't know what your opinion will be,"

answered the princess joyfully.

"And are the hours the same? And the walks in the avenues? And the

lathe?" asked Prince Andrew with a scarcely perceptible smile which

showed that, in spite of all his love and respect for his father, he was

aware of his weaknesses.

"The hours are the same, and the lathe, and also the mathematics and my

geometry lessons," said Princess Mary gleefully, as if her lessons in

geometry were among the greatest delights of her life.

When the twenty minutes had elapsed and the time had come for the old

prince to get up, Tikhon came to call the young prince to his father.

The old man made a departure from his usual routine in honor of his

son's arrival: he gave orders to admit him to his apartments while he

dressed for dinner. The old prince always dressed in old-fashioned

style, wearing an antique coat and powdered hair; and when Prince Andrew

entered his father's dressing room (not with the contemptuous look and

manner he wore in drawing rooms, but with the animated face with which

he talked to Pierre), the old man was sitting on a large leather-covered

chair, wrapped in a powdering mantle, entrusting his head to Tikhon.

"Ah! here's the warrior! Wants to vanquish Buonaparte?" said the old

man, shaking his powdered head as much as the tail, which Tikhon was

holding fast to plait, would allow.

"You at least must tackle him properly, or else if he goes on like this

he'll soon have us, too, for his subjects! How are you?" And he held out

his cheek.

The old man was in a good temper after his nap before dinner. (He used

to say that a nap "after dinner was silver--before dinner, golden.") He

cast happy, sidelong glances at his son from under his thick, bushy

eyebrows. Prince Andrew went up and kissed his father on the spot

indicated to him. He made no reply on his father's favorite topic--

making fun of the military men of the day, and more particularly of

Bonaparte.

"Yes, Father, I have come to you and brought my wife who is pregnant,"

said Prince Andrew, following every movement of his father's face with

an eager and respectful look. "How is your health?"

"Only fools and rakes fall ill, my boy. You know me: I am busy from

morning till night and abstemious, so of course I am well."

"Thank God," said his son smiling.

"God has nothing to do with it! Well, go on," he continued, returning to

his hobby; "tell me how the Germans have taught you to fight Bonaparte

by this new science you call 'strategy.'"

Prince Andrew smiled.

"Give me time to collect my wits, Father," said he, with a smile that

showed that his father's foibles did not prevent his son from loving and

honoring him. "Why, I have not yet had time to settle down!"

"Nonsense, nonsense!" cried the old man, shaking his pigtail to see

whether it was firmly plaited, and grasping his by the hand. "The house

for your wife is ready. Princess Mary will take her there and show her

over, and they'll talk nineteen to the dozen. That's their woman's way!

I am glad to have her. Sit down and talk. About Mikhelson's army I

understand--Tolstoy's too... a simultaneous expedition.... But what's

the southern army to do? Prussia is neutral... I know that. What about

Austria?" said he, rising from his chair and pacing up and down the room

followed by Tikhon, who ran after him, handing him different articles of

clothing. "What of Sweden? How will they cross Pomerania?"

Prince Andrew, seeing that his father insisted, began--at first

reluctantly, but gradually with more and more animation, and from habit

changing unconsciously from Russian to French as he went on--to explain

the plan of operation for the coming campaign. He explained how an army,

ninety thousand strong, was to threaten Prussia so as to bring her out

of her neutrality and draw her into the war; how part of that army was

to join some Swedish forces at Stralsund; how two hundred and twenty

thousand Austrians, with a hundred thousand Russians, were to operate in

Italy and on the Rhine; how fifty thousand Russians and as many English

were to land at Naples, and how a total force of five hundred thousand

men was to attack the French from different sides. The old prince did

not evince the least interest during this explanation, but as if he were

not listening to it continued to dress while walking about, and three

times unexpectedly interrupted. Once he stopped it by shouting: "The

white one, the white one!"

This meant that Tikhon was not handing him the waistcoat he wanted.

Another time he interrupted, saying:

"And will she soon be confined?" and shaking his head reproachfully

said: "That's bad! Go on, go on."

The third interruption came when Prince Andrew was finishing his

description. The old man began to sing, in the cracked voice of old age:

"Malbrook s'en va-t-en guerre. Dieu sait quand reviendra." \*

\* "Marlborough is going to the wars; God knows when he'll return."

His son only smiled.

"I don't say it's a plan I approve of," said the son; "I am only telling

you what it is. Napoleon has also formed his plan by now, not worse than

this one."

"Well, you've told me nothing new," and the old man repeated,

meditatively and rapidly:

"Dieu sait quand reviendra. Go to the dining room."

CHAPTER XXVII

At the appointed hour the prince, powdered and shaven, entered the

dining room where his daughter-in-law, Princess Mary, and Mademoiselle

Bourienne were already awaiting him together with his architect, who by

a strange caprice of his employer's was admitted to table though the

position of that insignificant individual was such as could certainly

not have caused him to expect that honor. The prince, who generally kept

very strictly to social distinctions and rarely admitted even important

government officials to his table, had unexpectedly selected Michael

Ivanovich (who always went into a corner to blow his nose on his checked

handkerchief) to illustrate the theory that all men are equals, and had

more than once impressed on his daughter that Michael Ivanovich was "not

a whit worse than you or I." At dinner the prince usually spoke to the

taciturn Michael Ivanovich more often than to anyone else.

In the dining room, which like all the rooms in the house was

exceedingly lofty, the members of the household and the footmen--one

behind each chair--stood waiting for the prince to enter. The head

butler, napkin on arm, was scanning the setting of the table, making

signs to the footmen, and anxiously glancing from the clock to the door

by which the prince was to enter. Prince Andrew was looking at a large

gilt frame, new to him, containing the genealogical tree of the Princes

Bolkonski, opposite which hung another such frame with a badly painted

portrait (evidently by the hand of the artist belonging to the estate)

of a ruling prince, in a crown--an alleged descendant of Rurik and

ancestor of the Bolkonskis. Prince Andrew, looking again at that

genealogical tree, shook his head, laughing as a man laughs who looks at

a portrait so characteristic of the original as to be amusing.

"How thoroughly like him that is!" he said to Princess Mary, who had

come up to him.

Princess Mary looked at her brother in surprise. She did not understand

what he was laughing at. Everything her father did inspired her with

reverence and was beyond question.

"Everyone has his Achilles' heel," continued Prince Andrew. "Fancy, with

his powerful mind, indulging in such nonsense!"

Princess Mary could not understand the boldness of her brother's

criticism and was about to reply, when the expected footsteps were heard

coming from the study. The prince walked in quickly and jauntily as was

his wont, as if intentionally contrasting the briskness of his manners

with the strict formality of his house. At that moment the great clock

struck two and another with a shrill tone joined in from the drawing

room. The prince stood still; his lively glittering eyes from under

their thick, bushy eyebrows sternly scanned all present and rested on

the little princess. She felt, as courtiers do when the Tsar enters, the

sensation of fear and respect which the old man inspired in all around

him. He stroked her hair and then patted her awkwardly on the back of

her neck.

"I'm glad, glad, to see you," he said, looking attentively into her

eyes, and then quickly went to his place and sat down. "Sit down, sit

down! Sit down, Michael Ianovich!"

He indicated a place beside him to his daughter-in-law. A footman moved

the chair for her.

"Ho, ho!" said the old man, casting his eyes on her rounded figure.

"You've been in a hurry. That's bad!"

He laughed in his usual dry, cold, unpleasant way, with his lips only

and not with his eyes.

"You must walk, walk as much as possible, as much as possible," he said.

The little princess did not, or did not wish to, hear his words. She was

silent and seemed confused. The prince asked her about her father, and

she began to smile and talk. He asked about mutual acquaintances, and

she became still more animated and chattered away giving him greetings

from various people and retelling the town gossip.

"Countess Apraksina, poor thing, has lost her husband and she has cried

her eyes out," she said, growing more and more lively.

As she became animated the prince looked at her more and more sternly,

and suddenly, as if he had studied her sufficiently and had formed a

definite idea of her, he turned away and addressed Michael Ivanovich.

"Well, Michael Ivanovich, our Bonaparte will be having a bad time of it.

Prince Andrew" (he always spoke thus of his son) "has been telling me

what forces are being collected against him! While you and I never

thought much of him."

Michael Ivanovich did not at all know when "you and I" had said such

things about Bonaparte, but understanding that he was wanted as a peg on

which to hang the prince's favorite topic, he looked inquiringly at the

young prince, wondering what would follow.

"He is a great tactician!" said the prince to his son, pointing to the

architect.

And the conversation again turned on the war, on Bonaparte, and the

generals and statesmen of the day. The old prince seemed convinced not

only that all the men of the day were mere babies who did not know the A

B C of war or of politics, and that Bonaparte was an insignificant

little Frenchy, successful only because there were no longer any

Potemkins or Suvorovs left to oppose him; but he was also convinced that

there were no political difficulties in Europe and no real war, but only

a sort of puppet show at which the men of the day were playing,

pretending to do something real. Prince Andrew gaily bore with his

father's ridicule of the new men, and drew him on and listened to him

with evident pleasure.

"The past always seems good," said he, "but did not Suvorov himself fall

into a trap Moreau set him, and from which he did not know how to

escape?"

"Who told you that? Who?" cried the prince. "Suvorov!" And he jerked

away his plate, which Tikhon briskly caught. "Suvorov!... Consider,

Prince Andrew. Two... Frederick and Suvorov; Moreau!... Moreau would

have been a prisoner if Suvorov had had a free hand; but he had the

Hofs-kriegs-wurst-schnapps-Rath on his hands. It would have puzzled the

devil himself! When you get there you'll find out what those Hofs-

kriegs-wurst-Raths are! Suvorov couldn't manage them so what chance has

Michael Kutuzov? No, my dear boy," he continued, "you and your generals

won't get on against Buonaparte; you'll have to call in the French, so

that birds of a feather may fight together. The German, Pahlen, has been

sent to New York in America, to fetch the Frenchman, Moreau," he said,

alluding to the invitation made that year to Moreau to enter the Russian

service.... "Wonderful!... Were the Potemkins, Suvorovs, and Orlovs

Germans? No, lad, either you fellows have all lost your wits, or I have

outlived mine. May God help you, but we'll see what will happen.

Buonaparte has become a great commander among them! Hm!..."

"I don't at all say that all the plans are good," said Prince Andrew, "I

am only surprised at your opinion of Bonaparte. You may laugh as much as

you like, but all the same Bonaparte is a great general!"

"Michael Ivanovich!" cried the old prince to the architect who, busy

with his roast meat, hoped he had been forgotten: "Didn't I tell you

Buonaparte was a great tactician? Here, he says the same thing."

"To be sure, your excellency," replied the architect.

The prince again laughed his frigid laugh.

"Buonaparte was born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He has got

splendid soldiers. Besides he began by attacking Germans. And only

idlers have failed to beat the Germans. Since the world began everybody

has beaten the Germans. They beat no one--except one another. He made

his reputation fighting them."

And the prince began explaining all the blunders which, according to

him, Bonaparte had made in his campaigns and even in politics. His son

made no rejoinder, but it was evident that whatever arguments were

presented he was as little able as his father to change his opinion. He

listened, refraining from a reply, and involuntarily wondered how this

old man, living alone in the country for so many years, could know and

discuss so minutely and acutely all the recent European military and

political events.

"You think I'm an old man and don't understand the present state of

affairs?" concluded his father. "But it troubles me. I don't sleep at

night. Come now, where has this great commander of yours shown his

skill?" he concluded.

"That would take too long to tell," answered the son.

"Well, then go to your Buonaparte! Mademoiselle Bourienne, here's

another admirer of that powder-monkey emperor of yours," he exclaimed in

excellent French.

"You know, Prince, I am not a Bonapartist!"

"Dieu sait quand reviendra..." hummed the prince out of tune and, with a

laugh still more so, he quitted the table.

The little princess during the whole discussion and the rest of the

dinner sat silent, glancing with a frightened look now at her father-in-

law and now at Princess Mary. When they left the table she took her

sister-in-law's arm and drew her into another room.

"What a clever man your father is," said she; "perhaps that is why I am

afraid of him."

"Oh, he is so kind!" answered Princess Mary.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Prince Andrew was to leave next evening. The old prince, not altering

his routine, retired as usual after dinner. The little princess was in

her sister-in-law's room. Prince Andrew in a traveling coat without

epaulettes had been packing with his valet in the rooms assigned to him.

After inspecting the carriage himself and seeing the trunks put in, he

ordered the horses to be harnessed. Only those things he always kept

with him remained in his room; a small box, a large canteen fitted with

silver plate, two Turkish pistols and a saber--a present from his father

who had brought it from the siege of Ochakov. All these traveling

effects of Prince Andrew's were in very good order: new, clean, and in

cloth covers carefully tied with tapes.

When starting on a journey or changing their mode of life, men capable

of reflection are generally in a serious frame of mind. At such moments

one reviews the past and plans for the future. Prince Andrew's face

looked very thoughtful and tender. With his hands behind him he paced

briskly from corner to corner of the room, looking straight before him

and thoughtfully shaking his head. Did he fear going to the war, or was

he sad at leaving his wife?--perhaps both, but evidently he did not wish

to be seen in that mood, for hearing footsteps in the passage he

hurriedly unclasped his hands, stopped at a table as if tying the cover

of the small box, and assumed his usual tranquil and impenetrable

expression. It was the heavy tread of Princess Mary that he heard.

"I hear you have given orders to harness," she cried, panting (she had

apparently been running), "and I did so wish to have another talk with

you alone! God knows how long we may again be parted. You are not angry

with me for coming? You have changed so, Andrusha," she added, as if to

explain such a question.

She smiled as she uttered his pet name, "Andrusha." It was obviously

strange to her to think that this stern handsome man should be Andrusha-

-the slender mischievous boy who had been her playfellow in childhood.

"And where is Lise?" he asked, answering her question only by a smile.

"She was so tired that she has fallen asleep on the sofa in my room. Oh,

Andrew! What a treasure of a wife you have," said she, sitting down on

the sofa, facing her brother. "She is quite a child: such a dear, merry

child. I have grown so fond of her."

Prince Andrew was silent, but the princess noticed the ironical and

contemptuous look that showed itself on his face.

"One must be indulgent to little weaknesses; who is free from them,

Andrew? Don't forget that she has grown up and been educated in society,

and so her position now is not a rosy one. We should enter into

everyone's situation. Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner. \* Think

what it must be for her, poor thing, after what she has been used to, to

be parted from her husband and be left alone in the country, in her

condition! It's very hard."

\* To understand all is to forgive all.

Prince Andrew smiled as he looked at his sister, as we smile at those we

think we thoroughly understand.

"You live in the country and don't think the life terrible," he replied.

"I... that's different. Why speak of me? I don't want any other life,

and can't, for I know no other. But think, Andrew: for a young society

woman to be buried in the country during the best years of her life, all

alone--for Papa is always busy, and I... well, you know what poor

resources I have for entertaining a woman used to the best society.

There is only Mademoiselle Bourienne...."

"I don't like your Mademoiselle Bourienne at all," said Prince Andrew.

"No? She is very nice and kind and, above all, she's much to be pitied.

She has no one, no one. To tell the truth, I don't need her, and she's

even in my way. You know I always was a savage, and now am even more so.

I like being alone.... Father likes her very much. She and Michael

Ivanovich are the two people to whom he is always gentle and kind,

because he has been a benefactor to them both. As Sterne says: 'We don't

love people so much for the good they have done us, as for the good we

have done them.' Father took her when she was homeless after losing her

own father. She is very good-natured, and my father likes her way of

reading. She reads to him in the evenings and reads splendidly."

"To be quite frank, Mary, I expect Father's character sometimes makes

things trying for you, doesn't it?" Prince Andrew asked suddenly.

Princess Mary was first surprised and then aghast at this question.

"For me? For me?... Trying for me!..." said she.

"He always was rather harsh; and now I should think he's getting very

trying," said Prince Andrew, apparently speaking lightly of their father

in order to puzzle or test his sister.

"You are good in every way, Andrew, but you have a kind of intellectual

pride," said the princess, following the train of her own thoughts

rather than the trend of the conversation--"and that's a great sin. How

can one judge Father? But even if one might, what feeling except

veneration could such a man as my father evoke? And I am so contented

and happy with him. I only wish you were all as happy as I am."

Her brother shook his head incredulously.

"The only thing that is hard for me... I will tell you the truth,

Andrew... is Father's way of treating religious subjects. I don't

understand how a man of his immense intellect can fail to see what is as

clear as day, and can go so far astray. That is the only thing that

makes me unhappy. But even in this I can see lately a shade of

improvement. His satire has been less bitter of late, and there was a

monk he received and had a long talk with."

"Ah! my dear, I am afraid you and your monk are wasting your powder,"

said Prince Andrew banteringly yet tenderly.

"Ah! mon ami, I only pray, and hope that God will hear me. Andrew..."

she said timidly after a moment's silence, "I have a great favor to ask

of you."

"What is it, dear?"

"No--promise that you will not refuse! It will give you no trouble and

is nothing unworthy of you, but it will comfort me. Promise,

Andrusha!..." said she, putting her hand in her reticule but not yet

taking out what she was holding inside it, as if what she held were the

subject of her request and must not be shown before the request was

granted.

She looked timidly at her brother.

"Even if it were a great deal of trouble..." answered Prince Andrew, as

if guessing what it was about.

"Think what you please! I know you are just like Father. Think as you

please, but do this for my sake! Please do! Father's father, our

grandfather, wore it in all his wars." (She still did not take out what

she was holding in her reticule.) "So you promise?"

"Of course. What is it?"

"Andrew, I bless you with this icon and you must promise me you will

never take it off. Do you promise?"

"If it does not weigh a hundredweight and won't break my neck... To

please you..." said Prince Andrew. But immediately, noticing the pained

expression his joke had brought to his sister's face, he repented and

added: "I am glad; really, dear, I am very glad."

"Against your will He will save and have mercy on you and bring you to

Himself, for in Him alone is truth and peace," said she in a voice

trembling with emotion, solemnly holding up in both hands before her

brother a small, oval, antique, dark-faced icon of the Saviour in a gold

setting, on a finely wrought silver chain.

She crossed herself, kissed the icon, and handed it to Andrew.

"Please, Andrew, for my sake!..."

Rays of gentle light shone from her large, timid eyes. Those eyes lit up

the whole of her thin, sickly face and made it beautiful. Her brother

would have taken the icon, but she stopped him. Andrew understood,

crossed himself and kissed the icon. There was a look of tenderness, for

he was touched, but also a gleam of irony on his face.

"Thank you, my dear." She kissed him on the forehead and sat down again

on the sofa. They were silent for a while.

"As I was saying to you, Andrew, be kind and generous as you always used

to be. Don't judge Lise harshly," she began. "She is so sweet, so good-

natured, and her position now is a very hard one."

"I do not think I have complained of my wife to you, Masha, or blamed

her. Why do you say all this to me?"

Red patches appeared on Princess Mary's face and she was silent as if

she felt guilty.

"I have said nothing to you, but you have already been talked to. And I

am sorry for that," he went on.

The patches grew deeper on her forehead, neck, and cheeks. She tried to

say something but could not. Her brother had guessed right: the little

princess had been crying after dinner and had spoken of her forebodings

about her confinement, and how she dreaded it, and had complained of her

fate, her father-in-law, and her husband. After crying she had fallen

asleep. Prince Andrew felt sorry for his sister.

"Know this, Masha: I can't reproach, have not reproached, and never

shall reproach my wife with anything, and I cannot reproach myself with

anything in regard to her; and that always will be so in whatever

circumstances I may be placed. But if you want to know the truth... if

you want to know whether I am happy? No! Is she happy? No! But why this

is so I don't know..."

As he said this he rose, went to his sister, and, stooping, kissed her

forehead. His fine eyes lit up with a thoughtful, kindly, and

unaccustomed brightness, but he was looking not at his sister but over

her head toward the darkness of the open doorway.

"Let us go to her, I must say good-by. Or--go and wake and I'll come in

a moment. Petrushka!" he called to his valet: "Come here, take these

away. Put this on the seat and this to the right."

Princess Mary rose and moved to the door, then stopped and said:

"Andrew, if you had faith you would have turned to God and asked Him to

give you the love you do not feel, and your prayer would have been

answered."

"Well, may be!" said Prince Andrew. "Go, Masha; I'll come immediately."

On the way to his sister's room, in the passage which connected one wing

with the other, Prince Andrew met Mademoiselle Bourienne smiling

sweetly. It was the third time that day that, with an ecstatic and

artless smile, she had met him in secluded passages.

"Oh! I thought you were in your room," she said, for some reason

blushing and dropping her eyes.

Prince Andrew looked sternly at her and an expression of anger suddenly

came over his face. He said nothing to her but looked at her forehead

and hair, without looking at her eyes, with such contempt that the

Frenchwoman blushed and went away without a word. When he reached his

sister's room his wife was already awake and her merry voice, hurrying

one word after another, came through the open door. She was speaking as

usual in French, and as if after long self-restraint she wished to make

up for lost time.

"No, but imagine the old Countess Zubova, with false curls and her mouth

full of false teeth, as if she were trying to cheat old age.... Ha, ha,

ha! Mary!"

This very sentence about Countess Zubova and this same laugh Prince

Andrew had already heard from his wife in the presence of others some

five times. He entered the room softly. The little princess, plump and

rosy, was sitting in an easy chair with her work in her hands, talking

incessantly, repeating Petersburg reminiscences and even phrases. Prince

Andrew came up, stroked her hair, and asked if she felt rested after

their journey. She answered him and continued her chatter.

The coach with six horses was waiting at the porch. It was an autumn

night, so dark that the coachman could not see the carriage pole.

Servants with lanterns were bustling about in the porch. The immense

house was brilliant with lights shining through its lofty windows. The

domestic serfs were crowding in the hall, waiting to bid good-by to the

young prince. The members of the household were all gathered in the

reception hall: Michael Ivanovich, Mademoiselle Bourienne, Princess

Mary, and the little princess. Prince Andrew had been called to his

father's study as the latter wished to say good-by to him alone. All

were waiting for them to come out.

When Prince Andrew entered the study the old man in his old-age

spectacles and white dressing gown, in which he received no one but his

son, sat at the table writing. He glanced round.

"Going?" And he went on writing.

"I've come to say good-by."

"Kiss me here," and he touched his cheek: "Thanks, thanks!"

"What do you thank me for?"

"For not dilly-dallying and not hanging to a woman's apron strings. The

Service before everything. Thanks, thanks!" And he went on writing, so

that his quill spluttered and squeaked. "If you have anything to say,

say it. These two things can be done together," he added.

"About my wife... I am ashamed as it is to leave her on your hands..."

"Why talk nonsense? Say what you want."

"When her confinement is due, send to Moscow for an accoucheur.... Let

him be here...."

The old prince stopped writing and, as if not understanding, fixed his

stern eyes on his son.

"I know that no one can help if nature does not do her work," said

Prince Andrew, evidently confused. "I know that out of a million cases

only one goes wrong, but it is her fancy and mine. They have been

telling her things. She has had a dream and is frightened."

"Hm... Hm..." muttered the old prince to himself, finishing what he was

writing. "I'll do it."

He signed with a flourish and suddenly turning to his son began to

laugh.

"It's a bad business, eh?"

"What is bad, Father?"

"The wife!" said the old prince, briefly and significantly.

"I don't understand!" said Prince Andrew.

"No, it can't be helped, lad," said the prince. "They're all like that;

one can't unmarry. Don't be afraid; I won't tell anyone, but you know it

yourself."

He seized his son by the hand with small bony fingers, shook it, looked

straight into his son's face with keen eyes which seemed to see through

him, and again laughed his frigid laugh.

The son sighed, thus admitting that his father had understood him. The

old man continued to fold and seal his letter, snatching up and throwing

down the wax, the seal, and the paper, with his accustomed rapidity.

"What's to be done? She's pretty! I will do everything. Make your mind

easy," said he in abrupt sentences while sealing his letter.

Andrew did not speak; he was both pleased and displeased that his father

understood him. The old man got up and gave the letter to his son.

"Listen!" said he; "don't worry about your wife: what can be done shall

be. Now listen! Give this letter to Michael Ilarionovich. \* I have

written that he should make use of you in proper places and not keep you

long as an adjutant: a bad position! Tell him I remember and like him.

Write and tell me how he receives you. If he is all right--serve him.

Nicholas Bolkonski's son need not serve under anyone if he is in

disfavor. Now come here."

\*Kutuzov.

He spoke so rapidly that he did not finish half his words, but his son

was accustomed to understand him. He led him to the desk, raised the

lid, drew out a drawer, and took out an exercise book filled with his

bold, tall, close handwriting.

"I shall probably die before you. So remember, these are my memoirs;

hand them to the Emperor after my death. Now here is a Lombard bond and

a letter; it is a premium for the man who writes a history of Suvorov's

wars. Send it to the Academy. Here are some jottings for you to read

when I am gone. You will find them useful."

Andrew did not tell his father that he would no doubt live a long time

yet. He felt that he must not say it.

"I will do it all, Father," he said.

"Well, now, good-by!" He gave his son his hand to kiss, and embraced

him. "Remember this, Prince Andrew, if they kill you it will hurt me,

your old father..." he paused unexpectedly, and then in a querulous

voice suddenly shrieked: "but if I hear that you have not behaved like a

son of Nicholas Bolkonski, I shall be ashamed!"

"You need not have said that to me, Father," said the son with a smile.

The old man was silent.

"I also wanted to ask you," continued Prince Andrew, "if I'm killed and

if I have a son, do not let him be taken away from you--as I said

yesterday... let him grow up with you.... Please."

"Not let the wife have him?" said the old man, and laughed.

They stood silent, facing one another. The old man's sharp eyes were

fixed straight on his son's. Something twitched in the lower part of the

old prince's face.

"We've said good-by. Go!" he suddenly shouted in a loud, angry voice,

opening his door.

"What is it? What?" asked both princesses when they saw for a moment at

the door Prince Andrew and the figure of the old man in a white dressing

gown, spectacled and wigless, shouting in an angry voice.

Prince Andrew sighed and made no reply.

"Well!" he said, turning to his wife.

And this "Well!" sounded coldly ironic, as if he were saying,: "Now go

through your performance."

"Andrew, already!" said the little princess, turning pale and looking

with dismay at her husband.

He embraced her. She screamed and fell unconscious on his shoulder.

He cautiously released the shoulder she leaned on, looked into her face,

and carefully placed her in an easy chair.

"Adieu, Mary," said he gently to his sister, taking her by the hand and

kissing her, and then he left the room with rapid steps.

The little princess lay in the armchair, Mademoiselle Bourienne chafing

her temples. Princess Mary, supporting her sister-in-law, still looked

with her beautiful eyes full of tears at the door through which Prince

Andrew had gone and made the sign of the cross in his direction. From

the study, like pistol shots, came the frequent sound of the old man

angrily blowing his nose. Hardly had Prince Andrew gone when the study

door opened quickly and the stern figure of the old man in the white

dressing gown looked out.

"Gone? That's all right!" said he; and looking angrily at the

unconscious little princess, he shook his head reprovingly and slammed

the door.

BOOK TWO: 1805

CHAPTER I

In October, 1805, a Russian army was occupying the villages and towns of

the Archduchy of Austria, and yet other regiments freshly arriving from

Russia were settling near the fortress of Braunau and burdening the

inhabitants on whom they were quartered. Braunau was the headquarters of

the commander-in-chief, Kutuzov.

On October 11, 1805, one of the infantry regiments that had just reached

Braunau had halted half a mile from the town, waiting to be inspected by

the commander-in-chief. Despite the un-Russian appearance of the

locality and surroundings--fruit gardens, stone fences, tiled roofs, and

hills in the distance--and despite the fact that the inhabitants (who

gazed with curiosity at the soldiers) were not Russians, the regiment

had just the appearance of any Russian regiment preparing for an

inspection anywhere in the heart of Russia.

On the evening of the last day's march an order had been received that

the commander-in-chief would inspect the regiment on the march. Though

the words of the order were not clear to the regimental commander, and

the question arose whether the troops were to be in marching order or

not, it was decided at a consultation between the battalion commanders

to present the regiment in parade order, on the principle that it is

always better to "bow too low than not bow low enough." So the soldiers,

after a twenty-mile march, were kept mending and cleaning all night long

without closing their eyes, while the adjutants and company commanders

calculated and reckoned, and by morning the regiment--instead of the

straggling, disorderly crowd it had been on its last march the day

before--presented a well-ordered array of two thousand men each of whom

knew his place and his duty, had every button and every strap in place,

and shone with cleanliness. And not only externally was all in order,

but had it pleased the commander-in-chief to look under the uniforms he

would have found on every man a clean shirt, and in every knapsack the

appointed number of articles, "awl, soap, and all," as the soldiers say.

There was only one circumstance concerning which no one could be at

ease. It was the state of the soldiers' boots. More than half the men's

boots were in holes. But this defect was not due to any fault of the

regimental commander, for in spite of repeated demands boots had not

been issued by the Austrian commissariat, and the regiment had marched

some seven hundred miles.

The commander of the regiment was an elderly, choleric, stout, and

thick-set general with grizzled eyebrows and whiskers, and wider from

chest to back than across the shoulders. He had on a brand-new uniform

showing the creases where it had been folded and thick gold epaulettes

which seemed to stand rather than lie down on his massive shoulders. He

had the air of a man happily performing one of the most solemn duties of

his life. He walked about in front of the line and at every step pulled

himself up, slightly arching his back. It was plain that the commander

admired his regiment, rejoiced in it, and that his whole mind was

engrossed by it, yet his strut seemed to indicate that, besides military

matters, social interests and the fair sex occupied no small part of his

thoughts.

"Well, Michael Mitrich, sir?" he said, addressing one of the battalion

commanders who smilingly pressed forward (it was plain that they both

felt happy). "We had our hands full last night. However, I think the

regiment is not a bad one, eh?"

The battalion commander perceived the jovial irony and laughed.

"It would not be turned off the field even on the Tsaritsin Meadow."

"What?" asked the commander.

At that moment, on the road from the town on which signalers had been

posted, two men appeared on horse back. They were an aide-de-camp

followed by a Cossack.

The aide-de-camp was sent to confirm the order which had not been

clearly worded the day before, namely, that the commander-in-chief

wished to see the regiment just in the state in which it had been on the

march: in their greatcoats, and packs, and without any preparation

whatever.

A member of the Hofkriegsrath from Vienna had come to Kutuzov the day

before with proposals and demands for him to join up with the army of

the Archduke Ferdinand and Mack, and Kutuzov, not considering this

junction advisable, meant, among other arguments in support of his view,

to show the Austrian general the wretched state in which the troops

arrived from Russia. With this object he intended to meet the regiment;

so the worse the condition it was in, the better pleased the commander-

in-chief would be. Though the aide-de-camp did not know these

circumstances, he nevertheless delivered the definite order that the men

should be in their greatcoats and in marching order, and that the

commander-in-chief would otherwise be dissatisfied. On hearing this the

regimental commander hung his head, silently shrugged his shoulders, and

spread out his arms with a choleric gesture.

"A fine mess we've made of it!" he remarked.

"There now! Didn't I tell you, Michael Mitrich, that if it was said 'on

the march' it meant in greatcoats?" said he reproachfully to the

battalion commander. "Oh, my God!" he added, stepping resolutely

forward. "Company commanders!" he shouted in a voice accustomed to

command. "Sergeants major!... How soon will he be here?" he asked the

aide-de-camp with a respectful politeness evidently relating to the

personage he was referring to.

"In an hour's time, I should say."

"Shall we have time to change clothes?"

"I don't know, General...."

The regimental commander, going up to the line himself, ordered the

soldiers to change into their greatcoats. The company commanders ran off

to their companies, the sergeants major began bustling (the greatcoats

were not in very good condition), and instantly the squares that had up

to then been in regular order and silent began to sway and stretch and

hum with voices. On all sides soldiers were running to and fro, throwing

up their knapsacks with a jerk of their shoulders and pulling the straps

over their heads, unstrapping their overcoats and drawing the sleeves on

with upraised arms.

In half an hour all was again in order, only the squares had become gray

instead of black. The regimental commander walked with his jerky steps

to the front of the regiment and examined it from a distance.

"Whatever is this? This!" he shouted and stood still. "Commander of the

third company!"

"Commander of the third company wanted by the general!... commander to

the general... third company to the commander." The words passed along

the lines and an adjutant ran to look for the missing officer.

When the eager but misrepeated words had reached their destination in a

cry of: "The general to the third company," the missing officer appeared

from behind his company and, though he was a middle-aged man and not in

the habit of running, trotted awkwardly stumbling on his toes toward the

general. The captain's face showed the uneasiness of a schoolboy who is

told to repeat a lesson he has not learned. Spots appeared on his nose,

the redness of which was evidently due to intemperance, and his mouth

twitched nervously. The general looked the captain up and down as he

came up panting, slackening his pace as he approached.

"You will soon be dressing your men in petticoats! What is this?"

shouted the regimental commander, thrusting forward his jaw and pointing

at a soldier in the ranks of the third company in a greatcoat of bluish

cloth, which contrasted with the others. "What have you been after? The

commander in chief is expected and you leave your place? Eh? I'll teach

you to dress the men in fancy coats for a parade.... Eh...?"

The commander of the company, with his eyes fixed on his superior,

pressed two fingers more and more rigidly to his cap, as if in this

pressure lay his only hope of salvation.

"Well, why don't you speak? Whom have you got there dressed up as a

Hungarian?" said the commander with an austere gibe.

"Your excellency..."

"Well, your excellency, what? Your excellency! But what about your

excellency?... nobody knows."

"Your excellency, it's the officer Dolokhov, who has been reduced to the

ranks," said the captain softly.

"Well? Has he been degraded into a field marshal, or into a soldier? If

a soldier, he should be dressed in regulation uniform like the others."

"Your excellency, you gave him leave yourself, on the march."

"Gave him leave? Leave? That's just like you young men," said the

regimental commander cooling down a little. "Leave indeed.... One says a

word to you and you... What?" he added with renewed irritation, "I beg

you to dress your men decently."

And the commander, turning to look at the adjutant, directed his jerky

steps down the line. He was evidently pleased at his own display of

anger and walking up to the regiment wished to find a further excuse for

wrath. Having snapped at an officer for an unpolished badge, at another

because his line was not straight, he reached the third company.

"H-o-o-w are you standing? Where's your leg? Your leg?" shouted the

commander with a tone of suffering in his voice, while there were still

five men between him and Dolokhov with his bluish-gray uniform.

Dolokhov slowly straightened his bent knee, looking straight with his

clear, insolent eyes in the general's face.

"Why a blue coat? Off with it... Sergeant major! Change his coat... the

ras..." he did not finish.

"General, I must obey orders, but I am not bound to endure..." Dolokhov

hurriedly interrupted.

"No talking in the ranks!... No talking, no talking!"

"Not bound to endure insults," Dolokhov concluded in loud, ringing

tones.

The eyes of the general and the soldier met. The general became silent,

angrily pulling down his tight scarf.

"I request you to have the goodness to change your coat," he said as he

turned away.

CHAPTER II

"He's coming!" shouted the signaler at that moment.

The regimental commander, flushing, ran to his horse, seized the stirrup

with trembling hands, threw his body across the saddle, righted himself,

drew his saber, and with a happy and resolute countenance, opening his

mouth awry, prepared to shout. The regiment fluttered like a bird

preening its plumage and became motionless.

"Att-ention!" shouted the regimental commander in a soul-shaking voice

which expressed joy for himself, severity for the regiment, and welcome

for the approaching chief.

Along the broad country road, edged on both sides by trees, came a high,

light blue Viennese caleche, slightly creaking on its springs and drawn

by six horses at a smart trot. Behind the caleche galloped the suite and

a convoy of Croats. Beside Kutuzov sat an Austrian general, in a white

uniform that looked strange among the Russian black ones. The caleche

stopped in front of the regiment. Kutuzov and the Austrian general were

talking in low voices and Kutuzov smiled slightly as treading heavily he

stepped down from the carriage just as if those two thousand men

breathlessly gazing at him and the regimental commander did not exist.

The word of command rang out, and again the regiment quivered, as with a

jingling sound it presented arms. Then amidst a dead silence the feeble

voice of the commander-in-chief was heard. The regiment roared, "Health

to your ex... len... len... lency!" and again all became silent. At

first Kutuzov stood still while the regiment moved; then he and the

general in white, accompanied by the suite, walked between the ranks.

From the way the regimental commander saluted the commander-in-chief and

devoured him with his eyes, drawing himself up obsequiously, and from

the way he walked through the ranks behind the generals, bending forward

and hardly able to restrain his jerky movements, and from the way he

darted forward at every word or gesture of the commander-in-chief, it

was evident that he performed his duty as a subordinate with even

greater zeal than his duty as a commander. Thanks to the strictness and

assiduity of its commander the regiment, in comparison with others that

had reached Braunau at the same time, was in splendid condition. There

were only 217 sick and stragglers. Everything was in good order except

the boots.

Kutuzov walked through the ranks, sometimes stopping to say a few

friendly words to officers he had known in the Turkish war, sometimes

also to the soldiers. Looking at their boots he several times shook his

head sadly, pointing them out to the Austrian general with an expression

which seemed to say that he was not blaming anyone, but could not help

noticing what a bad state of things it was. The regimental commander ran

forward on each such occasion, fearing to miss a single word of the

commander-in-chief's regarding the regiment. Behind Kutuzov, at a

distance that allowed every softly spoken word to be heard, followed

some twenty men of his suite. These gentlemen talked among themselves

and sometimes laughed. Nearest of all to the commander-in-chief walked a

handsome adjutant. This was Prince Bolkonski. Beside him was his comrade

Nesvitski, a tall staff officer, extremely stout, with a kindly,

smiling, handsome face and moist eyes. Nesvitski could hardly keep from

laughter provoked by a swarthy hussar officer who walked beside him.

This hussar, with a grave face and without a smile or a change in the

expression of his fixed eyes, watched the regimental commander's back

and mimicked his every movement. Each time the commander started and

bent forward, the hussar started and bent forward in exactly the same

manner. Nesvitski laughed and nudged the others to make them look at the

wag.

Kutuzov walked slowly and languidly past thousands of eyes which were

starting from their sockets to watch their chief. On reaching the third

company he suddenly stopped. His suite, not having expected this,

involuntarily came closer to him.

"Ah, Timokhin!" said he, recognizing the red-nosed captain who had been

reprimanded on account of the blue greatcoat.

One would have thought it impossible for a man to stretch himself more

than Timokhin had done when he was reprimanded by the regimental

commander, but now that the commander-in-chief addressed him he drew

himself up to such an extent that it seemed he could not have sustained

it had the commander-in-chief continued to look at him, and so Kutuzov,

who evidently understood his case and wished him nothing but good,

quickly turned away, a scarcely perceptible smile flitting over his

scarred and puffy face.

"Another Ismail comrade," said he. "A brave officer! Are you satisfied

with him?" he asked the regimental commander.

And the latter--unconscious that he was being reflected in the hussar

officer as in a looking glass--started, moved forward, and answered:

"Highly satisfied, your excellency!"

"We all have our weaknesses," said Kutuzov smiling and walking away from

him. "He used to have a predilection for Bacchus."

The regimental commander was afraid he might be blamed for this and did

not answer. The hussar at that moment noticed the face of the red-nosed

captain and his drawn-in stomach, and mimicked his expression and pose

with such exactitude that Nesvitski could not help laughing. Kutuzov

turned round. The officer evidently had complete control of his face,

and while Kutuzov was turning managed to make a grimace and then assume

a most serious, deferential, and innocent expression.

The third company was the last, and Kutuzov pondered, apparently trying

to recollect something. Prince Andrew stepped forward from among the

suite and said in French:

"You told me to remind you of the officer Dolokhov, reduced to the ranks

in this regiment."

"Where is Dolokhov?" asked Kutuzov.

Dolokhov, who had already changed into a soldier's gray greatcoat, did

not wait to be called. The shapely figure of the fair-haired soldier,

with his clear blue eyes, stepped forward from the ranks, went up to the

commander in chief, and presented arms.

"Have you a complaint to make?" Kutuzov asked with a slight frown.

"This is Dolokhov," said Prince Andrew.

"Ah!" said Kutuzov. "I hope this will be a lesson to you. Do your duty.

The Emperor is gracious, and I shan't forget you if you deserve well."

The clear blue eyes looked at the commander-in-chief just as boldly as

they had looked at the regimental commander, seeming by their expression

to tear open the veil of convention that separates a commander-in-chief

so widely from a private.

"One thing I ask of your excellency," Dolokhov said in his firm,

ringing, deliberate voice. "I ask an opportunity to atone for my fault

and prove my devotion to His Majesty the Emperor and to Russia!"

Kutuzov turned away. The same smile of the eyes with which he had turned

from Captain Timokhin again flitted over his face. He turned away with a

grimace as if to say that everything Dolokhov had said to him and

everything he could say had long been known to him, that he was weary of

it and it was not at all what he wanted. He turned away and went to the

carriage.

The regiment broke up into companies, which went to their appointed

quarters near Braunau, where they hoped to receive boots and clothes and

to rest after their hard marches.

"You won't bear me a grudge, Prokhor Ignatych?" said the regimental

commander, overtaking the third company on its way to its quarters and

riding up to Captain Timokhin who was walking in front. (The regimental

commander's face now that the inspection was happily over beamed with

irrepressible delight.) "It's in the Emperor's service... it can't be

helped... one is sometimes a bit hasty on parade... I am the first to

apologize, you know me!... He was very pleased!" And he held out his

hand to the captain.

"Don't mention it, General, as if I'd be so bold!" replied the captain,

his nose growing redder as he gave a smile which showed where two front

teeth were missing that had been knocked out by the butt end of a gun at

Ismail.

"And tell Mr. Dolokhov that I won't forget him--he may be quite easy.

And tell me, please--I've been meaning to ask--how is he behaving

himself, and in general..."

"As far as the service goes he is quite punctilious, your excellency;

but his character..." said Timokhin.

"And what about his character?" asked the regimental commander.

"It's different on different days," answered the captain. "One day he is

sensible, well educated, and good-natured, and the next he's a wild

beast.... In Poland, if you please, he nearly killed a Jew."

"Oh, well, well!" remarked the regimental commander. "Still, one must

have pity on a young man in misfortune. You know he has important

connections... Well, then, you just..."

"I will, your excellency," said Timokhin, showing by his smile that he

understood his commander's wish.

"Well, of course, of course!"

The regimental commander sought out Dolokhov in the ranks and, reining

in his horse, said to him:

"After the next affair... epaulettes."

Dolokhov looked round but did not say anything, nor did the mocking

smile on his lips change.

"Well, that's all right," continued the regimental commander. "A cup of

vodka for the men from me," he added so that the soldiers could hear. "I

thank you all! God be praised!" and he rode past that company and

overtook the next one.

"Well, he's really a good fellow, one can serve under him," said

Timokhin to the subaltern beside him.

"In a word, a hearty one..." said the subaltern, laughing (the

regimental commander was nicknamed King of Hearts).

The cheerful mood of their officers after the inspection infected the

soldiers. The company marched on gaily. The soldiers' voices could be

heard on every side.

"And they said Kutuzov was blind of one eye?"

"And so he is! Quite blind!"

"No, friend, he is sharper-eyed than you are. Boots and leg bands... he

noticed everything..."

"When he looked at my feet, friend... well, thinks I..."

"And that other one with him, the Austrian, looked as if he were smeared

with chalk--as white as flour! I suppose they polish him up as they do

the guns."

"I say, Fedeshon!... Did he say when the battles are to begin? You were

near him. Everybody said that Buonaparte himself was at Braunau."

"Buonaparte himself!... Just listen to the fool, what he doesn't know!

The Prussians are up in arms now. The Austrians, you see, are putting

them down. When they've been put down, the war with Buonaparte will

begin. And he says Buonaparte is in Braunau! Shows you're a fool. You'd

better listen more carefully!"

"What devils these quartermasters are! See, the fifth company is turning

into the village already... they will have their buckwheat cooked before

we reach our quarters."

"Give me a biscuit, you devil!"

"And did you give me tobacco yesterday? That's just it, friend! Ah,

well, never mind, here you are."

"They might call a halt here or we'll have to do another four miles

without eating."

"Wasn't it fine when those Germans gave us lifts! You just sit still and

are drawn along."

"And here, friend, the people are quite beggarly. There they all seemed

to be Poles--all under the Russian crown--but here they're all regular

Germans."

"Singers to the front" came the captain's order.

And from the different ranks some twenty men ran to the front. A

drummer, their leader, turned round facing the singers, and flourishing

his arm, began a long-drawn-out soldiers' song, commencing with the

words: "Morning dawned, the sun was rising," and concluding: "On then,

brothers, on to glory, led by Father Kamenski." This song had been

composed in the Turkish campaign and now being sung in Austria, the only

change being that the words "Father Kamenski" were replaced by "Father

Kutuzov."

Having jerked out these last words as soldiers do and waved his arms as

if flinging something to the ground, the drummer--a lean, handsome

soldier of forty--looked sternly at the singers and screwed up his eyes.

Then having satisfied himself that all eyes were fixed on him, he raised

both arms as if carefully lifting some invisible but precious object

above his head and, holding it there for some seconds, suddenly flung it

down and began:

"Oh, my bower, oh, my bower...!"

"Oh, my bower new...!" chimed in twenty voices, and the castanet player,

in spite of the burden of his equipment, rushed out to the front and,

walking backwards before the company, jerked his shoulders and

flourished his castanets as if threatening someone. The soldiers,

swinging their arms and keeping time spontaneously, marched with long

steps. Behind the company the sound of wheels, the creaking of springs,

and the tramp of horses' hoofs were heard. Kutuzov and his suite were

returning to the town. The commander-in-chief made a sign that the men

should continue to march at ease, and he and all his suite showed

pleasure at the sound of the singing and the sight of the dancing

soldier and the gay and smartly marching men. In the second file from

the right flank, beside which the carriage passed the company, a blue-

eyed soldier involuntarily attracted notice. It was Dolokhov marching

with particular grace and boldness in time to the song and looking at

those driving past as if he pitied all who were not at that moment

marching with the company. The hussar cornet of Kutuzov's suite who had

mimicked the regimental commander, fell back from the carriage and rode

up to Dolokhov.

Hussar cornet Zherkov had at one time, in Petersburg, belonged to the

wild set led by Dolokhov. Zherkov had met Dolokhov abroad as a private

and had not seen fit to recognize him. But now that Kutuzov had spoken

to the gentleman ranker, he addressed him with the cordiality of an old

friend.

"My dear fellow, how are you?" said he through the singing, making his

horse keep pace with the company.

"How am I?" Dolokhov answered coldly. "I am as you see."

The lively song gave a special flavor to the tone of free and easy

gaiety with which Zherkov spoke, and to the intentional coldness of

Dolokhov's reply.

"And how do you get on with the officers?" inquired Zherkov.

"All right. They are good fellows. And how have you wriggled onto the

staff?"

"I was attached; I'm on duty."

Both were silent.

"She let the hawk fly upward from her wide right sleeve," went the song,

arousing an involuntary sensation of courage and cheerfulness. Their

conversation would probably have been different but for the effect of

that song.

"Is it true that Austrians have been beaten?" asked Dolokhov.

"The devil only knows! They say so."

"I'm glad," answered Dolokhov briefly and clearly, as the song demanded.

"I say, come round some evening and we'll have a game of faro!" said

Zherkov.

"Why, have you too much money?"

"Do come."

"I can't. I've sworn not to. I won't drink and won't play till I get

reinstated."

"Well, that's only till the first engagement."

"We shall see."

They were again silent.

"Come if you need anything. One can at least be of use on the staff..."

Dolokhov smiled. "Don't trouble. If I want anything, I won't beg--I'll

take it!"

"Well, never mind; I only..."

"And I only..."

"Good-bye."

"Good health..."

"It's a long, long way. To my native land..."

Zherkov touched his horse with the spurs; it pranced excitedly from foot

to foot uncertain with which to start, then settled down, galloped past

the company, and overtook the carriage, still keeping time to the song.

CHAPTER III

On returning from the review, Kutuzov took the Austrian general into his

private room and, calling his adjutant, asked for some papers relating

to the condition of the troops on their arrival, and the letters that

had come from the Archduke Ferdinand, who was in command of the advanced

army. Prince Andrew Bolkonski came into the room with the required

papers. Kutuzov and the Austrian member of the Hofkriegsrath were

sitting at the table on which a plan was spread out.

"Ah!..." said Kutuzov glancing at Bolkonski as if by this exclamation he

was asking the adjutant to wait, and he went on with the conversation in

French.

"All I can say, General," said he with a pleasant elegance of expression

and intonation that obliged one to listen to each deliberately spoken

word. It was evident that Kutuzov himself listened with pleasure to his

own voice. "All I can say, General, is that if the matter depended on my

personal wishes, the will of His Majesty the Emperor Francis would have

been fulfilled long ago. I should long ago have joined the archduke. And

believe me on my honour that to me personally it would be a pleasure to

hand over the supreme command of the army into the hands of a better

informed and more skillful general--of whom Austria has so many--and to

lay down all this heavy responsibility. But circumstances are sometimes

too strong for us, General."

And Kutuzov smiled in a way that seemed to say, "You are quite at

liberty not to believe me and I don't even care whether you do or not,

but you have no grounds for telling me so. And that is the whole point."

The Austrian general looked dissatisfied, but had no option but to reply

in the same tone.

"On the contrary," he said, in a querulous and angry tone that

contrasted with his flattering words, "on the contrary, your

excellency's participation in the common action is highly valued by His

Majesty; but we think the present delay is depriving the splendid

Russian troops and their commander of the laurels they have been

accustomed to win in their battles," he concluded his evidently

prearranged sentence.

Kutuzov bowed with the same smile.

"But that is my conviction, and judging by the last letter with which

His Highness the Archduke Ferdinand has honored me, I imagine that the

Austrian troops, under the direction of so skillful a leader as General

Mack, have by now already gained a decisive victory and no longer need

our aid," said Kutuzov.

The general frowned. Though there was no definite news of an Austrian

defeat, there were many circumstances confirming the unfavorable rumors

that were afloat, and so Kutuzov's suggestion of an Austrian victory

sounded much like irony. But Kutuzov went on blandly smiling with the

same expression, which seemed to say that he had a right to suppose so.

And, in fact, the last letter he had received from Mack's army informed

him of a victory and stated strategically the position of the army was

very favorable.

"Give me that letter," said Kutuzov turning to Prince Andrew. "Please

have a look at it"--and Kutuzov with an ironical smile about the corners

of his mouth read to the Austrian general the following passage, in

German, from the Archduke Ferdinand's letter:

We have fully concentrated forces of nearly seventy thousand men with

which to attack and defeat the enemy should he cross the Lech. Also, as

we are masters of Ulm, we cannot be deprived of the advantage of

commanding both sides of the Danube, so that should the enemy not cross

the Lech, we can cross the Danube, throw ourselves on his line of

communications, recross the river lower down, and frustrate his

intention should he try to direct his whole force against our faithful

ally. We shall therefore confidently await the moment when the Imperial

Russian army will be fully equipped, and shall then, in conjunction with

it, easily find a way to prepare for the enemy the fate he deserves.

Kutuzov sighed deeply on finishing this paragraph and looked at the

member of the Hofkriegsrath mildly and attentively.

"But you know the wise maxim your excellency, advising one to expect the

worst," said the Austrian general, evidently wishing to have done with

jests and to come to business. He involuntarily looked round at the

aide-de-camp.

"Excuse me, General," interrupted Kutuzov, also turning to Prince

Andrew. "Look here, my dear fellow, get from Kozlovski all the reports

from our scouts. Here are two letters from Count Nostitz and here is one

from His Highness the Archduke Ferdinand and here are these," he said,

handing him several papers, "make a neat memorandum in French out of all

this, showing all the news we have had of the movements of the Austrian

army, and then give it to his excellency."

Prince Andrew bowed his head in token of having understood from the

first not only what had been said but also what Kutuzov would have liked

to tell him. He gathered up the papers and with a bow to both, stepped

softly over the carpet and went out into the waiting room.

Though not much time had passed since Prince Andrew had left Russia, he

had changed greatly during that period. In the expression of his face,

in his movements, in his walk, scarcely a trace was left of his former

affected languor and indolence. He now looked like a man who has time to

think of the impression he makes on others, but is occupied with

agreeable and interesting work. His face expressed more satisfaction

with himself and those around him, his smile and glance were brighter

and more attractive.

Kutuzov, whom he had overtaken in Poland, had received him very kindly,

promised not to forget him, distinguished him above the other adjutants,

and had taken him to Vienna and given him the more serious commissions.

From Vienna Kutuzov wrote to his old comrade, Prince Andrew's father.

Your son bids fair to become an officer distinguished by his industry,

firmness, and expedition. I consider myself fortunate to have such a

subordinate by me.

On Kutuzov's staff, among his fellow officers and in the army generally,

Prince Andrew had, as he had had in Petersburg society, two quite

opposite reputations. Some, a minority, acknowledged him to be different

from themselves and from everyone else, expected great things of him,

listened to him, admired, and imitated him, and with them Prince Andrew

was natural and pleasant. Others, the majority, disliked him and

considered him conceited, cold, and disagreeable. But among these people

Prince Andrew knew how to take his stand so that they respected and even

feared him.

Coming out of Kutuzov's room into the waiting room with the papers in

his hand Prince Andrew came up to his comrade, the aide-de-camp on duty,

Kozlovski, who was sitting at the window with a book.

"Well, Prince?" asked Kozlovski.

"I am ordered to write a memorandum explaining why we are not

advancing."

"And why is it?"

Prince Andrew shrugged his shoulders.

"Any news from Mack?"

"No."

"If it were true that he has been beaten, news would have come."

"Probably," said Prince Andrew moving toward the outer door.

But at that instant a tall Austrian general in a greatcoat, with the

order of Maria Theresa on his neck and a black bandage round his head,

who had evidently just arrived, entered quickly, slamming the door.

Prince Andrew stopped short.

"Commander in Chief Kutuzov?" said the newly arrived general speaking

quickly with a harsh German accent, looking to both sides and advancing

straight toward the inner door.

"The commander-in-chief is engaged," said Kozlovski, going hurriedly up

to the unknown general and blocking his way to the door. "Whom shall I

announce?"

The unknown general looked disdainfully down at Kozlovski, who was

rather short, as if surprised that anyone should not know him.

"The commander-in-chief is engaged," repeated Kozlovski calmly.

The general's face clouded, his lips quivered and trembled. He took out

a notebook, hurriedly scribbled something in pencil, tore out the leaf,

gave it to Kozlovski, stepped quickly to the window, and threw himself

into a chair, gazing at those in the room as if asking, "Why do they

look at me?" Then he lifted his head, stretched his neck as if he

intended to say something, but immediately, with affected indifference,

began to hum to himself, producing a queer sound which immediately broke

off. The door of the private room opened and Kutuzov appeared in the

doorway. The general with the bandaged head bent forward as though

running away from some danger, and, making long, quick strides with his

thin legs, went up to Kutuzov.

"Vous voyez le malheureux Mack," he uttered in a broken voice.

Kutuzov's face as he stood in the open doorway remained perfectly

immobile for a few moments. Then wrinkles ran over his face like a wave

and his forehead became smooth again, he bowed his head respectfully,

closed his eyes, silently let Mack enter his room before him, and closed

the door himself behind him.

The report which had been circulated that the Austrians had been beaten

and that the whole army had surrendered at Ulm proved to be correct.

Within half an hour adjutants had been sent in various directions with

orders which showed that the Russian troops, who had hitherto been

inactive, would also soon have to meet the enemy.

Prince Andrew was one of those rare staff officers whose chief interest

lay in the general progress of the war. When he saw Mack and heard the

details of his disaster he understood that half the campaign was lost,

understood all the difficulties of the Russian army's position, and

vividly imagined what awaited it and the part he would have to play.

Involuntarily he felt a joyful agitation at the thought of the

humiliation of arrogant Austria and that in a week's time he might,

perhaps, see and take part in the first Russian encounter with the

French since Suvorov met them. He feared that Bonaparte's genius might

outweigh all the courage of the Russian troops, and at the same time

could not admit the idea of his hero being disgraced.

Excited and irritated by these thoughts Prince Andrew went toward his

room to write to his father, to whom he wrote every day. In the corridor

he met Nesvitski, with whom he shared a room, and the wag Zherkov; they

were as usual laughing.

"Why are you so glum?" asked Nesvitski noticing Prince Andrew's pale

face and glittering eyes.

"There's nothing to be gay about," answered Bolkonski.

Just as Prince Andrew met Nesvitski and Zherkov, there came toward them

from the other end of the corridor, Strauch, an Austrian general who on

Kutuzov's staff in charge of the provisioning of the Russian army, and

the member of the Hofkriegsrath who had arrived the previous evening.

There was room enough in the wide corridor for the generals to pass the

three officers quite easily, but Zherkov, pushing Nesvitski aside with

his arm, said in a breathless voice,

"They're coming!... they're coming!... Stand aside, make way, please

make way!"

The generals were passing by, looking as if they wished to avoid

embarrassing attentions. On the face of the wag Zherkov there suddenly

appeared a stupid smile of glee which he seemed unable to suppress.

"Your excellency," said he in German, stepping forward and addressing

the Austrian general, "I have the honor to congratulate you."

He bowed his head and scraped first with one foot and then with the

other, awkwardly, like a child at a dancing lesson.

The member of the Hofkriegsrath looked at him severely but, seeing the

seriousness of his stupid smile, could not but give him a moment's

attention. He screwed up his eyes showing that he was listening.

"I have the honor to congratulate you. General Mack has arrived, quite

well, only a little bruised just here," he added, pointing with a

beaming smile to his head.

The general frowned, turned away, and went on.

"Gott, wie naiv!" \* said he angrily, after he had gone a few steps.

\* "Good God, what simplicity!"

Nesvitski with a laugh threw his arms round Prince Andrew, but

Bolkonski, turning still paler, pushed him away with an angry look and

turned to Zherkov. The nervous irritation aroused by the appearance of

Mack, the news of his defeat, and the thought of what lay before the

Russian army found vent in anger at Zherkov's untimely jest.

"If you, sir, choose to make a buffoon of yourself," he said sharply,

with a slight trembling of the lower jaw, "I can't prevent your doing

so; but I warn you that if you dare to play the fool in my presence, I

will teach you to behave yourself."

Nesvitski and Zherkov were so surprised by this outburst that they gazed

at Bolkonski silently with wide-open eyes.

"What's the matter? I only congratulated them," said Zherkov.

"I am not jesting with you; please be silent!" cried Bolkonski, and

taking Nesvitski's arm he left Zherkov, who did not know what to say.

"Come, what's the matter, old fellow?" said Nesvitski trying to soothe

him.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Prince Andrew standing still in his

excitement. "Don't you understand that either we are officers serving

our Tsar and our country, rejoicing in the successes and grieving at the

misfortunes of our common cause, or we are merely lackeys who care

nothing for their master's business. Quarante mille hommes massacres et

l'armee de nos allies detruite, et vous trouvez la le mot pour rire," \*

he said, as if strengthening his views by this French sentence. "C'est

bien pour un garcon de rien comme cet individu dont vous avez fait un

ami, mais pas pour vous, pas pour vous. \*(2) Only a hobbledehoy could

amuse himself in this way," he added in Russian--but pronouncing the

word with a French accent--having noticed that Zherkov could still hear

him.

\* "Forty thousand men massacred and the army of our allies destroyed,

and you find that a cause for jesting!"

\* (2) "It is all very well for that good-for-nothing fellow of whom you

have made a friend, but not for you, not for you."

He waited a moment to see whether the cornet would answer, but he turned

and went out of the corridor.

CHAPTER IV

The Pavlograd Hussars were stationed two miles from Braunau. The

squadron in which Nicholas Rostov served as a cadet was quartered in the

German village of Salzeneck. The best quarters in the village were

assigned to cavalry-captain Denisov, the squadron commander, known

throughout the whole cavalry division as Vaska Denisov. Cadet Rostov,

ever since he had overtaken the regiment in Poland, had lived with the

squadron commander.

On October 11, the day when all was astir at headquarters over the news

of Mack's defeat, the camp life of the officers of this squadron was

proceeding as usual. Denisov, who had been losing at cards all night,

had not yet come home when Rostov rode back early in the morning from a

foraging expedition. Rostov in his cadet uniform, with a jerk to his

horse, rode up to the porch, swung his leg over the saddle with a supple

youthful movement, stood for a moment in the stirrup as if loathe to

part from his horse, and at last sprang down and called to his orderly.

"Ah, Bondarenko, dear friend!" said he to the hussar who rushed up

headlong to the horse. "Walk him up and down, my dear fellow," he

continued, with that gay brotherly cordiality which goodhearted young

people show to everyone when they are happy.

"Yes, your excellency," answered the Ukrainian gaily, tossing his head.

"Mind, walk him up and down well!"

Another hussar also rushed toward the horse, but Bondarenko had already

thrown the reins of the snaffle bridle over the horse's head. It was

evident that the cadet was liberal with his tips and that it paid to

serve him. Rostov patted the horse's neck and then his flank, and

lingered for a moment.

"Splendid! What a horse he will be!" he thought with a smile, and

holding up his saber, his spurs jingling, he ran up the steps of the

porch. His landlord, who in a waistcoat and a pointed cap, pitchfork in

hand, was clearing manure from the cowhouse, looked out, and his face

immediately brightened on seeing Rostov. "Schon gut Morgen! Schon gut

Morgen!" \* he said winking with a merry smile, evidently pleased to

greet the young man.

\* "A very good morning! A very good morning!"

"Schon fleissig?" \* said Rostov with the same gay brotherly smile which

did not leave his eager face. "Hoch Oestreicher! Hoch Russen! Kaiser

Alexander hoch!" \*(2) said he, quoting words often repeated by the

German landlord.

\* "Busy already?"

\* (2) "Hurrah for the Austrians! Hurrah for the Russians! Hurrah for

Emperor Alexander!"

The German laughed, came out of the cowshed, pulled off his cap, and

waving it above his head cried:

"Und die ganze Welt hoch!" \*

\* "And hurrah for the whole world!"

Rostov waved his cap above his head like the German and cried laughing,

"Und vivat die ganze Welt!" Though neither the German cleaning his

cowshed nor Rostov back with his platoon from foraging for hay had any

reason for rejoicing, they looked at each other with joyful delight and

brotherly love, wagged their heads in token of their mutual affection,

and parted smiling, the German returning to his cowshed and Rostov going

to the cottage he occupied with Denisov.

"What about your master?" he asked Lavrushka, Denisov's orderly, whom

all the regiment knew for a rogue.

"Hasn't been in since the evening. Must have been losing," answered

Lavrushka. "I know by now, if he wins he comes back early to brag about

it, but if he stays out till morning it means he's lost and will come

back in a rage. Will you have coffee?"

"Yes, bring some."

Ten minutes later Lavrushka brought the coffee. "He's coming!" said he.

"Now for trouble!" Rostov looked out of the window and saw Denisov

coming home. Denisov was a small man with a red face, sparkling black

eyes, and black tousled mustache and hair. He wore an unfastened cloak,

wide breeches hanging down in creases, and a crumpled shako on the back

of his head. He came up to the porch gloomily, hanging his head.

"Lavwuska!" he shouted loudly and angrily, "take it off, blockhead!"

"Well, I am taking it off," replied Lavrushka's voice.

"Ah, you're up already," said Denisov, entering the room.

"Long ago," answered Rostov, "I have already been for the hay, and have

seen Fraulein Mathilde."

"Weally! And I've been losing, bwother. I lost yesterday like a damned

fool!" cried Denisov, not pronouncing his r's. "Such ill luck! Such ill

luck. As soon as you left, it began and went on. Hullo there! Tea!"

Puckering up his face though smiling, and showing his short strong

teeth, he began with stubby fingers of both hands to ruffle up his thick

tangled black hair.

"And what devil made me go to that wat?" (an officer nicknamed "the

rat") he said, rubbing his forehead and whole face with both hands.

"Just fancy, he didn't let me win a single cahd, not one cahd."

He took the lighted pipe that was offered to him, gripped it in his

fist, and tapped it on the floor, making the sparks fly, while he

continued to shout.

"He lets one win the singles and collahs it as soon as one doubles it;

gives the singles and snatches the doubles!"

He scattered the burning tobacco, smashed the pipe, and threw it away.

Then he remained silent for a while, and all at once looked cheerfully

with his glittering, black eyes at Rostov.

"If at least we had some women here; but there's nothing foh one to do

but dwink. If we could only get to fighting soon. Hullo, who's there?"

he said, turning to the door as he heard a tread of heavy boots and the

clinking of spurs that came to a stop, and a respectful cough.

"The squadron quartermaster!" said Lavrushka.

Denisov's face puckered still more.

"Wetched!" he muttered, throwing down a purse with some gold in it.

"Wostov, deah fellow, just see how much there is left and shove the

purse undah the pillow," he said, and went out to the quartermaster.

Rostov took the money and, mechanically arranging the old and new coins

in separate piles, began counting them.

"Ah! Telyanin! How d'ye do? They plucked me last night," came Denisov's

voice from the next room.

"Where? At Bykov's, at the rat's... I knew it," replied a piping voice,

and Lieutenant Telyanin, a small officer of the same squadron, entered

the room.

Rostov thrust the purse under the pillow and shook the damp little hand

which was offered him. Telyanin for some reason had been transferred

from the Guards just before this campaign. He behaved very well in the

regiment but was not liked; Rostov especially detested him and was

unable to overcome or conceal his groundless antipathy to the man.

"Well, young cavalryman, how is my Rook behaving?" he asked. (Rook was a

young horse Telyanin had sold to Rostov.)

The lieutenant never looked the man he was speaking to straight in the

face; his eyes continually wandered from one object to another.

"I saw you riding this morning..." he added.

"Oh, he's all right, a good horse," answered Rostov, though the horse

for which he had paid seven hundred rubbles was not worth half that sum.

"He's begun to go a little lame on the left foreleg," he added.

"The hoof's cracked! That's nothing. I'll teach you what to do and show

you what kind of rivet to use."

"Yes, please do," said Rostov.

"I'll show you, I'll show you! It's not a secret. And it's a horse

you'll thank me for."

"Then I'll have it brought round," said Rostov wishing to avoid

Telyanin, and he went out to give the order.

In the passage Denisov, with a pipe, was squatting on the threshold

facing the quartermaster who was reporting to him. On seeing Rostov,

Denisov screwed up his face and pointing over his shoulder with his

thumb to the room where Telyanin was sitting, he frowned and gave a

shudder of disgust.

"Ugh! I don't like that fellow," he said, regardless of the

quartermaster's presence.

Rostov shrugged his shoulders as much as to say: "Nor do I, but what's

one to do?" and, having given his order, he returned to Telyanin.

Telyanin was sitting in the same indolent pose in which Rostov had left

him, rubbing his small white hands.

"Well there certainly are disgusting people," thought Rostov as he

entered.

"Have you told them to bring the horse?" asked Telyanin, getting up and

looking carelessly about him.

"I have."

"Let us go ourselves. I only came round to ask Denisov about yesterday's

order. Have you got it, Denisov?"

"Not yet. But where are you off to?"

"I want to teach this young man how to shoe a horse," said Telyanin.

They went through the porch and into the stable. The lieutenant

explained how to rivet the hoof and went away to his own quarters.

When Rostov went back there was a bottle of vodka and a sausage on the

table. Denisov was sitting there scratching with his pen on a sheet of

paper. He looked gloomily in Rostov's face and said: "I am witing to

her."

He leaned his elbows on the table with his pen in his hand and,

evidently glad of a chance to say quicker in words what he wanted to

write, told Rostov the contents of his letter.

"You see, my fwiend," he said, "we sleep when we don't love. We are

childwen of the dust... but one falls in love and one is a God, one is

pua' as on the first day of cweation... Who's that now? Send him to the

devil, I'm busy!" he shouted to Lavrushka, who went up to him not in the

least abashed.

"Who should it be? You yourself told him to come. It's the quartermaster

for the money."

Denisov frowned and was about to shout some reply but stopped.

"Wetched business," he muttered to himself. "How much is left in the

puhse?" he asked, turning to Rostov.

"Seven new and three old imperials."

"Oh, it's wetched! Well, what are you standing there for, you sca'cwow?

Call the quahtehmasteh," he shouted to Lavrushka.

"Please, Denisov, let me lend you some: I have some, you know," said

Rostov, blushing.

"Don't like bowwowing from my own fellows, I don't," growled Denisov.

"But if you won't accept money from me like a comrade, you will offend

me. Really I have some," Rostov repeated.

"No, I tell you."

And Denisov went to the bed to get the purse from under the pillow.

"Where have you put it, Wostov?"

"Under the lower pillow."

"It's not there."

Denisov threw both pillows on the floor. The purse was not there.

"That's a miwacle."

"Wait, haven't you dropped it?" said Rostov, picking up the pillows one

at a time and shaking them.

He pulled off the quilt and shook it. The purse was not there.

"Dear me, can I have forgotten? No, I remember thinking that you kept it

under your head like a treasure," said Rostov. "I put it just here.

Where is it?" he asked, turning to Lavrushka.

"I haven't been in the room. It must be where you put it."

"But it isn't?..."

"You're always like that; you thwow a thing down anywhere and forget it.

Feel in your pockets."

"No, if I hadn't thought of it being a treasure," said Rostov, "but I

remember putting it there."

Lavrushka turned all the bedding over, looked under the bed and under

the table, searched everywhere, and stood still in the middle of the

room. Denisov silently watched Lavrushka's movements, and when the

latter threw up his arms in surprise saying it was nowhere to be found

Denisov glanced at Rostov.

"Wostov, you've not been playing schoolboy twicks..."

Rostov felt Denisov's gaze fixed on him, raised his eyes, and instantly

dropped them again. All the blood which had seemed congested somewhere

below his throat rushed to his face and eyes. He could not draw breath.

"And there hasn't been anyone in the room except the lieutenant and

yourselves. It must be here somewhere," said Lavrushka.

"Now then, you devil's puppet, look alive and hunt for it!" shouted

Denisov, suddenly, turning purple and rushing at the man with a

threatening gesture. "If the purse isn't found I'll flog you, I'll flog

you all."

Rostov, his eyes avoiding Denisov, began buttoning his coat, buckled on

his saber, and put on his cap.

"I must have that purse, I tell you," shouted Denisov, shaking his

orderly by the shoulders and knocking him against the wall.

"Denisov, let him alone, I know who has taken it," said Rostov, going

toward the door without raising his eyes. Denisov paused, thought a

moment, and, evidently understanding what Rostov hinted at, seized his

arm.

"Nonsense!" he cried, and the veins on his forehead and neck stood out

like cords. "You are mad, I tell you. I won't allow it. The purse is

here! I'll flay this scoundwel alive, and it will be found."

"I know who has taken it," repeated Rostov in an unsteady voice, and

went to the door.

"And I tell you, don't you dahe to do it!" shouted Denisov, rushing at

the cadet to restrain him.

But Rostov pulled away his arm and, with as much anger as though Denisov

were his worst enemy, firmly fixed his eyes directly on his face.

"Do you understand what you're saying?" he said in a trembling voice.

"There was no one else in the room except myself. So that if it is not

so, then..."

He could not finish, and ran out of the room.

"Ah, may the devil take you and evewybody," were the last words Rostov

heard.

Rostov went to Telyanin's quarters.

"The master is not in, he's gone to headquarters," said Telyanin's

orderly. "Has something happened?" he added, surprised at the cadet's

troubled face.

"No, nothing."

"You've only just missed him," said the orderly.

The headquarters were situated two miles away from Salzeneck, and

Rostov, without returning home, took a horse and rode there. There was

an inn in the village which the officers frequented. Rostov rode up to

it and saw Telyanin's horse at the porch.

In the second room of the inn the lieutenant was sitting over a dish of

sausages and a bottle of wine.

"Ah, you've come here too, young man!" he said, smiling and raising his

eyebrows.

"Yes," said Rostov as if it cost him a great deal to utter the word; and

he sat down at the nearest table.

Both were silent. There were two Germans and a Russian officer in the

room. No one spoke and the only sounds heard were the clatter of knives

and the munching of the lieutenant.

When Telyanin had finished his lunch he took out of his pocket a double

purse and, drawing its rings aside with his small, white, turned-up

fingers, drew out a gold imperial, and lifting his eyebrows gave it to

the waiter.

"Please be quick," he said.

The coin was a new one. Rostov rose and went up to Telyanin.

"Allow me to look at your purse," he said in a low, almost inaudible,

voice.

With shifting eyes but eyebrows still raised, Telyanin handed him the

purse.

"Yes, it's a nice purse. Yes, yes," he said, growing suddenly pale, and

added, "Look at it, young man."

Rostov took the purse in his hand, examined it and the money in it, and

looked at Telyanin. The lieutenant was looking about in his usual way

and suddenly seemed to grow very merry.

"If we get to Vienna I'll get rid of it there but in these wretched

little towns there's nowhere to spend it," said he. "Well, let me have

it, young man, I'm going."

Rostov did not speak.

"And you? Are you going to have lunch too? They feed you quite decently

here," continued Telyanin. "Now then, let me have it."

He stretched out his hand to take hold of the purse. Rostov let go of

it. Telyanin took the purse and began carelessly slipping it into the

pocket of his riding breeches, with his eyebrows lifted and his mouth

slightly open, as if to say, "Yes, yes, I am putting my purse in my

pocket and that's quite simple and is no one else's business."

"Well, young man?" he said with a sigh, and from under his lifted brows

he glanced into Rostov's eyes.

Some flash as of an electric spark shot from Telyanin's eyes to Rostov's

and back, and back again and again in an instant.

"Come here," said Rostov, catching hold of Telyanin's arm and almost

dragging him to the window. "That money is Denisov's; you took it..." he

whispered just above Telyanin's ear.

"What? What? How dare you? What?" said Telyanin.

But these words came like a piteous, despairing cry and an entreaty for

pardon. As soon as Rostov heard them, an enormous load of doubt fell

from him. He was glad, and at the same instant began to pity the

miserable man who stood before him, but the task he had begun had to be

completed.

"Heaven only knows what the people here may imagine," muttered Telyanin,

taking up his cap and moving toward a small empty room. "We must have an

explanation..."

"I know it and shall prove it," said Rostov.

"I..."

Every muscle of Telyanin's pale, terrified face began to quiver, his

eyes still shifted from side to side but with a downward look not rising

to Rostov's face, and his sobs were audible.

"Count!... Don't ruin a young fellow... here is this wretched money,

take it..." He threw it on the table. "I have an old father and

mother!..."

Rostov took the money, avoiding Telyanin's eyes, and went out of the

room without a word. But at the door he stopped and then retraced his

steps. "O God," he said with tears in his eyes, "how could you do it?"

"Count..." said Telyanin drawing nearer to him.

"Don't touch me," said Rostov, drawing back. "If you need it, take the

money," and he threw the purse to him and ran out of the inn.

CHAPTER V

That same evening there was an animated discussion among the squadron's

officers in Denisov's quarters.

"And I tell you, Rostov, that you must apologize to the colonel!" said a

tall, grizzly-haired staff captain, with enormous mustaches and many

wrinkles on his large features, to Rostov who was crimson with

excitement.

The staff captain, Kirsten, had twice been reduced to the ranks for

affairs of honor and had twice regained his commission.

"I will allow no one to call me a liar!" cried Rostov. "He told me I

lied, and I told him he lied. And there it rests. He may keep me on duty

every day, or may place me under arrest, but no one can make me

apologize, because if he, as commander of this regiment, thinks it

beneath his dignity to give me satisfaction, then..."

"You just wait a moment, my dear fellow, and listen," interrupted the

staff captain in his deep bass, calmly stroking his long mustache. "You

tell the colonel in the presence of other officers that an officer has

stolen..."

"I'm not to blame that the conversation began in the presence of other

officers. Perhaps I ought not to have spoken before them, but I am not a

diplomatist. That's why I joined the hussars, thinking that here one

would not need finesse; and he tells me that I am lying--so let him give

me satisfaction..."

"That's all right. No one thinks you a coward, but that's not the point.

Ask Denisov whether it is not out of the question for a cadet to demand

satisfaction of his regimental commander?"

Denisov sat gloomily biting his mustache and listening to the

conversation, evidently with no wish to take part in it. He answered the

staff captain's question by a disapproving shake of his head.

"You speak to the colonel about this nasty business before other

officers," continued the staff captain, "and Bogdanich" (the colonel was

called Bogdanich) "shuts you up."

"He did not shut me up, he said I was telling an untruth."

"Well, have it so, and you talked a lot of nonsense to him and must

apologize."

"Not on any account!" exclaimed Rostov.

"I did not expect this of you," said the staff captain seriously and

severely. "You don't wish to apologize, but, man, it's not only to him

but to the whole regiment--all of us--you're to blame all round. The

case is this: you ought to have thought the matter over and taken

advice; but no, you go and blurt it all straight out before the

officers. Now what was the colonel to do? Have the officer tried and

disgrace the whole regiment? Disgrace the whole regiment because of one

scoundrel? Is that how you look at it? We don't see it like that. And

Bogdanich was a brick: he told you you were saying what was not true.

It's not pleasant, but what's to be done, my dear fellow? You landed

yourself in it. And now, when one wants to smooth the thing over, some

conceit prevents your apologizing, and you wish to make the whole affair

public. You are offended at being put on duty a bit, but why not

apologize to an old and honorable officer? Whatever Bogdanich may be,

anyway he is an honorable and brave old colonel! You're quick at taking

offense, but you don't mind disgracing the whole regiment!" The staff

captain's voice began to tremble. "You have been in the regiment next to

no time, my lad, you're here today and tomorrow you'll be appointed

adjutant somewhere and can snap your fingers when it is said 'There are

thieves among the Pavlograd officers!' But it's not all the same to us!

Am I not right, Denisov? It's not the same!"

Denisov remained silent and did not move, but occasionally looked with

his glittering black eyes at Rostov.

"You value your own pride and don't wish to apologize," continued the

staff captain, "but we old fellows, who have grown up in and, God

willing, are going to die in the regiment, we prize the honor of the

regiment, and Bogdanich knows it. Oh, we do prize it, old fellow! And

all this is not right, it's not right! You may take offense or not but I

always stick to mother truth. It's not right!"

And the staff captain rose and turned away from Rostov.

"That's twue, devil take it!" shouted Denisov, jumping up. "Now then,

Wostov, now then!"

Rostov, growing red and pale alternately, looked first at one officer

and then at the other.

"No, gentlemen, no... you mustn't think... I quite understand. You're

wrong to think that of me... I... for me... for the honor of the

regiment I'd... Ah well, I'll show that in action, and for me the honor

of the flag... Well, never mind, it's true I'm to blame, to blame all

round. Well, what else do you want?..."

"Come, that's right, Count!" cried the staff captain, turning round and

clapping Rostov on the shoulder with his big hand.

"I tell you," shouted Denisov, "he's a fine fellow."

"That's better, Count," said the staff captain, beginning to address

Rostov by his title, as if in recognition of his confession. "Go and

apologize, your excellency. Yes, go!"

"Gentlemen, I'll do anything. No one shall hear a word from me," said

Rostov in an imploring voice, "but I can't apologize, by God I can't, do

what you will! How can I go and apologize like a little boy asking

forgiveness?"

Denisov began to laugh.

"It'll be worse for you. Bogdanich is vindictive and you'll pay for your

obstinacy," said Kirsten.

"No, on my word it's not obstinacy! I can't describe the feeling. I

can't..."

"Well, it's as you like," said the staff captain. "And what has become

of that scoundrel?" he asked Denisov.

"He has weported himself sick, he's to be stwuck off the list tomowwow,"

muttered Denisov.

"It is an illness, there's no other way of explaining it," said the

staff captain.

"Illness or not, he'd better not cwoss my path. I'd kill him!" shouted

Denisov in a bloodthirsty tone.

Just then Zherkov entered the room.

"What brings you here?" cried the officers turning to the newcomer.

"We're to go into action, gentlemen! Mack has surrendered with his whole

army."

"It's not true!"

"I've seen him myself!"

"What? Saw the real Mack? With hands and feet?"

"Into action! Into action! Bring him a bottle for such news! But how did

you come here?"

"I've been sent back to the regiment all on account of that devil, Mack.

An Austrian general complained of me. I congratulated him on Mack's

arrival... What's the matter, Rostov? You look as if you'd just come out

of a hot bath."

"Oh, my dear fellow, we're in such a stew here these last two days."

The regimental adjutant came in and confirmed the news brought by

Zherkov. They were under orders to advance next day.

"We're going into action, gentlemen!"

"Well, thank God! We've been sitting here too long!"

CHAPTER VI

Kutuzov fell back toward Vienna, destroying behind him the bridges over

the rivers Inn (at Braunau) and Traun (near Linz). On October 23 the

Russian troops were crossing the river Enns. At midday the Russian

baggage train, the artillery, and columns of troops were defiling

through the town of Enns on both sides of the bridge.

It was a warm, rainy, autumnal day. The wide expanse that opened out

before the heights on which the Russian batteries stood guarding the

bridge was at times veiled by a diaphanous curtain of slanting rain, and

then, suddenly spread out in the sunlight, far-distant objects could be

clearly seen glittering as though freshly varnished. Down below, the

little town could be seen with its white, red-roofed houses, its

cathedral, and its bridge, on both sides of which streamed jostling

masses of Russian troops. At the bend of the Danube, vessels, an island,

and a castle with a park surrounded by the waters of the confluence of

the Enns and the Danube became visible, and the rocky left bank of the

Danube covered with pine forests, with a mystic background of green

treetops and bluish gorges. The turrets of a convent stood out beyond a

wild virgin pine forest, and far away on the other side of the Enns the

enemy's horse patrols could be discerned.

Among the field guns on the brow of the hill the general in command of

the rearguard stood with a staff officer, scanning the country through

his fieldglass. A little behind them Nesvitski, who had been sent to the

rearguard by the commander-in-chief, was sitting on the trail of a gun

carriage. A Cossack who accompanied him had handed him a knapsack and a

flask, and Nesvitski was treating some officers to pies and real

doppelkummel. The officers gladly gathered round him, some on their

knees, some squatting Turkish fashion on the wet grass.

"Yes, the Austrian prince who built that castle was no fool. It's a fine

place! Why are you not eating anything, gentlemen?" Nesvitski was

saying.

"Thank you very much, Prince," answered one of the officers, pleased to

be talking to a staff officer of such importance. "It's a lovely place!

We passed close to the park and saw two deer... and what a splendid

house!"

"Look, Prince," said another, who would have dearly liked to take

another pie but felt shy, and therefore pretended to be examining the

countryside--"See, our infantrymen have already got there. Look there in

the meadow behind the village, three of them are dragging something.

They'll ransack that castle," he remarked with evident approval.

"So they will," said Nesvitski. "No, but what I should like," added he,

munching a pie in his moist-lipped handsome mouth, "would be to slip in

over there."

He pointed with a smile to a turreted nunnery, and his eyes narrowed and

gleamed.

"That would be fine, gentlemen!"

The officers laughed.

"Just to flutter the nuns a bit. They say there are Italian girls among

them. On my word I'd give five years of my life for it!"

"They must be feeling dull, too," said one of the bolder officers,

laughing.

Meanwhile the staff officer standing in front pointed out something to

the general, who looked through his field glass.

"Yes, so it is, so it is," said the general angrily, lowering the field

glass and shrugging his shoulders, "so it is! They'll be fired on at the

crossing. And why are they dawdling there?"

On the opposite side the enemy could be seen by the naked eye, and from

their battery a milk-white cloud arose. Then came the distant report of

a shot, and our troops could be seen hurrying to the crossing.

Nesvitski rose, puffing, and went up to the general, smiling.

"Would not your excellency like a little refreshment?" he said.

"It's a bad business," said the general without answering him, "our men

have been wasting time."

"Hadn't I better ride over, your excellency?" asked Nesvitski.

"Yes, please do," answered the general, and he repeated the order that

had already once been given in detail: "and tell the hussars that they

are to cross last and to fire the bridge as I ordered; and the

inflammable material on the bridge must be reinspected."

"Very good," answered Nesvitski.

He called the Cossack with his horse, told him to put away the knapsack

and flask, and swung his heavy person easily into the saddle.

"I'll really call in on the nuns," he said to the officers who watched

him smilingly, and he rode off by the winding path down the hill.

"Now then, let's see how far it will carry, Captain. Just try!" said the

general, turning to an artillery officer. "Have a little fun to pass the

time."

"Crew, to your guns!" commanded the officer.

In a moment the men came running gaily from their campfires and began

loading.

"One!" came the command.

Number one jumped briskly aside. The gun rang out with a deafening

metallic roar, and a whistling grenade flew above the heads of our

troops below the hill and fell far short of the enemy, a little smoke

showing the spot where it burst.

The faces of officers and men brightened up at the sound. Everyone got

up and began watching the movements of our troops below, as plainly

visible as if but a stone's throw away, and the movements of the

approaching enemy farther off. At the same instant the sun came fully

out from behind the clouds, and the clear sound of the solitary shot and

the brilliance of the bright sunshine merged in a single joyous and

spirited impression.

CHAPTER VII

Two of the enemy's shots had already flown across the bridge, where

there was a crush. Halfway across stood Prince Nesvitski, who had

alighted from his horse and whose big body was jammed against the

railings. He looked back laughing to the Cossack who stood a few steps

behind him holding two horses by their bridles. Each time Prince

Nesvitski tried to move on, soldiers and carts pushed him back again and

pressed him against the railings, and all he could do was to smile.

"What a fine fellow you are, friend!" said the Cossack to a convoy

soldier with a wagon, who was pressing onto the infantrymen who were

crowded together close to his wheels and his horses. "What a fellow! You

can't wait a moment! Don't you see the general wants to pass?"

But the convoyman took no notice of the word "general" and shouted at

the soldiers who were blocking his way. "Hi there, boys! Keep to the

left! Wait a bit." But the soldiers, crowded together shoulder to

shoulder, their bayonets interlocking, moved over the bridge in a dense

mass. Looking down over the rails Prince Nesvitski saw the rapid, noisy

little waves of the Enns, which rippling and eddying round the piles of

the bridge chased each other along. Looking on the bridge he saw equally

uniform living waves of soldiers, shoulder straps, covered shakos,

knapsacks, bayonets, long muskets, and, under the shakos, faces with

broad cheekbones, sunken cheeks, and listless tired expressions, and

feet that moved through the sticky mud that covered the planks of the

bridge. Sometimes through the monotonous waves of men, like a fleck of

white foam on the waves of the Enns, an officer, in a cloak and with a

type of face different from that of the men, squeezed his way along;

sometimes like a chip of wood whirling in the river, an hussar on foot,

an orderly, or a townsman was carried through the waves of infantry; and

sometimes like a log floating down the river, an officers' or company's

baggage wagon, piled high, leather covered, and hemmed in on all sides,

moved across the bridge.

"It's as if a dam had burst," said the Cossack hopelessly. "Are there

many more of you to come?"

"A million all but one!" replied a waggish soldier in a torn coat, with

a wink, and passed on followed by another, an old man.

"If he" (he meant the enemy) "begins popping at the bridge now," said

the old soldier dismally to a comrade, "you'll forget to scratch

yourself."

That soldier passed on, and after him came another sitting on a cart.

"Where the devil have the leg bands been shoved to?" said an orderly,

running behind the cart and fumbling in the back of it.

And he also passed on with the wagon. Then came some merry soldiers who

had evidently been drinking.

"And then, old fellow, he gives him one in the teeth with the butt end

of his gun..." a soldier whose greatcoat was well tucked up said gaily,

with a wide swing of his arm.

"Yes, the ham was just delicious..." answered another with a loud laugh.

And they, too, passed on, so that Nesvitski did not learn who had been

struck on the teeth, or what the ham had to do with it.

"Bah! How they scurry. He just sends a ball and they think they'll all

be killed," a sergeant was saying angrily and reproachfully.

"As it flies past me, Daddy, the ball I mean," said a young soldier with

an enormous mouth, hardly refraining from laughing, "I felt like dying

of fright. I did, 'pon my word, I got that frightened!" said he, as if

bragging of having been frightened.

That one also passed. Then followed a cart unlike any that had gone

before. It was a German cart with a pair of horses led by a German, and

seemed loaded with a whole houseful of effects. A fine brindled cow with

a large udder was attached to the cart behind. A woman with an unweaned

baby, an old woman, and a healthy German girl with bright red cheeks

were sitting on some feather beds. Evidently these fugitives were

allowed to pass by special permission. The eyes of all the soldiers

turned toward the women, and while the vehicle was passing at foot pace

all the soldiers' remarks related to the two young ones. Every face bore

almost the same smile, expressing unseemly thoughts about the women.

"Just see, the German sausage is making tracks, too!"

"Sell me the missis," said another soldier, addressing the German, who,

angry and frightened, strode energetically along with downcast eyes.

"See how smart she's made herself! Oh, the devils!"

"There, Fedotov, you should be quartered on them!"

"I have seen as much before now, mate!"

"Where are you going?" asked an infantry officer who was eating an

apple, also half smiling as he looked at the handsome girl.

The German closed his eyes, signifying that he did not understand.

"Take it if you like," said the officer, giving the girl an apple.

The girl smiled and took it. Nesvitski like the rest of the men on the

bridge did not take his eyes off the women till they had passed. When

they had gone by, the same stream of soldiers followed, with the same

kind of talk, and at last all stopped. As often happens, the horses of a

convoy wagon became restive at the end of the bridge, and the whole

crowd had to wait.

"And why are they stopping? There's no proper order!" said the soldiers.

"Where are you shoving to? Devil take you! Can't you wait? It'll be

worse if he fires the bridge. See, here's an officer jammed in too"--

different voices were saying in the crowd, as the men looked at one

another, and all pressed toward the exit from the bridge.

Looking down at the waters of the Enns under the bridge, Nesvitski

suddenly heard a sound new to him, of something swiftly approaching...

something big, that splashed into the water.

"Just see where it carries to!" a soldier near by said sternly, looking

round at the sound.

"Encouraging us to get along quicker," said another uneasily.

The crowd moved on again. Nesvitski realized that it was a cannon ball.

"Hey, Cossack, my horse!" he said. "Now, then, you there! get out of the

way! Make way!"

With great difficulty he managed to get to his horse, and shouting

continually he moved on. The soldiers squeezed themselves to make way

for him, but again pressed on him so that they jammed his leg, and those

nearest him were not to blame for they were themselves pressed still

harder from behind.

"Nesvitski, Nesvitski! you numskull!" came a hoarse voice from behind

him.

Nesvitski looked round and saw, some fifteen paces away but separated by

the living mass of moving infantry, Vaska Denisov, red and shaggy, with

his cap on the back of his black head and a cloak hanging jauntily over

his shoulder.

"Tell these devils, these fiends, to let me pass!" shouted Denisov

evidently in a fit of rage, his coal-black eyes with their bloodshot

whites glittering and rolling as he waved his sheathed saber in a small

bare hand as red as his face.

"Ah, Vaska!" joyfully replied Nesvitski. "What's up with you?"

"The squadwon can't pass," shouted Vaska Denisov, showing his white

teeth fiercely and spurring his black thoroughbred Arab, which twitched

its ears as the bayonets touched it, and snorted, spurting white foam

from his bit, tramping the planks of the bridge with his hoofs, and

apparently ready to jump over the railings had his rider let him. "What

is this? They're like sheep! Just like sheep! Out of the way!... Let us

pass!... Stop there, you devil with the cart! I'll hack you with my

saber!" he shouted, actually drawing his saber from its scabbard and

flourishing it.

The soldiers crowded against one another with terrified faces, and

Denisov joined Nesvitski.

"How's it you're not drunk today?" said Nesvitski when the other had

ridden up to him.

"They don't even give one time to dwink!" answered Vaska Denisov. "They

keep dwagging the wegiment to and fwo all day. If they mean to fight,

let's fight. But the devil knows what this is."

"What a dandy you are today!" said Nesvitski, looking at Denisov's new

cloak and saddlecloth.

Denisov smiled, took out of his sabretache a handkerchief that diffused

a smell of perfume, and put it to Nesvitski's nose.

"Of course. I'm going into action! I've shaved, bwushed my teeth, and

scented myself."

The imposing figure of Nesvitski followed by his Cossack, and the

determination of Denisov who flourished his sword and shouted

frantically, had such an effect that they managed to squeeze through to

the farther side of the bridge and stopped the infantry. Beside the

bridge Nesvitski found the colonel to whom he had to deliver the order,

and having done this he rode back.

Having cleared the way Denisov stopped at the end of the bridge.

Carelessly holding in his stallion that was neighing and pawing the

ground, eager to rejoin its fellows, he watched his squadron draw

nearer. Then the clang of hoofs, as of several horses galloping,

resounded on the planks of the bridge, and the squadron, officers in

front and men four abreast, spread across the bridge and began to emerge

on his side of it.

The infantry who had been stopped crowded near the bridge in the

trampled mud and gazed with that particular feeling of ill-will,

estrangement, and ridicule with which troops of different arms usually

encounter one another at the clean, smart hussars who moved past them in

regular order.

"Smart lads! Only fit for a fair!" said one.

"What good are they? They're led about just for show!" remarked another.

"Don't kick up the dust, you infantry!" jested an hussar whose prancing

horse had splashed mud over some foot soldiers.

"I'd like to put you on a two days' march with a knapsack! Your fine

cords would soon get a bit rubbed," said an infantryman, wiping the mud

off his face with his sleeve. "Perched up there, you're more like a bird

than a man."

"There now, Zikin, they ought to put you on a horse. You'd look fine,"

said a corporal, chaffing a thin little soldier who bent under the

weight of his knapsack.

"Take a stick between your legs, that'll suit you for a horse!" the

hussar shouted back.

CHAPTER VIII

The last of the infantry hurriedly crossed the bridge, squeezing

together as they approached it as if passing through a funnel. At last

the baggage wagons had all crossed, the crush was less, and the last

battalion came onto the bridge. Only Denisov's squadron of hussars

remained on the farther side of the bridge facing the enemy, who could

be seen from the hill on the opposite bank but was not yet visible from

the bridge, for the horizon as seen from the valley through which the

river flowed was formed by the rising ground only half a mile away. At

the foot of the hill lay wasteland over which a few groups of our

Cossack scouts were moving. Suddenly on the road at the top of the high

ground, artillery and troops in blue uniform were seen. These were the

French. A group of Cossack scouts retired down the hill at a trot. All

the officers and men of Denisov's squadron, though they tried to talk of

other things and to look in other directions, thought only of what was

there on the hilltop, and kept constantly looking at the patches

appearing on the skyline, which they knew to be the enemy's troops. The

weather had cleared again since noon and the sun was descending brightly

upon the Danube and the dark hills around it. It was calm, and at

intervals the bugle calls and the shouts of the enemy could be heard

from the hill. There was no one now between the squadron and the enemy

except a few scattered skirmishers. An empty space of some seven hundred

yards was all that separated them. The enemy ceased firing, and that

stern, threatening, inaccessible, and intangible line which separates

two hostile armies was all the more clearly felt.

"One step beyond that boundary line which resembles the line dividing

the living from the dead lies uncertainty, suffering, and death. And

what is there? Who is there?--there beyond that field, that tree, that

roof lit up by the sun? No one knows, but one wants to know. You fear

and yet long to cross that line, and know that sooner or later it must

be crossed and you will have to find out what is there, just as you will

inevitably have to learn what lies the other side of death. But you are

strong, healthy, cheerful, and excited, and are surrounded by other such

excitedly animated and healthy men." So thinks, or at any rate feels,

anyone who comes in sight of the enemy, and that feeling gives a

particular glamour and glad keenness of impression to everything that

takes place at such moments.

On the high ground where the enemy was, the smoke of a cannon rose, and

a ball flew whistling over the heads of the hussar squadron. The

officers who had been standing together rode off to their places. The

hussars began carefully aligning their horses. Silence fell on the whole

squadron. All were looking at the enemy in front and at the squadron

commander, awaiting the word of command. A second and a third cannon

ball flew past. Evidently they were firing at the hussars, but the balls

with rapid rhythmic whistle flew over the heads of the horsemen and fell

somewhere beyond them. The hussars did not look round, but at the sound

of each shot, as at the word of command, the whole squadron with its

rows of faces so alike yet so different, holding its breath while the

ball flew past, rose in the stirrups and sank back again. The soldiers

without turning their heads glanced at one another, curious to see their

comrades' impression. Every face, from Denisov's to that of the bugler,

showed one common expression of conflict, irritation, and excitement,

around chin and mouth. The quartermaster frowned, looking at the

soldiers as if threatening to punish them. Cadet Mironov ducked every

time a ball flew past. Rostov on the left flank, mounted on his Rook--a

handsome horse despite its game leg--had the happy air of a schoolboy

called up before a large audience for an examination in which he feels

sure he will distinguish himself. He was glancing at everyone with a

clear, bright expression, as if asking them to notice how calmly he sat

under fire. But despite himself, on his face too that same indication of

something new and stern showed round the mouth.

"Who's that curtseying there? Cadet Miwonov! That's not wight! Look at

me," cried Denisov who, unable to keep still on one spot, kept turning

his horse in front of the squadron.

The black, hairy, snub-nosed face of Vaska Denisov, and his whole short

sturdy figure with the sinewy hairy hand and stumpy fingers in which he

held the hilt of his naked saber, looked just as it usually did,

especially toward evening when he had emptied his second bottle; he was

only redder than usual. With his shaggy head thrown back like birds when

they drink, pressing his spurs mercilessly into the sides of his good

horse, Bedouin, and sitting as though falling backwards in the saddle,

he galloped to the other flank of the squadron and shouted in a hoarse

voice to the men to look to their pistols. He rode up to Kirsten. The

staff captain on his broad-backed, steady mare came at a walk to meet

him. His face with its long mustache was serious as always, only his

eyes were brighter than usual.

"Well, what about it?" said he to Denisov. "It won't come to a fight.

You'll see--we shall retire."

"The devil only knows what they're about!" muttered Denisov. "Ah,

Wostov," he cried noticing the cadet's bright face, "you've got it at

last."

And he smiled approvingly, evidently pleased with the cadet. Rostov felt

perfectly happy. Just then the commander appeared on the bridge. Denisov

galloped up to him.

"Your excellency! Let us attack them! I'll dwive them off."

"Attack indeed!" said the colonel in a bored voice, puckering up his

face as if driving off a troublesome fly. "And why are you stopping

here? Don't you see the skirmishers are retreating? Lead the squadron

back."

The squadron crossed the bridge and drew out of range of fire without

having lost a single man. The second squadron that had been in the front

line followed them across and the last Cossacks quitted the farther side

of the river.

The two Pavlograd squadrons, having crossed the bridge, retired up the

hill one after the other. Their colonel, Karl Bogdanich Schubert, came

up to Denisov's squadron and rode at a footpace not far from Rostov,

without taking any notice of him although they were now meeting for the

first time since their encounter concerning Telyanin. Rostov, feeling

that he was at the front and in the power of a man toward whom he now

admitted that he had been to blame, did not lift his eyes from the

colonel's athletic back, his nape covered with light hair, and his red

neck. It seemed to Rostov that Bogdanich was only pretending not to

notice him, and that his whole aim now was to test the cadet's courage,

so he drew himself up and looked around him merrily; then it seemed to

him that Bogdanich rode so near in order to show him his courage. Next

he thought that his enemy would send the squadron on a desperate attack

just to punish him--Rostov. Then he imagined how, after the attack,

Bogdanich would come up to him as he lay wounded and would magnanimously

extend the hand of reconciliation.

The high-shouldered figure of Zherkov, familiar to the Pavlograds as he

had but recently left their regiment, rode up to the colonel. After his

dismissal from headquarters Zherkov had not remained in the regiment,

saying he was not such a fool as to slave at the front when he could get

more rewards by doing nothing on the staff, and had succeeded in

attaching himself as an orderly officer to Prince Bagration. He now came

to his former chief with an order from the commander of the rear guard.

"Colonel," he said, addressing Rostov's enemy with an air of gloomy

gravity and glancing round at his comrades, "there is an order to stop

and fire the bridge."

"An order to who?" asked the colonel morosely.

"I don't myself know 'to who,'" replied the cornet in a serious tone,

"but the prince told me to 'go and tell the colonel that the hussars

must return quickly and fire the bridge.'"

Zherkov was followed by an officer of the suite who rode up to the

colonel of hussars with the same order. After him the stout Nesvitski

came galloping up on a Cossack horse that could scarcely carry his

weight.

"How's this, Colonel?" he shouted as he approached. "I told you to fire

the bridge, and now someone has gone and blundered; they are all beside

themselves over there and one can't make anything out."

The colonel deliberately stopped the regiment and turned to Nesvitski.

"You spoke to me of inflammable material," said he, "but you said

nothing about firing it."

"But, my dear sir," said Nesvitski as he drew up, taking off his cap and

smoothing his hair wet with perspiration with his plump hand, "wasn't I

telling you to fire the bridge, when inflammable material had been put

in position?"

"I am not your 'dear sir,' Mr. Staff Officer, and you did not tell me to

burn the bridge! I know the service, and it is my habit orders strictly

to obey. You said the bridge would be burned, but who would it burn, I

could not know by the holy spirit!"

"Ah, that's always the way!" said Nesvitski with a wave of the hand.

"How did you get here?" said he, turning to Zherkov.

"On the same business. But you are damp! Let me wring you out!"

"You were saying, Mr. Staff Officer..." continued the colonel in an

offended tone.

"Colonel," interrupted the officer of the suite, "You must be quick or

the enemy will bring up his guns to use grapeshot."

The colonel looked silently at the officer of the suite, at the stout

staff officer, and at Zherkov, and he frowned.

"I will the bridge fire," he said in a solemn tone as if to announce

that in spite of all the unpleasantness he had to endure he would still

do the right thing.

Striking his horse with his long muscular legs as if it were to blame

for everything, the colonel moved forward and ordered the second

squadron, that in which Rostov was serving under Denisov, to return to

the bridge.

"There, it's just as I thought," said Rostov to himself. "He wishes to

test me!" His heart contracted and the blood rushed to his face. "Let

him see whether I am a coward!" he thought.

Again on all the bright faces of the squadron the serious expression

appeared that they had worn when under fire. Rostov watched his enemy,

the colonel, closely--to find in his face confirmation of his own

conjecture, but the colonel did not once glance at Rostov, and looked as

he always did when at the front, solemn and stern. Then came the word of

command.

"Look sharp! Look sharp!" several voices repeated around him.

Their sabers catching in the bridles and their spurs jingling, the

hussars hastily dismounted, not knowing what they were to do. The men

were crossing themselves. Rostov no longer looked at the colonel, he had

no time. He was afraid of falling behind the hussars, so much afraid

that his heart stood still. His hand trembled as he gave his horse into

an orderly's charge, and he felt the blood rush to his heart with a

thud. Denisov rode past him, leaning back and shouting something. Rostov

saw nothing but the hussars running all around him, their spurs catching

and their sabers clattering.

"Stretchers!" shouted someone behind him.

Rostov did not think what this call for stretchers meant; he ran on,

trying only to be ahead of the others; but just at the bridge, not

looking at the ground, he came on some sticky, trodden mud, stumbled,

and fell on his hands. The others outstripped him.

"At boss zides, Captain," he heard the voice of the colonel, who, having

ridden ahead, had pulled up his horse near the bridge, with a

triumphant, cheerful face.

Rostov wiping his muddy hands on his breeches looked at his enemy and

was about to run on, thinking that the farther he went to the front the

better. But Bogdanich, without looking at or recognizing Rostov, shouted

to him:

"Who's that running on the middle of the bridge? To the right! Come

back, Cadet!" he cried angrily; and turning to Denisov, who, showing off

his courage, had ridden on to the planks of the bridge:

"Why run risks, Captain? You should dismount," he said.

"Oh, every bullet has its billet," answered Vaska Denisov, turning in

his saddle.

Meanwhile Nesvitski, Zherkov, and the officer of the suite were standing

together out of range of the shots, watching, now the small group of men

with yellow shakos, dark-green jackets braided with cord, and blue

riding breeches, who were swarming near the bridge, and then at what was

approaching in the distance from the opposite side--the blue uniforms

and groups with horses, easily recognizable as artillery.

"Will they burn the bridge or not? Who'll get there first? Will they get

there and fire the bridge or will the French get within grapeshot range

and wipe them out?" These were the questions each man of the troops on

the high ground above the bridge involuntarily asked himself with a

sinking heart--watching the bridge and the hussars in the bright evening

light and the blue tunics advancing from the other side with their

bayonets and guns.

"Ugh. The hussars will get it hot!" said Nesvitski; "they are within

grapeshot range now."

"He shouldn't have taken so many men," said the officer of the suite.

"True enough," answered Nesvitski; "two smart fellows could have done

the job just as well."

"Ah, your excellency," put in Zherkov, his eyes fixed on the hussars,

but still with that naive air that made it impossible to know whether he

was speaking in jest or in earnest. "Ah, your excellency! How you look

at things! Send two men? And who then would give us the Vladimir medal

and ribbon? But now, even if they do get peppered, the squadron may be

recommended for honors and he may get a ribbon. Our Bogdanich knows how

things are done."

"There now!" said the officer of the suite, "that's grapeshot."

He pointed to the French guns, the limbers of which were being detached

and hurriedly removed.

On the French side, amid the groups with cannon, a cloud of smoke

appeared, then a second and a third almost simultaneously, and at the

moment when the first report was heard a fourth was seen. Then two

reports one after another, and a third.

"Oh! Oh!" groaned Nesvitski as if in fierce pain, seizing the officer of

the suite by the arm. "Look! A man has fallen! Fallen, fallen!"

"Two, I think."

"If I were Tsar I would never go to war," said Nesvitski, turning away.

The French guns were hastily reloaded. The infantry in their blue

uniforms advanced toward the bridge at a run. Smoke appeared again but

at irregular intervals, and grapeshot cracked and rattled onto the

bridge. But this time Nesvitski could not see what was happening there,

as a dense cloud of smoke arose from it. The hussars had succeeded in

setting it on fire and the French batteries were now firing at them, no

longer to hinder them but because the guns were trained and there was

someone to fire at.

The French had time to fire three rounds of grapeshot before the hussars

got back to their horses. Two were misdirected and the shot went too

high, but the last round fell in the midst of a group of hussars and

knocked three of them over.

Rostov, absorbed by his relations with Bogdanich, had paused on the

bridge not knowing what to do. There was no one to hew down (as he had

always imagined battles to himself), nor could he help to fire the

bridge because he had not brought any burning straw with him like the

other soldiers. He stood looking about him, when suddenly he heard a

rattle on the bridge as if nuts were being spilt, and the hussar nearest

to him fell against the rails with a groan. Rostov ran up to him with

the others. Again someone shouted, "Stretchers!" Four men seized the

hussar and began lifting him.

"Oooh! For Christ's sake let me alone!" cried the wounded man, but still

he was lifted and laid on the stretcher.

Nicholas Rostov turned away and, as if searching for something, gazed

into the distance, at the waters of the Danube, at the sky, and at the

sun. How beautiful the sky looked; how blue, how calm, and how deep! How

bright and glorious was the setting sun! With what soft glitter the

waters of the distant Danube shone. And fairer still were the faraway

blue mountains beyond the river, the nunnery, the mysterious gorges, and

the pine forests veiled in the mist of their summits... There was peace

and happiness... "I should wish for nothing else, nothing, if only I

were there," thought Rostov. "In myself alone and in that sunshine there

is so much happiness; but here... groans, suffering, fear, and this

uncertainty and hurry... There--they are shouting again, and again are

all running back somewhere, and I shall run with them, and it, death, is

here above me and around... Another instant and I shall never again see

the sun, this water, that gorge!..."

At that instant the sun began to hide behind the clouds, and other

stretchers came into view before Rostov. And the fear of death and of

the stretchers, and love of the sun and of life, all merged into one

feeling of sickening agitation.

"O Lord God! Thou who art in that heaven, save, forgive, and protect

me!" Rostov whispered.

The hussars ran back to the men who held their horses; their voices

sounded louder and calmer, the stretchers disappeared from sight.

"Well, fwiend? So you've smelt powdah!" shouted Vaska Denisov just above

his ear.

"It's all over; but I am a coward--yes, a coward!" thought Rostov, and

sighing deeply he took Rook, his horse, which stood resting one foot,

from the orderly and began to mount.

"Was that grapeshot?" he asked Denisov.

"Yes and no mistake!" cried Denisov. "You worked like wegular bwicks and

it's nasty work! An attack's pleasant work! Hacking away at the dogs!

But this sort of thing is the very devil, with them shooting at you like

a target."

And Denisov rode up to a group that had stopped near Rostov, composed of

the colonel, Nesvitski, Zherkov, and the officer from the suite.

"Well, it seems that no one has noticed," thought Rostov. And this was

true. No one had taken any notice, for everyone knew the sensation which

the cadet under fire for the first time had experienced.

"Here's something for you to report," said Zherkov. "See if I don't get

promoted to a sublieutenancy."

"Inform the prince that I the bridge fired!" said the colonel

triumphantly and gaily.

"And if he asks about the losses?"

"A trifle," said the colonel in his bass voice: "two hussars wounded,

and one knocked out," he added, unable to restrain a happy smile, and

pronouncing the phrase "knocked out" with ringing distinctness.

CHAPTER IX

Pursued by the French army of a hundred thousand men under the command

of Bonaparte, encountering a population that was unfriendly to it,

losing confidence in its allies, suffering from shortness of supplies,

and compelled to act under conditions of war unlike anything that had

been foreseen, the Russian army of thirty-five thousand men commanded by

Kutuzov was hurriedly retreating along the Danube, stopping where

overtaken by the enemy and fighting rearguard actions only as far as

necessary to enable it to retreat without losing its heavy equipment.

There had been actions at Lambach, Amstetten, and Melk; but despite the

courage and endurance--acknowledged even by the enemy--with which the

Russians fought, the only consequence of these actions was a yet more

rapid retreat. Austrian troops that had escaped capture at Ulm and had

joined Kutuzov at Braunau now separated from the Russian army, and

Kutuzov was left with only his own weak and exhausted forces. The

defense of Vienna was no longer to be thought of. Instead of an

offensive, the plan of which, carefully prepared in accord with the

modern science of strategics, had been handed to Kutuzov when he was in

Vienna by the Austrian Hofkriegsrath, the sole and almost unattainable

aim remaining for him was to effect a junction with the forces that were

advancing from Russia, without losing his army as Mack had done at Ulm.

On the twenty-eighth of October Kutuzov with his army crossed to the

left bank of the Danube and took up a position for the first time with

the river between himself and the main body of the French. On the

thirtieth he attacked Mortier's division, which was on the left bank,

and broke it up. In this action for the first time trophies were taken:

banners, cannon, and two enemy generals. For the first time, after a

fortnight's retreat, the Russian troops had halted and after a fight had

not only held the field but had repulsed the French. Though the troops

were ill-clad, exhausted, and had lost a third of their number in

killed, wounded, sick, and stragglers; though a number of sick and

wounded had been abandoned on the other side of the Danube with a letter

in which Kutuzov entrusted them to the humanity of the enemy; and though

the big hospitals and the houses in Krems converted into military

hospitals could no longer accommodate all the sick and wounded, yet the

stand made at Krems and the victory over Mortier raised the spirits of

the army considerably. Throughout the whole army and at headquarters

most joyful though erroneous rumors were rife of the imaginary approach

of columns from Russia, of some victory gained by the Austrians, and of

the retreat of the frightened Bonaparte.

Prince Andrew during the battle had been in attendance on the Austrian

General Schmidt, who was killed in the action. His horse had been

wounded under him and his own arm slightly grazed by a bullet. As a mark

of the commander-in-chief's special favor he was sent with the news of

this victory to the Austrian court, now no longer at Vienna (which was

threatened by the French) but at Brunn. Despite his apparently delicate

build Prince Andrew could endure physical fatigue far better than many

very muscular men, and on the night of the battle, having arrived at

Krems excited but not weary, with dispatches from Dokhturov to Kutuzov,

he was sent immediately with a special dispatch to Brunn. To be so sent

meant not only a reward but an important step toward promotion.

The night was dark but starry, the road showed black in the snow that

had fallen the previous day--the day of the battle. Reviewing his

impressions of the recent battle, picturing pleasantly to himself the

impression his news of a victory would create, or recalling the send-off

given him by the commander-in-chief and his fellow officers, Prince

Andrew was galloping along in a post chaise enjoying the feelings of a

man who has at length begun to attain a long-desired happiness. As soon

as he closed his eyes his ears seemed filled with the rattle of the

wheels and the sensation of victory. Then he began to imagine that the

Russians were running away and that he himself was killed, but he

quickly roused himself with a feeling of joy, as if learning afresh that

this was not so but that on the contrary the French had run away. He

again recalled all the details of the victory and his own calm courage

during the battle, and feeling reassured he dozed off.... The dark

starry night was followed by a bright cheerful morning. The snow was

thawing in the sunshine, the horses galloped quickly, and on both sides

of the road were forests of different kinds, fields, and villages.

At one of the post stations he overtook a convoy of Russian wounded. The

Russian officer in charge of the transport lolled back in the front

cart, shouting and scolding a soldier with coarse abuse. In each of the

long German carts six or more pale, dirty, bandaged men were being

jolted over the stony road. Some of them were talking (he heard Russian

words), others were eating bread; the more severely wounded looked

silently, with the languid interest of sick children, at the envoy

hurrying past them.

Prince Andrew told his driver to stop, and asked a soldier in what

action they had been wounded. "Day before yesterday, on the Danube,"

answered the soldier. Prince Andrew took out his purse and gave the

soldier three gold pieces.

"That's for them all," he said to the officer who came up.

"Get well soon, lads!" he continued, turning to the soldiers. "There's

plenty to do still."

"What news, sir?" asked the officer, evidently anxious to start a

conversation.

"Good news!... Go on!" he shouted to the driver, and they galloped on.

It was already quite dark when Prince Andrew rattled over the paved

streets of Brunn and found himself surrounded by high buildings, the

lights of shops, houses, and street lamps, fine carriages, and all that

atmosphere of a large and active town which is always so attractive to a

soldier after camp life. Despite his rapid journey and sleepless night,

Prince Andrew when he drove up to the palace felt even more vigorous and

alert than he had done the day before. Only his eyes gleamed feverishly

and his thoughts followed one another with extraordinary clearness and

rapidity. He again vividly recalled the details of the battle, no longer

dim, but definite and in the concise form in which he imagined himself

stating them to the Emperor Francis. He vividly imagined the casual

questions that might be put to him and the answers he would give. He

expected to be at once presented to the Emperor. At the chief entrance

to the palace, however, an official came running out to meet him, and

learning that he was a special messenger led him to another entrance.

"To the right from the corridor, Euer Hochgeboren! There you will find

the adjutant on duty," said the official. "He will conduct you to the

Minister of War."

The adjutant on duty, meeting Prince Andrew, asked him to wait, and went

in to the Minister of War. Five minutes later he returned and bowing

with particular courtesy ushered Prince Andrew before him along a

corridor to the cabinet where the Minister of War was at work. The

adjutant by his elaborate courtesy appeared to wish to ward off any

attempt at familiarity on the part of the Russian messenger.

Prince Andrew's joyous feeling was considerably weakened as he

approached the door of the minister's room. He felt offended, and

without his noticing it the feeling of offense immediately turned into

one of disdain which was quite uncalled for. His fertile mind instantly

suggested to him a point of view which gave him a right to despise the

adjutant and the minister. "Away from the smell of powder, they probably

think it easy to gain victories!" he thought. His eyes narrowed

disdainfully, he entered the room of the Minister of War with peculiarly

deliberate steps. This feeling of disdain was heightened when he saw the

minister seated at a large table reading some papers and making pencil

notes on them, and for the first two or three minutes taking no notice

of his arrival. A wax candle stood at each side of the minister's bent

bald head with its gray temples. He went on reading to the end, without

raising his eyes at the opening of the door and the sound of footsteps.

"Take this and deliver it," said he to his adjutant, handing him the

papers and still taking no notice of the special messenger.

Prince Andrew felt that either the actions of Kutuzov's army interested

the Minister of War less than any of the other matters he was concerned

with, or he wanted to give the Russian special messenger that

impression. "But that is a matter of perfect indifference to me," he

thought. The minister drew the remaining papers together, arranged them

evenly, and then raised his head. He had an intellectual and distinctive

head, but the instant he turned to Prince Andrew the firm, intelligent

expression on his face changed in a way evidently deliberate and

habitual to him. His face took on the stupid artificial smile (which

does not even attempt to hide its artificiality) of a man who is

continually receiving many petitioners one after another.

"From General Field Marshal Kutuzov?" he asked. "I hope it is good news?

There has been an encounter with Mortier? A victory? It was high time!"

He took the dispatch which was addressed to him and began to read it

with a mournful expression.

"Oh, my God! My God! Schmidt!" he exclaimed in German. "What a calamity!

What a calamity!"

Having glanced through the dispatch he laid it on the table and looked

at Prince Andrew, evidently considering something.

"Ah what a calamity! You say the affair was decisive? But Mortier is not

captured." Again he pondered. "I am very glad you have brought good

news, though Schmidt's death is a heavy price to pay for the victory.

His Majesty will no doubt wish to see you, but not today. I thank you!

You must have a rest. Be at the levee tomorrow after the parade.

However, I will let you know."

The stupid smile, which had left his face while he was speaking,

reappeared.

"Au revoir! Thank you very much. His Majesty will probably desire to see

you," he added, bowing his head.

When Prince Andrew left the palace he felt that all the interest and

happiness the victory had afforded him had been now left in the

indifferent hands of the Minister of War and the polite adjutant. The

whole tenor of his thoughts instantaneously changed; the battle seemed

the memory of a remote event long past.

CHAPTER X

Prince Andrew stayed at Brunn with Bilibin, a Russian acquaintance of

his in the diplomatic service.

"Ah, my dear prince! I could not have a more welcome visitor," said

Bilibin as he came out to meet Prince Andrew. "Franz, put the prince's

things in my bedroom," said he to the servant who was ushering Bolkonski

in. "So you're a messenger of victory, eh? Splendid! And I am sitting

here ill, as you see."

After washing and dressing, Prince Andrew came into the diplomat's

luxurious study and sat down to the dinner prepared for him. Bilibin

settled down comfortably beside the fire.

After his journey and the campaign during which he had been deprived of

all the comforts of cleanliness and all the refinements of life, Prince

Andrew felt a pleasant sense of repose among luxurious surroundings such

as he had been accustomed to from childhood. Besides it was pleasant,

after his reception by the Austrians, to speak if not in Russian (for

they were speaking French) at least with a Russian who would, he

supposed, share the general Russian antipathy to the Austrians which was

then particularly strong.

Bilibin was a man of thirty-five, a bachelor, and of the same circle as

Prince Andrew. They had known each other previously in Petersburg, but

had become more intimate when Prince Andrew was in Vienna with Kutuzov.

Just as Prince Andrew was a young man who gave promise of rising high in

the military profession, so to an even greater extent Bilibin gave

promise of rising in his diplomatic career. He still a young man but no

longer a young diplomat, as he had entered the service at the age of

sixteen, had been in Paris and Copenhagen, and now held a rather

important post in Vienna. Both the foreign minister and our ambassador

in Vienna knew him and valued him. He was not one of those many

diplomats who are esteemed because they have certain negative qualities,

avoid doing certain things, and speak French. He was one of those, who,

liking work, knew how to do it, and despite his indolence would

sometimes spend a whole night at his writing table. He worked well

whatever the import of his work. It was not the question "What for?" but

the question "How?" that interested him. What the diplomatic matter

might be he did not care, but it gave him great pleasure to prepare a

circular, memorandum, or report, skillfully, pointedly, and elegantly.

Bilibin's services were valued not only for what he wrote, but also for

his skill in dealing and conversing with those in the highest spheres.

Bilibin liked conversation as he liked work, only when it could be made

elegantly witty. In society he always awaited an opportunity to say

something striking and took part in a conversation only when that was

possible. His conversation was always sprinkled with wittily original,

finished phrases of general interest. These sayings were prepared in the

inner laboratory of his mind in a portable form as if intentionally, so

that insignificant society people might carry them from drawing room to

drawing room. And, in fact, Bilibin's witticisms were hawked about in

the Viennese drawing rooms and often had an influence on matters

considered important.

His thin, worn, sallow face was covered with deep wrinkles, which always

looked as clean and well washed as the tips of one's fingers after a

Russian bath. The movement of these wrinkles formed the principal play

of expression on his face. Now his forehead would pucker into deep folds

and his eyebrows were lifted, then his eyebrows would descend and deep

wrinkles would crease his cheeks. His small, deep-set eyes always

twinkled and looked out straight.

"Well, now tell me about your exploits," said he.

Bolkonski, very modestly without once mentioning himself, described the

engagement and his reception by the Minister of War.

"They received me and my news as one receives a dog in a game of

skittles," said he in conclusion.

Bilibin smiled and the wrinkles on his face disappeared.

"Cependant, mon cher," he remarked, examining his nails from a distance

and puckering the skin above his left eye, "malgre la haute estime que

je professe pour the Orthodox Russian army, j'avoue que votre victoire

n'est pas des plus victorieuses." \*

\* "But my dear fellow, with all my respect for the Orthodox Russian

army, I must say that your victory was not particularly victorious."

He went on talking in this way in French, uttering only those words in

Russian on which he wished to put a contemptuous emphasis.

"Come now! You with all your forces fall on the unfortunate Mortier and

his one division, and even then Mortier slips through your fingers!

Where's the victory?"

"But seriously," said Prince Andrew, "we can at any rate say without

boasting that it was a little better than at Ulm..."

"Why didn't you capture one, just one, marshal for us?"

"Because not everything happens as one expects or with the smoothness of

a parade. We had expected, as I told you, to get at their rear by seven

in the morning but had not reached it by five in the afternoon."

"And why didn't you do it at seven in the morning? You ought to have

been there at seven in the morning," returned Bilibin with a smile. "You

ought to have been there at seven in the morning."

"Why did you not succeed in impressing on Bonaparte by diplomatic

methods that he had better leave Genoa alone?" retorted Prince Andrew in

the same tone.

"I know," interrupted Bilibin, "you're thinking it's very easy to take

marshals, sitting on a sofa by the fire! That is true, but still why

didn't you capture him? So don't be surprised if not only the Minister

of War but also his Most August Majesty the Emperor and King Francis is

not much delighted by your victory. Even I, a poor secretary of the

Russian Embassy, do not feel any need in token of my joy to give my

Franz a thaler, or let him go with his Liebchen to the Prater... True,

we have no Prater here..."

He looked straight at Prince Andrew and suddenly unwrinkled his

forehead.

"It is now my turn to ask you 'why?' mon cher," said Bolkonski. "I

confess I do not understand: perhaps there are diplomatic subtleties

here beyond my feeble intelligence, but I can't make it out. Mack loses

a whole army, the Archduke Ferdinand and the Archduke Karl give no signs

of life and make blunder after blunder. Kutuzov alone at last gains a

real victory, destroying the spell of the invincibility of the French,

and the Minister of War does not even care to hear the details."

"That's just it, my dear fellow. You see it's hurrah for the Tsar, for

Russia, for the Orthodox Greek faith! All that is beautiful, but what do

we, I mean the Austrian court, care for your victories? Bring us nice

news of a victory by the Archduke Karl or Ferdinand (one archduke's as

good as another, as you know) and even if it is only over a fire brigade

of Bonaparte's, that will be another story and we'll fire off some

cannon! But this sort of thing seems done on purpose to vex us. The

Archduke Karl does nothing, the Archduke Ferdinand disgraces himself.

You abandon Vienna, give up its defense--as much as to say: 'Heaven is

with us, but heaven help you and your capital!' The one general whom we

all loved, Schmidt, you expose to a bullet, and then you congratulate us

on the victory! Admit that more irritating news than yours could not

have been conceived. It's as if it had been done on purpose, on purpose.

Besides, suppose you did gain a brilliant victory, if even the Archduke

Karl gained a victory, what effect would that have on the general course

of events? It's too late now when Vienna is occupied by the French

army!"

"What? Occupied? Vienna occupied?"

"Not only occupied, but Bonaparte is at Schonbrunn, and the count, our

dear Count Vrbna, goes to him for orders."

After the fatigues and impressions of the journey, his reception, and

especially after having dined, Bolkonski felt that he could not take in

the full significance of the words he heard.

"Count Lichtenfels was here this morning," Bilibin continued, "and

showed me a letter in which the parade of the French in Vienna was fully

described: Prince Murat et tout le tremblement... You see that your

victory is not a matter for great rejoicing and that you can't be

received as a savior."

"Really I don't care about that, I don't care at all," said Prince

Andrew, beginning to understand that his news of the battle before Krems

was really of small importance in view of such events as the fall of

Austria's capital. "How is it Vienna was taken? What of the bridge and

its celebrated bridgehead and Prince Auersperg? We heard reports that

Prince Auersperg was defending Vienna?" he said.

"Prince Auersperg is on this, on our side of the river, and is defending

us--doing it very badly, I think, but still he is defending us. But

Vienna is on the other side. No, the bridge has not yet been taken and I

hope it will not be, for it is mined and orders have been given to blow

it up. Otherwise we should long ago have been in the mountains of

Bohemia, and you and your army would have spent a bad quarter of an hour

between two fires."

"But still this does not mean that the campaign is over," said Prince

Andrew.

"Well, I think it is. The bigwigs here think so too, but they daren't

say so. It will be as I said at the beginning of the campaign, it won't

be your skirmishing at Durrenstein, or gunpowder at all, that will

decide the matter, but those who devised it," said Bilibin quoting one

of his own mots, releasing the wrinkles on his forehead, and pausing.

"The only question is what will come of the meeting between the Emperor

Alexander and the King of Prussia in Berlin? If Prussia joins the

Allies, Austria's hand will be forced and there will be war. If not it

is merely a question of settling where the preliminaries of the new

Campo Formio are to be drawn up."

"What an extraordinary genius!" Prince Andrew suddenly exclaimed,

clenching his small hand and striking the table with it, "and what luck

the man has!"

"Buonaparte?" said Bilibin inquiringly, puckering up his forehead to

indicate that he was about to say something witty. "Buonaparte?" he

repeated, accentuating the u: "I think, however, now that he lays down

laws for Austria at Schonbrunn, il faut lui faire grace de l'u! \* I

shall certainly adopt an innovation and call him simply Bonaparte!"

\* "We must let him off the u!"

"But joking apart," said Prince Andrew, "do you really think the

campaign is over?"

"This is what I think. Austria has been made a fool of, and she is not

used to it. She will retaliate. And she has been fooled in the first

place because her provinces have been pillaged--they say the Holy

Russian army loots terribly--her army is destroyed, her capital taken,

and all this for the beaux yeux \* of His Sardinian Majesty. And

therefore--this is between ourselves--I instinctively feel that we are

being deceived, my instinct tells me of negotiations with France and

projects for peace, a secret peace concluded separately."

\* Fine eyes.

"Impossible!" cried Prince Andrew. "That would be too base."

"If we live we shall see," replied Bilibin, his face again becoming

smooth as a sign that the conversation was at an end.

When Prince Andrew reached the room prepared for him and lay down in a

clean shirt on the feather bed with its warmed and fragrant pillows, he

felt that the battle of which he had brought tidings was far, far away

from him. The alliance with Prussia, Austria's treachery, Bonaparte's

new triumph, tomorrow's levee and parade, and the audience with the

Emperor Francis occupied his thoughts.

He closed his eyes, and immediately a sound of cannonading, of musketry

and the rattling of carriage wheels seemed to fill his ears, and now

again drawn out in a thin line the musketeers were descending the hill,

the French were firing, and he felt his heart palpitating as he rode

forward beside Schmidt with the bullets merrily whistling all around,

and he experienced tenfold the joy of living, as he had not done since

childhood.

He woke up...

"Yes, that all happened!" he said, and, smiling happily to himself like

a child, he fell into a deep, youthful slumber.

CHAPTER XI

Next day he woke late. Recalling his recent impressions, the first

thought that came into his mind was that today he had to be presented to

the Emperor Francis; he remembered the Minister of War, the polite

Austrian adjutant, Bilibin, and last night's conversation. Having

dressed for his attendance at court in full parade uniform, which he had

not worn for a long time, he went into Bilibin's study fresh, animated,

and handsome, with his hand bandaged. In the study were four gentlemen

of the diplomatic corps. With Prince Hippolyte Kuragin, who was a

secretary to the embassy, Bolkonski was already acquainted. Bilibin

introduced him to the others.

The gentlemen assembled at Bilibin's were young, wealthy, gay society

men, who here, as in Vienna, formed a special set which Bilibin, their

leader, called les notres. \* This set, consisting almost exclusively of

diplomats, evidently had its own interests which had nothing to do with

war or politics but related to high society, to certain women, and to

the official side of the service. These gentlemen received Prince Andrew

as one of themselves, an honor they did not extend to many. From

politeness and to start conversation, they asked him a few questions

about the army and the battle, and then the talk went off into merry

jests and gossip.

\* Ours.

"But the best of it was," said one, telling of the misfortune of a

fellow diplomat, "that the Chancellor told him flatly that his

appointment to London was a promotion and that he was so to regard it.

Can you fancy the figure he cut?..."

"But the worst of it, gentlemen--I am giving Kuragin away to you--is

that that man suffers, and this Don Juan, wicked fellow, is taking

advantage of it!"

Prince Hippolyte was lolling in a lounge chair with his legs over its

arm. He began to laugh.

"Tell me about that!" he said.

"Oh, you Don Juan! You serpent!" cried several voices.

"You, Bolkonski, don't know," said Bilibin turning to Prince Andrew,

"that all the atrocities of the French army (I nearly said of the

Russian army) are nothing compared to what this man has been doing among

the women!"

"La femme est la compagne de l'homme," \* announced Prince Hippolyte, and

began looking through a lorgnette at his elevated legs.

\* "Woman is man's companion."

Bilibin and the rest of "ours" burst out laughing in Hippolyte's face,

and Prince Andrew saw that Hippolyte, of whom--he had to admit--he had

almost been jealous on his wife's account, was the butt of this set.

"Oh, I must give you a treat," Bilibin whispered to Bolkonski. "Kuragin

is exquisite when he discusses politics--you should see his gravity!"

He sat down beside Hippolyte and wrinkling his forehead began talking to

him about politics. Prince Andrew and the others gathered round these

two.

"The Berlin cabinet cannot express a feeling of alliance," began

Hippolyte gazing round with importance at the others, "without

expressing... as in its last note... you understand... Besides, unless

His Majesty the Emperor derogates from the principle of our alliance...

"Wait, I have not finished..." he said to Prince Andrew, seizing him by

the arm, "I believe that intervention will be stronger than

nonintervention. And..." he paused. "Finally one cannot impute the

nonreceipt of our dispatch of November 18. That is how it will end." And

he released Bolkonski's arm to indicate that he had now quite finished.

"Demosthenes, I know thee by the pebble thou secretest in thy golden

mouth!" said Bilibin, and the mop of hair on his head moved with

satisfaction.

Everybody laughed, and Hippolyte louder than anyone. He was evidently

distressed, and breathed painfully, but could not restrain the wild

laughter that convulsed his usually impassive features.

"Well now, gentlemen," said Bilibin, "Bolkonski is my guest in this

house and in Brunn itself. I want to entertain him as far as I can, with

all the pleasures of life here. If we were in Vienna it would be easy,

but here, in this wretched Moravian hole, it is more difficult, and I

beg you all to help me. Brunn's attractions must be shown him. You can

undertake the theater, I society, and you, Hippolyte, of course the

women."

"We must let him see Amelie, she's exquisite!" said one of "ours,"

kissing his finger tips.

"In general we must turn this bloodthirsty soldier to more humane

interests," said Bilibin.

"I shall scarcely be able to avail myself of your hospitality,

gentlemen, it is already time for me to go," replied Prince Andrew

looking at his watch.

"Where to?"

"To the Emperor."

"Oh! Oh! Oh! Well, au revoir, Bolkonski! Au revoir, Prince! Come back

early to dinner," cried several voices. "We'll take you in hand."

"When speaking to the Emperor, try as far as you can to praise the way

that provisions are supplied and the routes indicated," said Bilibin,

accompanying him to the hall.

"I should like to speak well of them, but as far as I know the facts, I

can't," replied Bolkonski, smiling.

"Well, talk as much as you can, anyway. He has a passion for giving

audiences, but he does not like talking himself and can't do it, as you

will see."

CHAPTER XII

At the levee Prince Andrew stood among the Austrian officers as he had

been told to, and the Emperor Francis merely looked fixedly into his

face and just nodded to him with his long head. But after it was over,

the adjutant he had seen the previous day ceremoniously informed

Bolkonski that the Emperor desired to give him an audience. The Emperor

Francis received him standing in the middle of the room. Before the

conversation began Prince Andrew was struck by the fact that the Emperor

seemed confused and blushed as if not knowing what to say.

"Tell me, when did the battle begin?" he asked hurriedly.

Prince Andrew replied. Then followed other questions just as simple:

"Was Kutuzov well? When had he left Krems?" and so on. The Emperor spoke

as if his sole aim were to put a given number of questions--the answers

to these questions, as was only too evident, did not interest him.

"At what o'clock did the battle begin?" asked the Emperor.

"I cannot inform Your Majesty at what o'clock the battle began at the

front, but at Durrenstein, where I was, our attack began after five in

the afternoon," replied Bolkonski growing more animated and expecting

that he would have a chance to give a reliable account, which he had

ready in his mind, of all he knew and had seen. But the Emperor smiled

and interrupted him.

"How many miles?"

"From where to where, Your Majesty?"

"From Durrenstein to Krems."

"Three and a half miles, Your Majesty."

"The French have abandoned the left bank?"

"According to the scouts the last of them crossed on rafts during the

night."

"Is there sufficient forage in Krems?"

"Forage has not been supplied to the extent..."

The Emperor interrupted him.

"At what o'clock was General Schmidt killed?"

"At seven o'clock, I believe."

"At seven o'clock? It's very sad, very sad!"

The Emperor thanked Prince Andrew and bowed. Prince Andrew withdrew and

was immediately surrounded by courtiers on all sides. Everywhere he saw

friendly looks and heard friendly words. Yesterday's adjutant reproached

him for not having stayed at the palace, and offered him his own house.

The Minister of War came up and congratulated him on the Maria Theresa

Order of the third grade, which the Emperor was conferring on him. The

Empress' chamberlain invited him to see Her Majesty. The archduchess

also wished to see him. He did not know whom to answer, and for a few

seconds collected his thoughts. Then the Russian ambassador took him by

the shoulder, led him to the window, and began to talk to him.

Contrary to Bilibin's forecast the news he had brought was joyfully

received. A thanksgiving service was arranged, Kutuzov was awarded the

Grand Cross of Maria Theresa, and the whole army received rewards.

Bolkonski was invited everywhere, and had to spend the whole morning

calling on the principal Austrian dignitaries. Between four and five in

the afternoon, having made all his calls, he was returning to Bilibin's

house thinking out a letter to his father about the battle and his visit

to Brunn. At the door he found a vehicle half full of luggage. Franz,

Bilibin's man, was dragging a portmanteau with some difficulty out of

the front door.

Before returning to Bilibin's Prince Andrew had gone to a bookshop to

provide himself with some books for the campaign, and had spent some

time in the shop.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Oh, your excellency!" said Franz, with difficulty rolling the

portmanteau into the vehicle, "we are to move on still farther. The

scoundrel is again at our heels!"

"Eh? What?" asked Prince Andrew.

Bilibin came out to meet him. His usually calm face showed excitement.

"There now! Confess that this is delightful," said he. "This affair of

the Thabor Bridge, at Vienna.... They have crossed without striking a

blow!"

Prince Andrew could not understand.

"But where do you come from not to know what every coachman in the town

knows?"

"I come from the archduchess'. I heard nothing there."

"And you didn't see that everybody is packing up?"

"I did not... What is it all about?" inquired Prince Andrew impatiently.

"What's it all about? Why, the French have crossed the bridge that

Auersperg was defending, and the bridge was not blown up: so Murat is

now rushing along the road to Brunn and will be here in a day or two."

"What? Here? But why did they not blow up the bridge, if it was mined?"

"That is what I ask you. No one, not even Bonaparte, knows why."

Bolkonski shrugged his shoulders.

"But if the bridge is crossed it means that the army too is lost? It

will be cut off," said he.

"That's just it," answered Bilibin. "Listen! The French entered Vienna

as I told you. Very well. Next day, which was yesterday, those

gentlemen, messieurs les marechaux, \* Murat, Lannes, and Belliard, mount

and ride to the bridge. (Observe that all three are Gascons.)

'Gentlemen,' says one of them, 'you know the Thabor Bridge is mined and

doubly mined and that there are menacing fortifications at its head and

an army of fifteen thousand men has been ordered to blow up the bridge

and not let us cross? But it will please our sovereign the Emperor

Napoleon if we take this bridge, so let us three go and take it!' 'Yes,

let's!' say the others. And off they go and take the bridge, cross it,

and now with their whole army are on this side of the Danube, marching

on us, you, and your lines of communication."

\* The marshalls.

"Stop jesting," said Prince Andrew sadly and seriously. This news

grieved him and yet he was pleased.

As soon as he learned that the Russian army was in such a hopeless

situation it occurred to him that it was he who was destined to lead it

out of this position; that here was the Toulon that would lift him from

the ranks of obscure officers and offer him the first step to fame!

Listening to Bilibin he was already imagining how on reaching the army

he would give an opinion at the war council which would be the only one

that could save the army, and how he alone would be entrusted with the

executing of the plan.

"Stop this jesting," he said.

"I am not jesting," Bilibin went on. "Nothing is truer or sadder. These

gentlemen ride onto the bridge alone and wave white handkerchiefs; they

assure the officer on duty that they, the marshals, are on their way to

negotiate with Prince Auersperg. He lets them enter the tête-de-pont. \*

They spin him a thousand gasconades, saying that the war is over, that

the Emperor Francis is arranging a meeting with Bonaparte, that they

desire to see Prince Auersperg, and so on. The officer sends for

Auersperg; these gentlemen embrace the officers, crack jokes, sit on the

cannon, and meanwhile a French battalion gets to the bridge unobserved,

flings the bags of incendiary material into the water, and approaches

the tête-de-pont. At length appears the lieutenant general, our dear

Prince Auersperg von Mautern himself. 'Dearest foe! Flower of the

Austrian army, hero of the Turkish wars Hostilities are ended, we can

shake one another's hand.... The Emperor Napoleon burns with impatience

to make Prince Auersperg's acquaintance.' In a word, those gentlemen,

Gascons indeed, so bewildered him with fine words, and he is so

flattered by his rapidly established intimacy with the French marshals,

and so dazzled by the sight of Murat's mantle and ostrich plumes, qu'il

n'y voit que du feu, et oublie celui qu'il devait faire faire sur

l'ennemi!" \*(2) In spite of the animation of his speech, Bilibin did not

forget to pause after this mot to give time for its due appreciation.

"The French battalion rushes to the bridgehead, spikes the guns, and the

bridge is taken! But what is best of all," he went on, his excitement

subsiding under the delightful interest of his own story, "is that the

sergeant in charge of the cannon which was to give the signal to fire

the mines and blow up the bridge, this sergeant, seeing that the French

troops were running onto the bridge, was about to fire, but Lannes

stayed his hand. The sergeant, who was evidently wiser than his general,

goes up to Auersperg and says: 'Prince, you are being deceived, here are

the French!' Murat, seeing that all is lost if the sergeant is allowed

to speak, turns to Auersperg with feigned astonishment (he is a true

Gascon) and says: 'I don't recognize the world-famous Austrian

discipline, if you allow a subordinate to address you like that!' It was

a stroke of genius. Prince Auersperg feels his dignity at stake and

orders the sergeant to be arrested. Come, you must own that this affair

of the Thabor Bridge is delightful! It is not exactly stupidity, nor

rascality...."

\* Bridgehead.

\* (2) That their fire gets into his eyes and he forgets that he ought to

be firing at the enemy.

"It may be treachery," said Prince Andrew, vividly imagining the gray

overcoats, wounds, the smoke of gunpowder, the sounds of firing, and the

glory that awaited him.

"Not that either. That puts the court in too bad a light," replied

Bilibin. "It's not treachery nor rascality nor stupidity: it is just as

at Ulm... it is..."--he seemed to be trying to find the right

expression. "C'est... c'est du Mack. Nous sommes mackes (It is... it is

a bit of Mack. We are Macked)," he concluded, feeling that he had

produced a good epigram, a fresh one that would be repeated. His

hitherto puckered brow became smooth as a sign of pleasure, and with a

slight smile he began to examine his nails.

"Where are you off to?" he said suddenly to Prince Andrew who had risen

and was going toward his room.

"I am going away."

"Where to?"

"To the army."

"But you meant to stay another two days?"

"But now I am off at once."

And Prince Andrew after giving directions about his departure went to

his room.

"Do you know, mon cher," said Bilibin following him, "I have been

thinking about you. Why are you going?"

And in proof of the conclusiveness of his opinion all the wrinkles

vanished from his face.

Prince Andrew looked inquiringly at him and gave no reply.

"Why are you going? I know you think it your duty to gallop back to the

army now that it is in danger. I understand that. Mon cher, it is

heroism!"

"Not at all," said Prince Andrew.

"But as you are a philosopher, be a consistent one, look at the other

side of the question and you will see that your duty, on the contrary,

is to take care of yourself. Leave it to those who are no longer fit for

anything else.... You have not been ordered to return and have not been

dismissed from here; therefore, you can stay and go with us wherever our

ill luck takes us. They say we are going to Olmutz, and Olmutz is a very

decent town. You and I will travel comfortably in my caleche."

"Do stop joking, Bilibin," cried Bolkonski.

"I am speaking sincerely as a friend! Consider! Where and why are you

going, when you might remain here? You are faced by one of two things,"

and the skin over his left temple puckered, "either you will not reach

your regiment before peace is concluded, or you will share defeat and

disgrace with Kutuzov's whole army."

And Bilibin unwrinkled his temple, feeling that the dilemma was

insoluble.

"I cannot argue about it," replied Prince Andrew coldly, but he thought:

"I am going to save the army."

"My dear fellow, you are a hero!" said Bilibin.

CHAPTER XIII

That same night, having taken leave of the Minister of War, Bolkonski

set off to rejoin the army, not knowing where he would find it and

fearing to be captured by the French on the way to Krems.

In Brunn everybody attached to the court was packing up, and the heavy

baggage was already being dispatched to Olmutz. Near Hetzelsdorf Prince

Andrew struck the high road along which the Russian army was moving with

great haste and in the greatest disorder. The road was so obstructed

with carts that it was impossible to get by in a carriage. Prince Andrew

took a horse and a Cossack from a Cossack commander, and hungry and

weary, making his way past the baggage wagons, rode in search of the

commander-in-chief and of his own luggage. Very sinister reports of the

position of the army reached him as he went along, and the appearance of

the troops in their disorderly flight confirmed these rumors.

"Cette armee russe que l'or de l'Angleterre a transportee des extremites

de l'univers, nous allons lui faire eprouver le meme sort--(le sort de

l'armee d'Ulm)." \* He remembered these words in Bonaparte's address to

his army at the beginning of the campaign, and they awoke in him

astonishment at the genius of his hero, a feeling of wounded pride, and

a hope of glory. "And should there be nothing left but to die?" he

thought. "Well, if need be, I shall do it no worse than others."

\* "That Russian army which has been brought from the ends of the earth

by English gold, we shall cause to share the same fate--(the fate of the

army at Ulm)."

He looked with disdain at the endless confused mass of detachments,

carts, guns, artillery, and again baggage wagons and vehicles of all

kinds overtaking one another and blocking the muddy road, three and

sometimes four abreast. From all sides, behind and before, as far as ear

could reach, there were the rattle of wheels, the creaking of carts and

gun carriages, the tramp of horses, the crack of whips, shouts, the

urging of horses, and the swearing of soldiers, orderlies, and officers.

All along the sides of the road fallen horses were to be seen, some

flayed, some not, and broken-down carts beside which solitary soldiers

sat waiting for something, and again soldiers straggling from their

companies, crowds of whom set off to the neighboring villages, or

returned from them dragging sheep, fowls, hay, and bulging sacks. At

each ascent or descent of the road the crowds were yet denser and the

din of shouting more incessant. Soldiers floundering knee-deep in mud

pushed the guns and wagons themselves. Whips cracked, hoofs slipped,

traces broke, and lungs were strained with shouting. The officers

directing the march rode backward and forward between the carts. Their

voices were but feebly heard amid the uproar and one saw by their faces

that they despaired of the possibility of checking this disorder.

"Here is our dear Orthodox Russian army," thought Bolkonski, recalling

Bilibin's words.

Wishing to find out where the commander-in-chief was, he rode up to a

convoy. Directly opposite to him came a strange one-horse vehicle,

evidently rigged up by soldiers out of any available materials and

looking like something between a cart, a cabriolet, and a caleche. A

soldier was driving, and a woman enveloped in shawls sat behind the

apron under the leather hood of the vehicle. Prince Andrew rode up and

was just putting his question to a soldier when his attention was

diverted by the desperate shrieks of the woman in the vehicle. An

officer in charge of transport was beating the soldier who was driving

the woman's vehicle for trying to get ahead of others, and the strokes

of his whip fell on the apron of the equipage. The woman screamed

piercingly. Seeing Prince Andrew she leaned out from behind the apron

and, waving her thin arms from under the woolen shawl, cried:

"Mr. Aide-de-camp! Mr. Aide-de-camp!... For heaven's sake... Protect me!

What will become of us? I am the wife of the doctor of the Seventh

Chasseurs.... They won't let us pass, we are left behind and have lost

our people..."

"I'll flatten you into a pancake!" shouted the angry officer to the

soldier. "Turn back with your slut!"

"Mr. Aide-de-camp! Help me!... What does it all mean?" screamed the

doctor's wife.

"Kindly let this cart pass. Don't you see it's a woman?" said Prince

Andrew riding up to the officer.

The officer glanced at him, and without replying turned again to the

soldier. "I'll teach you to push on!... Back!"

"Let them pass, I tell you!" repeated Prince Andrew, compressing his

lips.

"And who are you?" cried the officer, turning on him with tipsy rage,

"who are you? Are you in command here? Eh? I am commander here, not you!

Go back or I'll flatten you into a pancake," repeated he. This

expression evidently pleased him.

"That was a nice snub for the little aide-de-camp," came a voice from

behind.

Prince Andrew saw that the officer was in that state of senseless, tipsy

rage when a man does not know what he is saying. He saw that his

championship of the doctor's wife in her queer trap might expose him to

what he dreaded more than anything in the world--to ridicule; but his

instinct urged him on. Before the officer finished his sentence Prince

Andrew, his face distorted with fury, rode up to him and raised his

riding whip.

"Kind...ly let--them--pass!"

The officer flourished his arm and hastily rode away.

"It's all the fault of these fellows on the staff that there's this

disorder," he muttered. "Do as you like."

Prince Andrew without lifting his eyes rode hastily away from the

doctor's wife, who was calling him her deliverer, and recalling with a

sense of disgust the minutest details of this humiliating scene he

galloped on to the village where he was told that the commander-in-chief

was.

On reaching the village he dismounted and went to the nearest house,

intending to rest if but for a moment, eat something, and try to sort

out the stinging and tormenting thoughts that confused his mind. "This

is a mob of scoundrels and not an army," he was thinking as he went up

to the window of the first house, when a familiar voice called him by

name.

He turned round. Nesvitski's handsome face looked out of the little

window. Nesvitski, moving his moist lips as he chewed something, and

flourishing his arm, called him to enter.

"Bolkonski! Bolkonski!... Don't you hear? Eh? Come quick..." he shouted.

Entering the house, Prince Andrew saw Nesvitski and another adjutant

having something to eat. They hastily turned round to him asking if he

had any news. On their familiar faces he read agitation and alarm. This

was particularly noticeable on Nesvitski's usually laughing countenance.

"Where is the commander-in-chief?" asked Bolkonski.

"Here, in that house," answered the adjutant.

"Well, is it true that it's peace and capitulation?" asked Nesvitski.

"I was going to ask you. I know nothing except that it was all I could

do to get here."

"And we, my dear boy! It's terrible! I was wrong to laugh at Mack, we're

getting it still worse," said Nesvitski. "But sit down and have

something to eat."

"You won't be able to find either your baggage or anything else now,

Prince. And God only knows where your man Peter is," said the other

adjutant.

"Where are headquarters?"

"We are to spend the night in Znaim."

"Well, I have got all I need into packs for two horses," said Nesvitski.

"They've made up splendid packs for me--fit to cross the Bohemian

mountains with. It's a bad lookout, old fellow! But what's the matter

with you? You must be ill to shiver like that," he added, noticing that

Prince Andrew winced as at an electric shock.

"It's nothing," replied Prince Andrew.

He had just remembered his recent encounter with the doctor's wife and

the convoy officer.

"What is the commander-in-chief doing here?" he asked.

"I can't make out at all," said Nesvitski.

"Well, all I can make out is that everything is abominable, abominable,

quite abominable!" said Prince Andrew, and he went off to the house

where the commander-in-chief was.

Passing by Kutuzov's carriage and the exhausted saddle horses of his

suite, with their Cossacks who were talking loudly together, Prince

Andrew entered the passage. Kutuzov himself, he was told, was in the

house with Prince Bagration and Weyrother. Weyrother was the Austrian

general who had succeeded Schmidt. In the passage little Kozlovski was

squatting on his heels in front of a clerk. The clerk, with cuffs turned

up, was hastily writing at a tub turned bottom upwards. Kozlovski's face

looked worn--he too had evidently not slept all night. He glanced at

Prince Andrew and did not even nod to him.

"Second line... have you written it?" he continued dictating to the

clerk. "The Kiev Grenadiers, Podolian..."

"One can't write so fast, your honor," said the clerk, glancing angrily

and disrespectfully at Kozlovski.

Through the door came the sounds of Kutuzov's voice, excited and

dissatisfied, interrupted by another, an unfamiliar voice. From the

sound of these voices, the inattentive way Kozlovski looked at him, the

disrespectful manner of the exhausted clerk, the fact that the clerk and

Kozlovski were squatting on the floor by a tub so near to the commander

in chief, and from the noisy laughter of the Cossacks holding the horses

near the window, Prince Andrew felt that something important and

disastrous was about to happen.

He turned to Kozlovski with urgent questions.

"Immediately, Prince," said Kozlovski. "Dispositions for Bagration."

"What about capitulation?"

"Nothing of the sort. Orders are issued for a battle."

Prince Andrew moved toward the door from whence voices were heard. Just

as he was going to open it the sounds ceased, the door opened, and

Kutuzov with his eagle nose and puffy face appeared in the doorway.

Prince Andrew stood right in front of Kutuzov but the expression of the

commander in chief's one sound eye showed him to be so preoccupied with

thoughts and anxieties as to be oblivious of his presence. He looked

straight at his adjutant's face without recognizing him.

"Well, have you finished?" said he to Kozlovski.

"One moment, your excellency."

Bagration, a gaunt middle-aged man of medium height with a firm,

impassive face of Oriental type, came out after the commander-in-chief.

"I have the honor to present myself," repeated Prince Andrew rather

loudly, handing Kutuzov an envelope.

"Ah, from Vienna? Very good. Later, later!"

Kutuzov went out into the porch with Bagration.

"Well, good-by, Prince," said he to Bagration. "My blessing, and may

Christ be with you in your great endeavor!"

His face suddenly softened and tears came into his eyes. With his left

hand he drew Bagration toward him, and with his right, on which he wore

a ring, he made the sign of the cross over him with a gesture evidently

habitual, offering his puffy cheek, but Bagration kissed him on the neck

instead.

"Christ be with you!" Kutuzov repeated and went toward his carriage.

"Get in with me," said he to Bolkonski.

"Your excellency, I should like to be of use here. Allow me to remain

with Prince Bagration's detachment."

"Get in," said Kutuzov, and noticing that Bolkonski still delayed, he

added: "I need good officers myself, need them myself!"

They got into the carriage and drove for a few minutes in silence.

"There is still much, much before us," he said, as if with an old man's

penetration he understood all that was passing in Bolkonski's mind. "If

a tenth part of his detachment returns I shall thank God," he added as

if speaking to himself.

Prince Andrew glanced at Kutuzov's face only a foot distant from him and

involuntarily noticed the carefully washed seams of the scar near his

temple, where an Ismail bullet had pierced his skull, and the empty eye

socket. "Yes, he has a right to speak so calmly of those men's death,"

thought Bolkonski.

"That is why I beg to be sent to that detachment," he said.

Kutuzov did not reply. He seemed to have forgotten what he had been

saying, and sat plunged in thought. Five minutes later, gently swaying

on the soft springs of the carriage, he turned to Prince Andrew. There

was not a trace of agitation on his face. With delicate irony he

questioned Prince Andrew about the details of his interview with the

Emperor, about the remarks he had heard at court concerning the Krems

affair, and about some ladies they both knew.

CHAPTER XIV

On November 1 Kutuzov had received, through a spy, news that the army he

commanded was in an almost hopeless position. The spy reported that the

French, after crossing the bridge at Vienna, were advancing in immense

force upon Kutuzov's line of communication with the troops that were

arriving from Russia. If Kutuzov decided to remain at Krems, Napoleon's

army of one hundred and fifty thousand men would cut him off completely

and surround his exhausted army of forty thousand, and he would find

himself in the position of Mack at Ulm. If Kutuzov decided to abandon

the road connecting him with the troops arriving from Russia, he would

have to march with no road into unknown parts of the Bohemian mountains,

defending himself against superior forces of the enemy and abandoning

all hope of a junction with Buxhowden. If Kutuzov decided to retreat

along the road from Krems to Olmutz, to unite with the troops arriving

from Russia, he risked being forestalled on that road by the French who

had crossed the Vienna bridge, and encumbered by his baggage and

transport, having to accept battle on the march against an enemy three

times as strong, who would hem him in from two sides.

Kutuzov chose this latter course.

The French, the spy reported, having crossed the Vienna bridge, were

advancing by forced marches toward Znaim, which lay sixty-six miles off

on the line of Kutuzov's retreat. If he reached Znaim before the French,

there would be great hope of saving the army; to let the French

forestall him at Znaim meant the exposure of his whole army to a

disgrace such as that of Ulm, or to utter destruction. But to forestall

the French with his whole army was impossible. The road for the French

from Vienna to Znaim was shorter and better than the road for the

Russians from Krems to Znaim.

The night he received the news, Kutuzov sent Bagration's vanguard, four

thousand strong, to the right across the hills from the Krems-Znaim to

the Vienna-Znaim road. Bagration was to make this march without resting,

and to halt facing Vienna with Znaim to his rear, and if he succeeded in

forestalling the French he was to delay them as long as possible.

Kutuzov himself with all his transport took the road to Znaim.

Marching thirty miles that stormy night across roadless hills, with his

hungry, ill-shod soldiers, and losing a third of his men as stragglers

by the way, Bagration came out on the Vienna-Znaim road at Hollabrunn a

few hours ahead of the French who were approaching Hollabrunn from

Vienna. Kutuzov with his transport had still to march for some days

before he could reach Znaim. Hence Bagration with his four thousand

hungry, exhausted men would have to detain for days the whole enemy army

that came upon him at Hollabrunn, which was clearly impossible. But a

freak of fate made the impossible possible. The success of the trick

that had placed the Vienna bridge in the hands of the French without a

fight led Murat to try to deceive Kutuzov in a similar way. Meeting

Bagration's weak detachment on the Znaim road he supposed it to be

Kutuzov's whole army. To be able to crush it absolutely he awaited the

arrival of the rest of the troops who were on their way from Vienna, and

with this object offered a three days' truce on condition that both

armies should remain in position without moving. Murat declared that

negotiations for peace were already proceeding, and that he therefore

offered this truce to avoid unnecessary bloodshed. Count Nostitz, the

Austrian general occupying the advanced posts, believed Murat's emissary

and retired, leaving Bagration's division exposed. Another emissary rode

to the Russian line to announce the peace negotiations and to offer the

Russian army the three days' truce. Bagration replied that he was not

authorized either to accept or refuse a truce and sent his adjutant to

Kutuzov to report the offer he had received.

A truce was Kutuzov's sole chance of gaining time, giving Bagration's

exhausted troops some rest, and letting the transport and heavy convoys

(whose movements were concealed from the French) advance if but one

stage nearer Znaim. The offer of a truce gave the only, and a quite

unexpected, chance of saving the army. On receiving the news he

immediately dispatched Adjutant General Wintzingerode, who was in

attendance on him, to the enemy camp. Wintzingerode was not merely to

agree to the truce but also to offer terms of capitulation, and

meanwhile Kutuzov sent his adjutants back to hasten to the utmost the

movements of the baggage trains of the entire army along the Krems-Znaim

road. Bagration's exhausted and hungry detachment, which alone covered

this movement of the transport and of the whole army, had to remain

stationary in face of an enemy eight times as strong as itself.

Kutuzov's expectations that the proposals of capitulation (which were in

no way binding) might give time for part of the transport to pass, and

also that Murat's mistake would very soon be discovered, proved correct.

As soon as Bonaparte (who was at Schonbrunn, sixteen miles from

Hollabrunn) received Murat's dispatch with the proposal of a truce and a

capitulation, he detected a ruse and wrote the following letter to

Murat:

Schonbrunn, 25th Brumaire, 1805,

at eight o'clock in the morning

To PRINCE MURAT,

I cannot find words to express to you my displeasure. You command only

my advance guard, and have no right to arrange an armistice without my

order. You are causing me to lose the fruits of a campaign. Break the

armistice immediately and march on the enemy. Inform him that the

general who signed that capitulation had no right to do so, and that no

one but the Emperor of Russia has that right.

If, however, the Emperor of Russia ratifies that convention, I will

ratify it; but it is only a trick. March on, destroy the Russian

army.... You are in a position to seize its baggage and artillery.

The Russian Emperor's aide-de-camp is an impostor. Officers are nothing

when they have no powers; this one had none.... The Austrians let

themselves be tricked at the crossing of the Vienna bridge, you are

letting yourself be tricked by an aide-de-camp of the Emperor.

NAPOLEON

Bonaparte's adjutant rode full gallop with this menacing letter to

Murat. Bonaparte himself, not trusting to his generals, moved with all

the Guards to the field of battle, afraid of letting a ready victim

escape, and Bagration's four thousand men merrily lighted campfires,

dried and warmed themselves, cooked their porridge for the first time

for three days, and not one of them knew or imagined what was in store

for him.

CHAPTER XV

Between three and four o'clock in the afternoon Prince Andrew, who had

persisted in his request to Kutuzov, arrived at Grunth and reported

himself to Bagration. Bonaparte's adjutant had not yet reached Murat's

detachment and the battle had not yet begun. In Bagration's detachment

no one knew anything of the general position of affairs. They talked of

peace but did not believe in its possibility; others talked of a battle

but also disbelieved in the nearness of an engagement. Bagration,

knowing Bolkonski to be a favorite and trusted adjutant, received him

with distinction and special marks of favor, explaining to him that

there would probably be an engagement that day or the next, and giving

him full liberty to remain with him during the battle or to join the

rearguard and have an eye on the order of retreat, "which is also very

important."

"However, there will hardly be an engagement today," said Bagration as

if to reassure Prince Andrew.

"If he is one of the ordinary little staff dandies sent to earn a medal

he can get his reward just as well in the rearguard, but if he wishes to

stay with me, let him... he'll be of use here if he's a brave officer,"

thought Bagration. Prince Andrew, without replying, asked the prince's

permission to ride round the position to see the disposition of the

forces, so as to know his bearings should he be sent to execute an

order. The officer on duty, a handsome, elegantly dressed man with a

diamond ring on his forefinger, who was fond of speaking French though

he spoke it badly, offered to conduct Prince Andrew.

On all sides they saw rain-soaked officers with dejected faces who

seemed to be seeking something, and soldiers dragging doors, benches,

and fencing from the village.

"There now, Prince! We can't stop those fellows," said the staff officer

pointing to the soldiers. "The officers don't keep them in hand. And

there," he pointed to a sutler's tent, "they crowd in and sit. This

morning I turned them all out and now look, it's full again. I must go

there, Prince, and scare them a bit. It won't take a moment."

"Yes, let's go in and I will get myself a roll and some cheese," said

Prince Andrew who had not yet had time to eat anything.

"Why didn't you mention it, Prince? I would have offered you something."

They dismounted and entered the tent. Several officers, with flushed and

weary faces, were sitting at the table eating and drinking.

"Now what does this mean, gentlemen?" said the staff officer, in the

reproachful tone of a man who has repeated the same thing more than

once. "You know it won't do to leave your posts like this. The prince

gave orders that no one should leave his post. Now you, Captain," and he

turned to a thin, dirty little artillery officer who without his boots

(he had given them to the canteen keeper to dry), in only his stockings,

rose when they entered, smiling not altogether comfortably.

"Well, aren't you ashamed of yourself, Captain Tushin?" he continued.

"One would think that as an artillery officer you would set a good

example, yet here you are without your boots! The alarm will be sounded

and you'll be in a pretty position without your boots!" (The staff

officer smiled.) "Kindly return to your posts, gentlemen, all of you,

all!" he added in a tone of command.

Prince Andrew smiled involuntarily as he looked at the artillery officer

Tushin, who silent and smiling, shifting from one stockinged foot to the

other, glanced inquiringly with his large, intelligent, kindly eyes from

Prince Andrew to the staff officer.

"The soldiers say it feels easier without boots," said Captain Tushin

smiling shyly in his uncomfortable position, evidently wishing to adopt

a jocular tone. But before he had finished he felt that his jest was

unacceptable and had not come off. He grew confused.

"Kindly return to your posts," said the staff officer trying to preserve

his gravity.

Prince Andrew glanced again at the artillery officer's small figure.

There was something peculiar about it, quite unsoldierly, rather comic,

but extremely attractive.

The staff officer and Prince Andrew mounted their horses and rode on.

Having ridden beyond the village, continually meeting and overtaking

soldiers and officers of various regiments, they saw on their left some

entrenchments being thrown up, the freshly dug clay of which showed up

red. Several battalions of soldiers, in their shirt sleeves despite the

cold wind, swarmed in these earthworks like a host of white ants;

spadefuls of red clay were continually being thrown up from behind the

bank by unseen hands. Prince Andrew and the officer rode up, looked at

the entrenchment, and went on again. Just behind it they came upon some

dozens of soldiers, continually replaced by others, who ran from the

entrenchment. They had to hold their noses and put their horses to a

trot to escape from the poisoned atmosphere of these latrines.

"Voila l'agrement des camps, monsieur le Prince," \* said the staff

officer.

\* "This is a pleasure one gets in camp, Prince."

They rode up the opposite hill. From there the French could already be

seen. Prince Andrew stopped and began examining the position.

"That's our battery," said the staff officer indicating the highest

point. "It's in charge of the queer fellow we saw without his boots. You

can see everything from there; let's go there, Prince."

"Thank you very much, I will go on alone," said Prince Andrew, wishing

to rid himself of this staff officer's company, "please don't trouble

yourself further."

The staff officer remained behind and Prince Andrew rode on alone.

The farther forward and nearer the enemy he went, the more orderly and

cheerful were the troops. The greatest disorder and depression had been

in the baggage train he had passed that morning on the Znaim road seven

miles away from the French. At Grunth also some apprehension and alarm

could be felt, but the nearer Prince Andrew came to the French lines the

more confident was the appearance of our troops. The soldiers in their

greatcoats were ranged in lines, the sergeants major and company

officers were counting the men, poking the last man in each section in

the ribs and telling him to hold his hand up. Soldiers scattered over

the whole place were dragging logs and brushwood and were building

shelters with merry chatter and laughter; around the fires sat others,

dressed and undressed, drying their shirts and leg bands or mending

boots or overcoats and crowding round the boilers and porridge cookers.

In one company dinner was ready, and the soldiers were gazing eagerly at

the steaming boiler, waiting till the sample, which a quartermaster

sergeant was carrying in a wooden bowl to an officer who sat on a log

before his shelter, had been tasted.

Another company, a lucky one for not all the companies had vodka,

crowded round a pockmarked, broad-shouldered sergeant major who, tilting

a keg, filled one after another the canteen lids held out to him. The

soldiers lifted the canteen lids to their lips with reverential faces,

emptied them, rolling the vodka in their mouths, and walked away from

the sergeant major with brightened expressions, licking their lips and

wiping them on the sleeves of their greatcoats. All their faces were as

serene as if all this were happening at home awaiting peaceful

encampment, and not within sight of the enemy before an action in which

at least half of them would be left on the field. After passing a

chasseur regiment and in the lines of the Kiev grenadiers--fine fellows

busy with similar peaceful affairs--near the shelter of the regimental

commander, higher than and different from the others, Prince Andrew came

out in front of a platoon of grenadiers before whom lay a naked man. Two

soldiers held him while two others were flourishing their switches and

striking him regularly on his bare back. The man shrieked unnaturally. A

stout major was pacing up and down the line, and regardless of the

screams kept repeating:

"It's a shame for a soldier to steal; a soldier must be honest,

honorable, and brave, but if he robs his fellows there is no honor in

him, he's a scoundrel. Go on! Go on!"

So the swishing sound of the strokes, and the desperate but unnatural

screams, continued.

"Go on, go on!" said the major.

A young officer with a bewildered and pained expression on his face

stepped away from the man and looked round inquiringly at the adjutant

as he rode by.

Prince Andrew, having reached the front line, rode along it. Our front

line and that of the enemy were far apart on the right and left flanks,

but in the center where the men with a flag of truce had passed that

morning, the lines were so near together that the men could see one

another's faces and speak to one another. Besides the soldiers who

formed the picket line on either side, there were many curious onlookers

who, jesting and laughing, stared at their strange foreign enemies.

Since early morning--despite an injunction not to approach the picket

line--the officers had been unable to keep sight-seers away. The

soldiers forming the picket line, like showmen exhibiting a curiosity,

no longer looked at the French but paid attention to the sight-seers and

grew weary waiting to be relieved. Prince Andrew halted to have a look

at the French.

"Look! Look there!" one soldier was saying to another, pointing to a

Russian musketeer who had gone up to the picket line with an officer and

was rapidly and excitedly talking to a French grenadier. "Hark to him

jabbering! Fine, isn't it? It's all the Frenchy can do to keep up with

him. There now, Sidorov!"

"Wait a bit and listen. It's fine!" answered Sidorov, who was considered

an adept at French.

The soldier to whom the laughers referred was Dolokhov. Prince Andrew

recognized him and stopped to listen to what he was saying. Dolokhov had

come from the left flank where their regiment was stationed, with his

captain.

"Now then, go on, go on!" incited the officer, bending forward and

trying not to lose a word of the speech which was incomprehensible to

him. "More, please: more! What's he saying?"

Dolokhov did not answer the captain; he had been drawn into a hot

dispute with the French grenadier. They were naturally talking about the

campaign. The Frenchman, confusing the Austrians with the Russians, was

trying to prove that the Russians had surrendered and had fled all the

way from Ulm, while Dolokhov maintained that the Russians had not

surrendered but had beaten the French.

"We have orders to drive you off here, and we shall drive you off," said

Dolokhov.

"Only take care you and your Cossacks are not all captured!" said the

French grenadier.

The French onlookers and listeners laughed.

"We'll make you dance as we did under Suvorov...," \* said Dolokhov.

\* "On vous fera danser."

"Qu' est-ce qu'il chante?" \* asked a Frenchman.

\* "What's he singing about?"

"It's ancient history," said another, guessing that it referred to a

former war. "The Emperor will teach your Suvara as he has taught the

others..."

"Bonaparte..." began Dolokhov, but the Frenchman interrupted him.

"Not Bonaparte. He is the Emperor! Sacre nom...!" cried he angrily.

"The devil skin your Emperor."

And Dolokhov swore at him in coarse soldier's Russian and shouldering

his musket walked away.

"Let us go, Ivan Lukich," he said to the captain.

"Ah, that's the way to talk French," said the picket soldiers. "Now,

Sidorov, you have a try!"

Sidorov, turning to the French, winked, and began to jabber meaningless

sounds very fast: "Kari, mala, tafa, safi, muter, Kaska," he said,

trying to give an expressive intonation to his voice.

"Ho! ho! ho! Ha! ha! ha! ha! Ouh! ouh!" came peals of such healthy and

good-humored laughter from the soldiers that it infected the French

involuntarily, so much so that the only thing left to do seemed to be to

unload the muskets, explode the ammunition, and all return home as

quickly as possible.

But the guns remained loaded, the loopholes in blockhouses and

entrenchments looked out just as menacingly, and the unlimbered cannon

confronted one another as before.

CHAPTER XVI

Having ridden round the whole line from right flank to left, Prince

Andrew made his way up to the battery from which the staff officer had

told him the whole field could be seen. Here he dismounted, and stopped

beside the farthest of the four unlimbered cannon. Before the guns an

artillery sentry was pacing up and down; he stood at attention when the

officer arrived, but at a sign resumed his measured, monotonous pacing.

Behind the guns were their limbers and still farther back picket ropes

and artillerymen's bonfires. To the left, not far from the farthest

cannon, was a small, newly constructed wattle shed from which came the

sound of officers' voices in eager conversation.

It was true that a view over nearly the whole Russian position and the

greater part of the enemy's opened out from this battery. Just facing

it, on the crest of the opposite hill, the village of Schon Grabern

could be seen, and in three places to left and right the French troops

amid the smoke of their campfires, the greater part of whom were

evidently in the village itself and behind the hill. To the left from

that village, amid the smoke, was something resembling a battery, but it

was impossible to see it clearly with the naked eye. Our right flank was

posted on a rather steep incline which dominated the French position.

Our infantry were stationed there, and at the farthest point the

dragoons. In the center, where Tushin's battery stood and from which

Prince Andrew was surveying the position, was the easiest and most

direct descent and ascent to the brook separating us from Schon Grabern.

On the left our troops were close to a copse, in which smoked the

bonfires of our infantry who were felling wood. The French line was

wider than ours, and it was plain that they could easily outflank us on

both sides. Behind our position was a steep and deep dip, making it

difficult for artillery and cavalry to retire. Prince Andrew took out

his notebook and, leaning on the cannon, sketched a plan of the

position. He made some notes on two points, intending to mention them to

Bagration. His idea was, first, to concentrate all the artillery in the

center, and secondly, to withdraw the cavalry to the other side of the

dip. Prince Andrew, being always near the commander in chief, closely

following the mass movements and general orders, and constantly studying

historical accounts of battles, involuntarily pictured to himself the

course of events in the forthcoming action in broad outline. He imagined

only important possibilities: "If the enemy attacks the right flank," he

said to himself, "the Kiev grenadiers and the Podolsk chasseurs must

hold their position till reserves from the center come up. In that case

the dragoons could successfully make a flank counterattack. If they

attack our center we, having the center battery on this high ground,

shall withdraw the left flank under its cover, and retreat to the dip by

echelons." So he reasoned.... All the time he had been beside the gun,

he had heard the voices of the officers distinctly, but as often happens

had not understood a word of what they were saying. Suddenly, however,

he was struck by a voice coming from the shed, and its tone was so

sincere that he could not but listen.

"No, friend," said a pleasant and, as it seemed to Prince Andrew, a

familiar voice, "what I say is that if it were possible to know what is

beyond death, none of us would be afraid of it. That's so, friend."

Another, a younger voice, interrupted him: "Afraid or not, you can't

escape it anyhow."

"All the same, one is afraid! Oh, you clever people," said a third manly

voice interrupting them both. "Of course you artillery men are very

wise, because you can take everything along with you--vodka and snacks."

And the owner of the manly voice, evidently an infantry officer,

laughed.

"Yes, one is afraid," continued the first speaker, he of the familiar

voice. "One is afraid of the unknown, that's what it is. Whatever we may

say about the soul going to the sky... we know there is no sky but only

an atmosphere."

The manly voice again interrupted the artillery officer.

"Well, stand us some of your herb vodka, Tushin," it said.

"Why," thought Prince Andrew, "that's the captain who stood up in the

sutler's hut without his boots." He recognized the agreeable,

philosophizing voice with pleasure.

"Some herb vodka? Certainly!" said Tushin. "But still, to conceive a

future life..."

He did not finish. Just then there was a whistle in the air; nearer and

nearer, faster and louder, louder and faster, a cannon ball, as if it

had not finished saying what was necessary, thudded into the ground near

the shed with super human force, throwing up a mass of earth. The ground

seemed to groan at the terrible impact.

And immediately Tushin, with a short pipe in the corner of his mouth and

his kind, intelligent face rather pale, rushed out of the shed followed

by the owner of the manly voice, a dashing infantry officer who hurried

off to his company, buttoning up his coat as he ran.

CHAPTER XVII

Mounting his horse again Prince Andrew lingered with the battery,

looking at the puff from the gun that had sent the ball. His eyes ran

rapidly over the wide space, but he only saw that the hitherto

motionless masses of the French now swayed and that there really was a

battery to their left. The smoke above it had not yet dispersed. Two

mounted Frenchmen, probably adjutants, were galloping up the hill. A

small but distinctly visible enemy column was moving down the hill,

probably to strengthen the front line. The smoke of the first shot had

not yet dispersed before another puff appeared, followed by a report.

The battle had begun! Prince Andrew turned his horse and galloped back

to Grunth to find Prince Bagration. He heard the cannonade behind him

growing louder and more frequent. Evidently our guns had begun to reply.

From the bottom of the slope, where the parleys had taken place, came

the report of musketry.

Lemarrois had just arrived at a gallop with Bonaparte's stern letter,

and Murat, humiliated and anxious to expiate his fault, had at once

moved his forces to attack the center and outflank both the Russian

wings, hoping before evening and before the arrival of the Emperor to

crush the contemptible detachment that stood before him.

"It has begun. Here it is!" thought Prince Andrew, feeling the blood

rush to his heart. "But where and how will my Toulon present itself?"

Passing between the companies that had been eating porridge and drinking

vodka a quarter of an hour before, he saw everywhere the same rapid

movement of soldiers forming ranks and getting their muskets ready, and

on all their faces he recognized the same eagerness that filled his

heart. "It has begun! Here it is, dreadful but enjoyable!" was what the

face of each soldier and each officer seemed to say.

Before he had reached the embankments that were being thrown up, he saw,

in the light of the dull autumn evening, mounted men coming toward him.

The foremost, wearing a Cossack cloak and lambskin cap and riding a

white horse, was Prince Bagration. Prince Andrew stopped, waiting for

him to come up; Prince Bagration reined in his horse and recognizing

Prince Andrew nodded to him. He still looked ahead while Prince Andrew

told him what he had seen.

The feeling, "It has begun! Here it is!" was seen even on Prince

Bagration's hard brown face with its half-closed, dull, sleepy eyes.

Prince Andrew gazed with anxious curiosity at that impassive face and

wished he could tell what, if anything, this man was thinking and

feeling at that moment. "Is there anything at all behind that impassive

face?" Prince Andrew asked himself as he looked. Prince Bagration bent

his head in sign of agreement with what Prince Andrew told him, and

said, "Very good!" in a tone that seemed to imply that everything that

took place and was reported to him was exactly what he had foreseen.

Prince Andrew, out of breath with his rapid ride, spoke quickly. Prince

Bagration, uttering his words with an Oriental accent, spoke

particularly slowly, as if to impress the fact that there was no need to

hurry. However, he put his horse to a trot in the direction of Tushin's

battery. Prince Andrew followed with the suite. Behind Prince Bagration

rode an officer of the suite, the prince's personal adjutant, Zherkov,

an orderly officer, the staff officer on duty, riding a fine bobtailed

horse, and a civilian--an accountant who had asked permission to be

present at the battle out of curiosity. The accountant, a stout, full-

faced man, looked around him with a naive smile of satisfaction and

presented a strange appearance among the hussars, Cossacks, and

adjutants, in his camlet coat, as he jolted on his horse with a convoy

officer's saddle.

"He wants to see a battle," said Zherkov to Bolkonski, pointing to the

accountant, "but he feels a pain in the pit of his stomach already."

"Oh, leave off!" said the accountant with a beaming but rather cunning

smile, as if flattered at being made the subject of Zherkov's joke, and

purposely trying to appear stupider than he really was.

"It is very strange, mon Monsieur Prince," said the staff officer. (He

remembered that in French there is some peculiar way of addressing a

prince, but could not get it quite right.)

By this time they were all approaching Tushin's battery, and a ball

struck the ground in front of them.

"What's that that has fallen?" asked the accountant with a naive smile.

"A French pancake," answered Zherkov.

"So that's what they hit with?" asked the accountant. "How awful!"

He seemed to swell with satisfaction. He had hardly finished speaking

when they again heard an unexpectedly violent whistling which suddenly

ended with a thud into something soft... f-f-flop! and a Cossack, riding

a little to their right and behind the accountant, crashed to earth with

his horse. Zherkov and the staff officer bent over their saddles and

turned their horses away. The accountant stopped, facing the Cossack,

and examined him with attentive curiosity. The Cossack was dead, but the

horse still struggled.

Prince Bagration screwed up his eyes, looked round, and, seeing the

cause of the confusion, turned away with indifference, as if to say, "Is

it worth while noticing trifles?" He reined in his horse with the care

of a skillful rider and, slightly bending over, disengaged his saber

which had caught in his cloak. It was an old-fashioned saber of a kind

no longer in general use. Prince Andrew remembered the story of Suvorov

giving his saber to Bagration in Italy, and the recollection was

particularly pleasant at that moment. They had reached the battery at

which Prince Andrew had been when he examined the battlefield.

"Whose company?" asked Prince Bagration of an artilleryman standing by

the ammunition wagon.

He asked, "Whose company?" but he really meant, "Are you frightened

here?" and the artilleryman understood him.

"Captain Tushin's, your excellency!" shouted the red-haired, freckled

gunner in a merry voice, standing to attention.

"Yes, yes," muttered Bagration as if considering something, and he rode

past the limbers to the farthest cannon.

As he approached, a ringing shot issued from it deafening him and his

suite, and in the smoke that suddenly surrounded the gun they could see

the gunners who had seized it straining to roll it quickly back to its

former position. A huge, broad-shouldered gunner, Number One, holding a

mop, his legs far apart, sprang to the wheel; while Number Two with a

trembling hand placed a charge in the cannon's mouth. The short, round-

shouldered Captain Tushin, stumbling over the tail of the gun carriage,

moved forward and, not noticing the general, looked out shading his eyes

with his small hand.

"Lift it two lines more and it will be just right," cried he in a feeble

voice to which he tried to impart a dashing note, ill-suited to his weak

figure. "Number Two!" he squeaked. "Fire, Medvedev!"

Bagration called to him, and Tushin, raising three fingers to his cap

with a bashful and awkward gesture not at all like a military salute but

like a priest's benediction, approached the general. Though Tushin's

guns had been intended to cannonade the valley, he was firing incendiary

balls at the village of Schon Grabern visible just opposite, in front of

which large masses of French were advancing.

No one had given Tushin orders where and at what to fire, but after

consulting his sergeant major, Zakharchenko, for whom he had great

respect, he had decided that it would be a good thing to set fire to the

village. "Very good!" said Bagration in reply to the officer's report,

and began deliberately to examine the whole battlefield extended before

him. The French had advanced nearest on our right. Below the height on

which the Kiev regiment was stationed, in the hollow where the rivulet

flowed, the soul-stirring rolling and crackling of musketry was heard,

and much farther to the right beyond the dragoons, the officer of the

suite pointed out to Bagration a French column that was outflanking us.

To the left the horizon bounded by the adjacent wood. Prince Bagration

ordered two battalions from the center to be sent to reinforce the right

flank. The officer of the suite ventured to remark to the prince that if

these battalions went away, the guns would remain without support.

Prince Bagration turned to the officer and with his dull eyes looked at

him in silence. It seemed to Prince Andrew that the officer's remark was

just and that really no answer could be made to it. But at that moment

an adjutant galloped up with a message from the commander of the

regiment in the hollow and news that immense masses of the French were

coming down upon them and that his regiment was in disorder and was

retreating upon the Kiev grenadiers. Prince Bagration bowed his head in

sign of assent and approval. He rode off at a walk to the right and sent

an adjutant to the dragoons with orders to attack the French. But this

adjutant returned half an hour later with the news that the commander of

the dragoons had already retreated beyond the dip in the ground, as a

heavy fire had been opened on him and he was losing men uselessly, and

so had hastened to throw some sharpshooters into the wood.

"Very good!" said Bagration.

As he was leaving the battery, firing was heard on the left also, and as

it was too far to the left flank for him to have time to go there

himself, Prince Bagration sent Zherkov to tell the general in command

(the one who had paraded his regiment before Kutuzov at Braunau) that he

must retreat as quickly as possible behind the hollow in the rear, as

the right flank would probably not be able to withstand the enemy's

attack very long. About Tushin and the battalion that had been in

support of his battery all was forgotten. Prince Andrew listened

attentively to Bagration's colloquies with the commanding officers and

the orders he gave them and, to his surprise, found that no orders were

really given, but that Prince Bagration tried to make it appear that

everything done by necessity, by accident, or by the will of subordinate

commanders was done, if not by his direct command, at least in accord

with his intentions. Prince Andrew noticed, however, that though what

happened was due to chance and was independent of the commander's will,

owing to the tact Bagration showed, his presence was very valuable.

Officers who approached him with disturbed countenances became calm;

soldiers and officers greeted him gaily, grew more cheerful in his

presence, and were evidently anxious to display their courage before

him.

CHAPTER XVIII

Prince Bagration, having reached the highest point of our right flank,

began riding downhill to where the roll of musketry was heard but where

on account of the smoke nothing could be seen. The nearer they got to

the hollow the less they could see but the more they felt the nearness

of the actual battlefield. They began to meet wounded men. One with a

bleeding head and no cap was being dragged along by two soldiers who

supported him under the arms. There was a gurgle in his throat and he

was spitting blood. A bullet had evidently hit him in the throat or

mouth. Another was walking sturdily by himself but without his musket,

groaning aloud and swinging his arm which had just been hurt, while

blood from it was streaming over his greatcoat as from a bottle. He had

that moment been wounded and his face showed fear rather than suffering.

Crossing a road they descended a steep incline and saw several men lying

on the ground; they also met a crowd of soldiers some of whom were

unwounded. The soldiers were ascending the hill breathing heavily, and

despite the general's presence were talking loudly and gesticulating. In

front of them rows of gray cloaks were already visible through the

smoke, and an officer catching sight of Bagration rushed shouting after

the crowd of retreating soldiers, ordering them back. Bagration rode up

to the ranks along which shots crackled now here and now there, drowning

the sound of voices and the shouts of command. The whole air reeked with

smoke. The excited faces of the soldiers were blackened with it. Some

were using their ramrods, others putting powder on the touchpans or

taking charges from their pouches, while others were firing, though who

they were firing at could not be seen for the smoke which there was no

wind to carry away. A pleasant humming and whistling of bullets were

often heard. "What is this?" thought Prince Andrew approaching the crowd

of soldiers. "It can't be an attack, for they are not moving; it can't

be a square--for they are not drawn up for that."

The commander of the regiment, a thin, feeble-looking old man with a

pleasant smile--his eyelids drooping more than half over his old eyes,

giving him a mild expression, rode up to Bagration and welcomed him as a

host welcomes an honored guest. He reported that his regiment had been

attacked by French cavalry and that, though the attack had been

repulsed, he had lost more than half his men. He said the attack had

been repulsed, employing this military term to describe what had

occurred to his regiment, but in reality he did not himself know what

had happened during that half-hour to the troops entrusted to him, and

could not say with certainty whether the attack had been repulsed or his

regiment had been broken up. All he knew was that at the commencement of

the action balls and shells began flying all over his regiment and

hitting men and that afterwards someone had shouted "Cavalry!" and our

men had begun firing. They were still firing, not at the cavalry which

had disappeared, but at French infantry who had come into the hollow and

were firing at our men. Prince Bagration bowed his head as a sign that

this was exactly what he had desired and expected. Turning to his

adjutant he ordered him to bring down the two battalions of the Sixth

Chasseurs whom they had just passed. Prince Andrew was struck by the

changed expression on Prince Bagration's face at this moment. It

expressed the concentrated and happy resolution you see on the face of a

man who on a hot day takes a final run before plunging into the water.

The dull, sleepy expression was no longer there, nor the affectation of

profound thought. The round, steady, hawk's eyes looked before him

eagerly and rather disdainfully, not resting on anything although his

movements were still slow and measured.

The commander of the regiment turned to Prince Bagration, entreating him

to go back as it was too dangerous to remain where they were. "Please,

your excellency, for God's sake!" he kept saying, glancing for support

at an officer of the suite who turned away from him. "There, you see!"

and he drew attention to the bullets whistling, singing, and hissing

continually around them. He spoke in the tone of entreaty and reproach

that a carpenter uses to a gentleman who has picked up an ax: "We are

used to it, but you, sir, will blister your hands." He spoke as if those

bullets could not kill him, and his half-closed eyes gave still more

persuasiveness to his words. The staff officer joined in the colonel's

appeals, but Bagration did not reply; he only gave an order to cease

firing and re-form, so as to give room for the two approaching

battalions. While he was speaking, the curtain of smoke that had

concealed the hollow, driven by a rising wind, began to move from right

to left as if drawn by an invisible hand, and the hill opposite, with

the French moving about on it, opened out before them. All eyes fastened

involuntarily on this French column advancing against them and winding

down over the uneven ground. One could already see the soldiers' shaggy

caps, distinguish the officers from the men, and see the standard

flapping against its staff.

"They march splendidly," remarked someone in Bagration's suite.

The head of the column had already descended into the hollow. The clash

would take place on this side of it...

The remains of our regiment which had been in action rapidly formed up

and moved to the right; from behind it, dispersing the laggards, came

two battalions of the Sixth Chasseurs in fine order. Before they had

reached Bagration, the weighty tread of the mass of men marching in step

could be heard. On their left flank, nearest to Bagration, marched a

company commander, a fine round-faced man, with a stupid and happy

expression--the same man who had rushed out of the wattle shed. At that

moment he was clearly thinking of nothing but how dashing a fellow he

would appear as he passed the commander.

With the self-satisfaction of a man on parade, he stepped lightly with

his muscular legs as if sailing along, stretching himself to his full

height without the smallest effort, his ease contrasting with the heavy

tread of the soldiers who were keeping step with him. He carried close

to his leg a narrow unsheathed sword (small, curved, and not like a real

weapon) and looked now at the superior officers and now back at the men

without losing step, his whole powerful body turning flexibly. It was as

if all the powers of his soul were concentrated on passing the commander

in the best possible manner, and feeling that he was doing it well he

was happy. "Left... left... left..." he seemed to repeat to himself at

each alternate step; and in time to this, with stern but varied faces,

the wall of soldiers burdened with knapsacks and muskets marched in

step, and each one of these hundreds of soldiers seemed to be repeating

to himself at each alternate step, "Left... left... left..." A fat major

skirted a bush, puffing and falling out of step; a soldier who had

fallen behind, his face showing alarm at his defection, ran at a trot,

panting to catch up with his company. A cannon ball, cleaving the air,

flew over the heads of Bagration and his suite, and fell into the column

to the measure of "Left... left!" "Close up!" came the company

commander's voice in jaunty tones. The soldiers passed in a semicircle

round something where the ball had fallen, and an old trooper on the

flank, a noncommissioned officer who had stopped beside the dead men,

ran to catch up his line and, falling into step with a hop, looked back

angrily, and through the ominous silence and the regular tramp of feet

beating the ground in unison, one seemed to hear left... left... left.

"Well done, lads!" said Prince Bagration.

"Glad to do our best, your ex'len-lency!" came a confused shout from the

ranks. A morose soldier marching on the left turned his eyes on

Bagration as he shouted, with an expression that seemed to say: "We know

that ourselves!" Another, without looking round, as though fearing to

relax, shouted with his mouth wide open and passed on.

The order was given to halt and down knapsacks.

Bagration rode round the ranks that had marched past him and dismounted.

He gave the reins to a Cossack, took off and handed over his felt coat,

stretched his legs, and set his cap straight. The head of the French

column, with its officers leading, appeared from below the hill.

"Forward, with God!" said Bagration, in a resolute, sonorous voice,

turning for a moment to the front line, and slightly swinging his arms,

he went forward uneasily over the rough field with the awkward gait of a

cavalryman. Prince Andrew felt that an invisible power was leading him

forward, and experienced great happiness.

The French were already near. Prince Andrew, walking beside Bagration,

could clearly distinguish their bandoliers, red epaulets, and even their

faces. (He distinctly saw an old French officer who, with gaitered legs

and turned-out toes, climbed the hill with difficulty.) Prince Bagration

gave no further orders and silently continued to walk on in front of the

ranks. Suddenly one shot after another rang out from the French, smoke

appeared all along their uneven ranks, and musket shots sounded. Several

of our men fell, among them the round-faced officer who had marched so

gaily and complacently. But at the moment the first report was heard,

Bagration looked round and shouted, "Hurrah!"

"Hurrah--ah!--ah!" rang a long-drawn shout from our ranks, and passing

Bagration and racing one another they rushed in an irregular but joyous

and eager crowd down the hill at their disordered foe.

CHAPTER XIX

The attack of the Sixth Chasseurs secured the retreat of our right

flank. In the center Tushin's forgotten battery, which had managed to

set fire to the Schon Grabern village, delayed the French advance. The

French were putting out the fire which the wind was spreading, and thus

gave us time to retreat. The retirement of the center to the other side

of the dip in the ground at the rear was hurried and noisy, but the

different companies did not get mixed. But our left--which consisted of

the Azov and Podolsk infantry and the Pavlograd hussars--was

simultaneously attacked and outflanked by superior French forces under

Lannes and was thrown into confusion. Bagration had sent Zherkov to the

general commanding that left flank with orders to retreat immediately.

Zherkov, not removing his hand from his cap, turned his horse about and

galloped off. But no sooner had he left Bagration than his courage

failed him. He was seized by panic and could not go where it was

dangerous.

Having reached the left flank, instead of going to the front where the

firing was, he began to look for the general and his staff where they

could not possibly be, and so did not deliver the order.

The command of the left flank belonged by seniority to the commander of

the regiment Kutuzov had reviewed at Braunau and in which Dolokhov was

serving as a private. But the command of the extreme left flank had been

assigned to the commander of the Pavlograd regiment in which Rostov was

serving, and a misunderstanding arose. The two commanders were much

exasperated with one another and, long after the action had begun on the

right flank and the French were already advancing, were engaged in

discussion with the sole object of offending one another. But the

regiments, both cavalry and infantry, were by no means ready for the

impending action. From privates to general they were not expecting a

battle and were engaged in peaceful occupations, the cavalry feeding the

horses and the infantry collecting wood.

"He higher iss dan I in rank," said the German colonel of the hussars,

flushing and addressing an adjutant who had ridden up, "so let him do

what he vill, but I cannot sacrifice my hussars... Bugler, sount ze

retreat!"

But haste was becoming imperative. Cannon and musketry, mingling

together, thundered on the right and in the center, while the capotes of

Lannes' sharpshooters were already seen crossing the milldam and forming

up within twice the range of a musket shot. The general in command of

the infantry went toward his horse with jerky steps, and having mounted

drew himself up very straight and tall and rode to the Pavlograd

commander. The commanders met with polite bows but with secret

malevolence in their hearts.

"Once again, Colonel," said the general, "I can't leave half my men in

the wood. I beg of you, I beg of you," he repeated, "to occupy the

position and prepare for an attack."

"I peg of you yourself not to mix in vot is not your business!" suddenly

replied the irate colonel. "If you vere in the cavalry..."

"I am not in the cavalry, Colonel, but I am a Russian general and if you

are not aware of the fact..."

"Quite avare, your excellency," suddenly shouted the colonel, touching

his horse and turning purple in the face. "Vill you be so goot to come

to ze front and see dat zis position iss no goot? I don't vish to

destroy my men for your pleasure!"

"You forget yourself, Colonel. I am not considering my own pleasure and

I won't allow it to be said!"

Taking the colonel's outburst as a challenge to his courage, the general

expanded his chest and rode, frowning, beside him to the front line, as

if their differences would be settled there amongst the bullets. They

reached the front, several bullets sped over them, and they halted in

silence. There was nothing fresh to be seen from the line, for from

where they had been before it had been evident that it was impossible

for cavalry to act among the bushes and broken ground, as well as that

the French were outflanking our left. The general and colonel looked

sternly and significantly at one another like two fighting cocks

preparing for battle, each vainly trying to detect signs of cowardice in

the other. Both passed the examination successfully. As there was

nothing to be said, and neither wished to give occasion for it to be

alleged that he had been the first to leave the range of fire, they

would have remained there for a long time testing each other's courage

had it not been that just then they heard the rattle of musketry and a

muffled shout almost behind them in the wood. The French had attacked

the men collecting wood in the copse. It was no longer possible for the

hussars to retreat with the infantry. They were cut off from the line of

retreat on the left by the French. However inconvenient the position, it

was now necessary to attack in order to cut a way through for

themselves.

The squadron in which Rostov was serving had scarcely time to mount

before it was halted facing the enemy. Again, as at the Enns bridge,

there was nothing between the squadron and the enemy, and again that

terrible dividing line of uncertainty and fear--resembling the line

separating the living from the dead--lay between them. All were

conscious of this unseen line, and the question whether they would cross

it or not, and how they would cross it, agitated them all.

The colonel rode to the front, angrily gave some reply to questions put

to him by the officers, and, like a man desperately insisting on having

his own way, gave an order. No one said anything definite, but the rumor

of an attack spread through the squadron. The command to form up rang

out and the sabers whizzed as they were drawn from their scabbards.

Still no one moved. The troops of the left flank, infantry and hussars

alike, felt that the commander did not himself know what to do, and this

irresolution communicated itself to the men.

"If only they would be quick!" thought Rostov, feeling that at last the

time had come to experience the joy of an attack of which he had so

often heard from his fellow hussars.

"Fo'ward, with God, lads!" rang out Denisov's voice. "At a twot

fo'ward!"

The horses' croups began to sway in the front line. Rook pulled at the

reins and started of his own accord.

Before him, on the right, Rostov saw the front lines of his hussars and

still farther ahead a dark line which he could not see distinctly but

took to be the enemy. Shots could be heard, but some way off.

"Faster!" came the word of command, and Rostov felt Rook's flanks

drooping as he broke into a gallop.

Rostov anticipated his horse's movements and became more and more

elated. He had noticed a solitary tree ahead of him. This tree had been

in the middle of the line that had seemed so terrible--and now he had

crossed that line and not only was there nothing terrible, but

everything was becoming more and more happy and animated. "Oh, how I

will slash at him!" thought Rostov, gripping the hilt of his saber.

"Hur-a-a-a-ah!" came a roar of voices. "Let anyone come my way now,"

thought Rostov driving his spurs into Rook and letting him go at a full

gallop so that he outstripped the others. Ahead, the enemy was already

visible. Suddenly something like a birch broom seemed to sweep over the

squadron. Rostov raised his saber, ready to strike, but at that instant

the trooper Nikitenko, who was galloping ahead, shot away from him, and

Rostov felt as in a dream that he continued to be carried forward with

unnatural speed but yet stayed on the same spot. From behind him

Bondarchuk, an hussar he knew, jolted against him and looked angrily at

him. Bondarchuk's horse swerved and galloped past.

"How is it I am not moving? I have fallen, I am killed!" Rostov asked

and answered at the same instant. He was alone in the middle of a field.

Instead of the moving horses and hussars' backs, he saw nothing before

him but the motionless earth and the stubble around him. There was warm

blood under his arm. "No, I am wounded and the horse is killed." Rook

tried to rise on his forelegs but fell back, pinning his rider's leg.

Blood was flowing from his head; he struggled but could not rise. Rostov

also tried to rise but fell back, his sabretache having become entangled

in the saddle. Where our men were, and where the French, he did not

know. There was no one near.

Having disentangled his leg, he rose. "Where, on which side, was now the

line that had so sharply divided the two armies?" he asked himself and

could not answer. "Can something bad have happened to me?" he wondered

as he got up: and at that moment he felt that something superfluous was

hanging on his benumbed left arm. The wrist felt as if it were not his.

He examined his hand carefully, vainly trying to find blood on it. "Ah,

here are people coming," he thought joyfully, seeing some men running

toward him. "They will help me!" In front came a man wearing a strange

shako and a blue cloak, swarthy, sunburned, and with a hooked nose. Then

came two more, and many more running behind. One of them said something

strange, not in Russian. In among the hindmost of these men wearing

similar shakos was a Russian hussar. He was being held by the arms and

his horse was being led behind him.

"It must be one of ours, a prisoner. Yes. Can it be that they will take

me too? Who are these men?" thought Rostov, scarcely believing his eyes.

"Can they be French?" He looked at the approaching Frenchmen, and though

but a moment before he had been galloping to get at them and hack them

to pieces, their proximity now seemed so awful that he could not believe

his eyes. "Who are they? Why are they running? Can they be coming at me?

And why? To kill me? Me whom everyone is so fond of?" He remembered his

mother's love for him, and his family's, and his friends', and the

enemy's intention to kill him seemed impossible. "But perhaps they may

do it!" For more than ten seconds he stood not moving from the spot or

realizing the situation. The foremost Frenchman, the one with the hooked

nose, was already so close that the expression of his face could be

seen. And the excited, alien face of that man, his bayonet hanging down,

holding his breath, and running so lightly, frightened Rostov. He seized

his pistol and, instead of firing it, flung it at the Frenchman and ran

with all his might toward the bushes. He did not now run with the

feeling of doubt and conflict with which he had trodden the Enns bridge,

but with the feeling of a hare fleeing from the hounds. One single

sentiment, that of fear for his young and happy life, possessed his

whole being. Rapidly leaping the furrows, he fled across the field with

the impetuosity he used to show at catchplay, now and then turning his

good-natured, pale, young face to look back. A shudder of terror went

through him: "No, better not look," he thought, but having reached the

bushes he glanced round once more. The French had fallen behind, and

just as he looked round the first man changed his run to a walk and,

turning, shouted something loudly to a comrade farther back. Rostov

paused. "No, there's some mistake," thought he. "They can't have wanted

to kill me." But at the same time, his left arm felt as heavy as if a

seventy-pound weight were tied to it. He could run no more. The

Frenchman also stopped and took aim. Rostov closed his eyes and stooped

down. One bullet and then another whistled past him. He mustered his

last remaining strength, took hold of his left hand with his right, and

reached the bushes. Behind these were some Russian sharpshooters.

CHAPTER XX

The infantry regiments that had been caught unawares in the outskirts of

the wood ran out of it, the different companies getting mixed, and

retreated as a disorderly crowd. One soldier, in his fear, uttered the

senseless cry, "Cut off!" that is so terrible in battle, and that word

infected the whole crowd with a feeling of panic.

"Surrounded! Cut off? We're lost!" shouted the fugitives.

The moment he heard the firing and the cry from behind, the general

realized that something dreadful had happened to his regiment, and the

thought that he, an exemplary officer of many years' service who had

never been to blame, might be held responsible at headquarters for

negligence or inefficiency so staggered him that, forgetting the

recalcitrant cavalry colonel, his own dignity as a general, and above

all quite forgetting the danger and all regard for self-preservation, he

clutched the crupper of his saddle and, spurring his horse, galloped to

the regiment under a hail of bullets which fell around, but fortunately

missed him. His one desire was to know what was happening and at any

cost correct, or remedy, the mistake if he had made one, so that he, an

exemplary officer of twenty-two years' service, who had never been

censured, should not be held to blame.

Having galloped safely through the French, he reached a field behind the

copse across which our men, regardless of orders, were running and

descending the valley. That moment of moral hesitation which decides the

fate of battles had arrived. Would this disorderly crowd of soldiers

attend to the voice of their commander, or would they, disregarding him,

continue their flight? Despite his desperate shouts that used to seem so

terrible to the soldiers, despite his furious purple countenance

distorted out of all likeness to his former self, and the flourishing of

his saber, the soldiers all continued to run, talking, firing into the

air, and disobeying orders. The moral hesitation which decided the fate

of battles was evidently culminating in a panic.

The general had a fit of coughing as a result of shouting and of the

powder smoke and stopped in despair. Everything seemed lost. But at that

moment the French who were attacking, suddenly and without any apparent

reason, ran back and disappeared from the outskirts, and Russian

sharpshooters showed themselves in the copse. It was Timokhin's company,

which alone had maintained its order in the wood and, having lain in

ambush in a ditch, now attacked the French unexpectedly. Timokhin, armed

only with a sword, had rushed at the enemy with such a desperate cry and

such mad, drunken determination that, taken by surprise, the French had

thrown down their muskets and run. Dolokhov, running beside Timokhin,

killed a Frenchman at close quarters and was the first to seize the

surrendering French officer by his collar. Our fugitives returned, the

battalions re-formed, and the French who had nearly cut our left flank

in half were for the moment repulsed. Our reserve units were able to

join up, and the fight was at an end. The regimental commander and Major

Ekonomov had stopped beside a bridge, letting the retreating companies

pass by them, when a soldier came up and took hold of the commander's

stirrup, almost leaning against him. The man was wearing a bluish coat

of broadcloth, he had no knapsack or cap, his head was bandaged, and

over his shoulder a French munition pouch was slung. He had an officer's

sword in his hand. The soldier was pale, his blue eyes looked impudently

into the commander's face, and his lips were smiling. Though the

commander was occupied in giving instructions to Major Ekonomov, he

could not help taking notice of the soldier.

"Your excellency, here are two trophies," said Dolokhov, pointing to the

French sword and pouch. "I have taken an officer prisoner. I stopped the

company." Dolokhov breathed heavily from weariness and spoke in abrupt

sentences. "The whole company can bear witness. I beg you will remember

this, your excellency!"

"All right, all right," replied the commander, and turned to Major

Ekonomov.

But Dolokhov did not go away; he untied the handkerchief around his

head, pulled it off, and showed the blood congealed on his hair.

"A bayonet wound. I remained at the front. Remember, your excellency!"

Tushin's battery had been forgotten and only at the very end of the

action did Prince Bagration, still hearing the cannonade in the center,

send his orderly staff officer, and later Prince Andrew also, to order

the battery to retire as quickly as possible. When the supports attached

to Tushin's battery had been moved away in the middle of the action by

someone's order, the battery had continued firing and was only not

captured by the French because the enemy could not surmise that anyone

could have the effrontery to continue firing from four quite undefended

guns. On the contrary, the energetic action of that battery led the

French to suppose that here--in the center--the main Russian forces were

concentrated. Twice they had attempted to attack this point, but on each

occasion had been driven back by grapeshot from the four isolated guns

on the hillock.

Soon after Prince Bagration had left him, Tushin had succeeded in

setting fire to Schon Grabern.

"Look at them scurrying! It's burning! Just see the smoke! Fine! Grand!

Look at the smoke, the smoke!" exclaimed the artillerymen, brightening

up.

All the guns, without waiting for orders, were being fired in the

direction of the conflagration. As if urging each other on, the soldiers

cried at each shot: "Fine! That's good! Look at it... Grand!" The fire,

fanned by the breeze, was rapidly spreading. The French columns that had

advanced beyond the village went back; but as though in revenge for this

failure, the enemy placed ten guns to the right of the village and began

firing them at Tushin's battery.

In their childlike glee, aroused by the fire and their luck in

successfully cannonading the French, our artillerymen only noticed this

battery when two balls, and then four more, fell among our guns, one

knocking over two horses and another tearing off a munition-wagon

driver's leg. Their spirits once roused were, however, not diminished,

but only changed character. The horses were replaced by others from a

reserve gun carriage, the wounded were carried away, and the four guns

were turned against the ten-gun battery. Tushin's companion officer had

been killed at the beginning of the engagement and within an hour

seventeen of the forty men of the guns' crews had been disabled, but the

artillerymen were still as merry and lively as ever. Twice they noticed

the French appearing below them, and then they fired grapeshot at them.

Little Tushin, moving feebly and awkwardly, kept telling his orderly to

"refill my pipe for that one!" and then, scattering sparks from it, ran

forward shading his eyes with his small hand to look at the French.

"Smack at 'em, lads!" he kept saying, seizing the guns by the wheels and

working the screws himself.

Amid the smoke, deafened by the incessant reports which always made him

jump, Tushin not taking his pipe from his mouth ran from gun to gun, now

aiming, now counting the charges, now giving orders about replacing dead

or wounded horses and harnessing fresh ones, and shouting in his feeble

voice, so high pitched and irresolute. His face grew more and more

animated. Only when a man was killed or wounded did he frown and turn

away from the sight, shouting angrily at the men who, as is always the

case, hesitated about lifting the injured or dead. The soldiers, for the

most part handsome fellows and, as is always the case in an artillery

company, a head and shoulders taller and twice as broad as their

officer--all looked at their commander like children in an embarrassing

situation, and the expression on his face was invariably reflected on

theirs.

Owing to the terrible uproar and the necessity for concentration and

activity, Tushin did not experience the slightest unpleasant sense of

fear, and the thought that he might be killed or badly wounded never

occurred to him. On the contrary, he became more and more elated. It

seemed to him that it was a very long time ago, almost a day, since he

had first seen the enemy and fired the first shot, and that the corner

of the field he stood on was well-known and familiar ground. Though he

thought of everything, considered everything, and did everything the

best of officers could do in his position, he was in a state akin to

feverish delirium or drunkenness.

From the deafening sounds of his own guns around him, the whistle and

thud of the enemy's cannon balls, from the flushed and perspiring faces

of the crew bustling round the guns, from the sight of the blood of men

and horses, from the little puffs of smoke on the enemy's side (always

followed by a ball flying past and striking the earth, a man, a gun, a

horse), from the sight of all these things a fantastic world of his own

had taken possession of his brain and at that moment afforded him

pleasure. The enemy's guns were in his fancy not guns but pipes from

which occasional puffs were blown by an invisible smoker.

"There... he's puffing again," muttered Tushin to himself, as a small

cloud rose from the hill and was borne in a streak to the left by the

wind.

"Now look out for the ball... we'll throw it back."

"What do you want, your honor?" asked an artilleryman, standing close

by, who heard him muttering.

"Nothing... only a shell..." he answered.

"Come along, our Matvevna!" he said to himself. "Matvevna" \* was the

name his fancy gave to the farthest gun of the battery, which was large

and of an old pattern. The French swarming round their guns seemed to

him like ants. In that world, the handsome drunkard Number One of the

second gun's crew was "uncle"; Tushin looked at him more often than at

anyone else and took delight in his every movement. The sound of

musketry at the foot of the hill, now diminishing, now increasing,

seemed like someone's breathing. He listened intently to the ebb and

flow of these sounds.

\* Daughter of Matthew.

"Ah! Breathing again, breathing!" he muttered to himself.

He imagined himself as an enormously tall, powerful man who was throwing

cannon balls at the French with both hands.

"Now then, Matvevna, dear old lady, don't let me down!" he was saying as

he moved from the gun, when a strange, unfamiliar voice called above his

head: "Captain Tushin! Captain!"

Tushin turned round in dismay. It was the staff officer who had turned

him out of the booth at Grunth. He was shouting in a gasping voice:

"Are you mad? You have twice been ordered to retreat, and you..."

"Why are they down on me?" thought Tushin, looking in alarm at his

superior.

"I... don't..." he muttered, holding up two fingers to his cap. "I..."

But the staff officer did not finish what he wanted to say. A cannon

ball, flying close to him, caused him to duck and bend over his horse.

He paused, and just as he was about to say something more, another ball

stopped him. He turned his horse and galloped off.

"Retire! All to retire!" he shouted from a distance.

The soldiers laughed. A moment later, an adjutant arrived with the same

order.

It was Prince Andrew. The first thing he saw on riding up to the space

where Tushin's guns were stationed was an unharnessed horse with a

broken leg, that lay screaming piteously beside the harnessed horses.

Blood was gushing from its leg as from a spring. Among the limbers lay

several dead men. One ball after another passed over as he approached

and he felt a nervous shudder run down his spine. But the mere thought

of being afraid roused him again. "I cannot be afraid," thought he, and

dismounted slowly among the guns. He delivered the order and did not

leave the battery. He decided to have the guns removed from their

positions and withdrawn in his presence. Together with Tushin, stepping

across the bodies and under a terrible fire from the French, he attended

to the removal of the guns.

"A staff officer was here a minute ago, but skipped off," said an

artilleryman to Prince Andrew. "Not like your honor!"

Prince Andrew said nothing to Tushin. They were both so busy as to seem

not to notice one another. When having limbered up the only two cannon

that remained uninjured out of the four, they began moving down the hill

(one shattered gun and one unicorn were left behind), Prince Andrew rode

up to Tushin.

"Well, till we meet again..." he said, holding out his hand to Tushin.

"Good-bye, my dear fellow," said Tushin. "Dear soul! Good-bye, my dear

fellow!" and for some unknown reason tears suddenly filled his eyes.

CHAPTER XXI

The wind had fallen and black clouds, merging with the powder smoke,

hung low over the field of battle on the horizon. It was growing dark

and the glow of two conflagrations was the more conspicuous. The

cannonade was dying down, but the rattle of musketry behind and on the

right sounded oftener and nearer. As soon as Tushin with his guns,

continually driving round or coming upon wounded men, was out of range

of fire and had descended into the dip, he was met by some of the staff,

among them the staff officer and Zherkov, who had been twice sent to

Tushin's battery but had never reached it. Interrupting one another,

they all gave, and transmitted, orders as to how to proceed,

reprimanding and reproaching him. Tushin gave no orders, and, silently--

fearing to speak because at every word he felt ready to weep without

knowing why--rode behind on his artillery nag. Though the orders were to

abandon the wounded, many of them dragged themselves after troops and

begged for seats on the gun carriages. The jaunty infantry officer who

just before the battle had rushed out of Tushin's wattle shed was laid,

with a bullet in his stomach, on "Matvevna's" carriage. At the foot of

the hill, a pale hussar cadet, supporting one hand with the other, came

up to Tushin and asked for a seat.

"Captain, for God's sake! I've hurt my arm," he said timidly. "For God's

sake... I can't walk. For God's sake!"

It was plain that this cadet had already repeatedly asked for a lift and

been refused. He asked in a hesitating, piteous voice.

"Tell them to give me a seat, for God's sake!"

"Give him a seat," said Tushin. "Lay a cloak for him to sit on, lad," he

said, addressing his favorite soldier. "And where is the wounded

officer?"

"He has been set down. He died," replied someone.

"Help him up. Sit down, dear fellow, sit down! Spread out the cloak,

Antonov."

The cadet was Rostov. With one hand he supported the other; he was pale

and his jaw trembled, shivering feverishly. He was placed on "Matvevna,"

the gun from which they had removed the dead officer. The cloak they

spread under him was wet with blood which stained his breeches and arm.

"What, are you wounded, my lad?" said Tushin, approaching the gun on

which Rostov sat.

"No, it's a sprain."

"Then what is this blood on the gun carriage?" inquired Tushin.

"It was the officer, your honor, stained it," answered the artilleryman,

wiping away the blood with his coat sleeve, as if apologizing for the

state of his gun.

It was all that they could do to get the guns up the rise aided by the

infantry, and having reached the village of Gruntersdorf they halted. It

had grown so dark that one could not distinguish the uniforms ten paces

off, and the firing had begun to subside. Suddenly, near by on the

right, shouting and firing were again heard. Flashes of shot gleamed in

the darkness. This was the last French attack and was met by soldiers

who had sheltered in the village houses. They all rushed out of the

village again, but Tushin's guns could not move, and the artillerymen,

Tushin, and the cadet exchanged silent glances as they awaited their

fate. The firing died down and soldiers, talking eagerly, streamed out

of a side street.

"Not hurt, Petrov?" asked one.

"We've given it 'em hot, mate! They won't make another push now," said

another.

"You couldn't see a thing. How they shot at their own fellows! Nothing

could be seen. Pitch-dark, brother! Isn't there something to drink?"

The French had been repulsed for the last time. And again and again in

the complete darkness Tushin's guns moved forward, surrounded by the

humming infantry as by a frame.

In the darkness, it seemed as though a gloomy unseen river was flowing

always in one direction, humming with whispers and talk and the sound of

hoofs and wheels. Amid the general rumble, the groans and voices of the

wounded were more distinctly heard than any other sound in the darkness

of the night. The gloom that enveloped the army was filled with their

groans, which seemed to melt into one with the darkness of the night.

After a while the moving mass became agitated, someone rode past on a

white horse followed by his suite, and said something in passing: "What

did he say? Where to, now? Halt, is it? Did he thank us?" came eager

questions from all sides. The whole moving mass began pressing closer

together and a report spread that they were ordered to halt: evidently

those in front had halted. All remained where they were in the middle of

the muddy road.

Fires were lighted and the talk became more audible. Captain Tushin,

having given orders to his company, sent a soldier to find a dressing

station or a doctor for the cadet, and sat down by a bonfire the

soldiers had kindled on the road. Rostov, too, dragged himself to the

fire. From pain, cold, and damp, a feverish shivering shook his whole

body. Drowsiness was irresistibly mastering him, but he kept awake by an

excruciating pain in his arm, for which he could find no satisfactory

position. He kept closing his eyes and then again looking at the fire,

which seemed to him dazzlingly red, and at the feeble, round-shouldered

figure of Tushin who was sitting cross-legged like a Turk beside him.

Tushin's large, kind, intelligent eyes were fixed with sympathy and

commiseration on Rostov, who saw that Tushin with his whole heart wished

to help him but could not.

From all sides were heard the footsteps and talk of the infantry, who

were walking, driving past, and settling down all around. The sound of

voices, the tramping feet, the horses' hoofs moving in mud, the

crackling of wood fires near and afar, merged into one tremulous rumble.

It was no longer, as before, a dark, unseen river flowing through the

gloom, but a dark sea swelling and gradually subsiding after a storm.

Rostov looked at and listened listlessly to what passed before and

around him. An infantryman came to the fire, squatted on his heels, held

his hands to the blaze, and turned away his face.

"You don't mind your honor?" he asked Tushin. "I've lost my company,

your honor. I don't know where... such bad luck!"

With the soldier, an infantry officer with a bandaged cheek came up to

the bonfire, and addressing Tushin asked him to have the guns moved a

trifle to let a wagon go past. After he had gone, two soldiers rushed to

the campfire. They were quarreling and fighting desperately, each trying

to snatch from the other a boot they were both holding on to.

"You picked it up?... I dare say! You're very smart!" one of them

shouted hoarsely.

Then a thin, pale soldier, his neck bandaged with a bloodstained leg

band, came up and in angry tones asked the artillerymen for water.

"Must one die like a dog?" said he.

Tushin told them to give the man some water. Then a cheerful soldier ran

up, begging a little fire for the infantry.

"A nice little hot torch for the infantry! Good luck to you, fellow

countrymen. Thanks for the fire--we'll return it with interest," said

he, carrying away into the darkness a glowing stick.

Next came four soldiers, carrying something heavy on a cloak, and passed

by the fire. One of them stumbled.

"Who the devil has put the logs on the road?" snarled he.

"He's dead--why carry him?" said another.

"Shut up!"

And they disappeared into the darkness with their load.

"Still aching?" Tushin asked Rostov in a whisper.

"Yes."

"Your honor, you're wanted by the general. He is in the hut here," said

a gunner, coming up to Tushin.

"Coming, friend."

Tushin rose and, buttoning his greatcoat and pulling it straight, walked

away from the fire.

Not far from the artillery campfire, in a hut that had been prepared for

him, Prince Bagration sat at dinner, talking with some commanding

officers who had gathered at his quarters. The little old man with the

half-closed eyes was there greedily gnawing a mutton bone, and the

general who had served blamelessly for twenty-two years, flushed by a

glass of vodka and the dinner; and the staff officer with the signet

ring, and Zherkov, uneasily glancing at them all, and Prince Andrew,

pale, with compressed lips and feverishly glittering eyes.

In a corner of the hut stood a standard captured from the French, and

the accountant with the naive face was feeling its texture, shaking his

head in perplexity--perhaps because the banner really interested him,

perhaps because it was hard for him, hungry as he was, to look on at a

dinner where there was no place for him. In the next hut there was a

French colonel who had been taken prisoner by our dragoons. Our officers

were flocking in to look at him. Prince Bagration was thanking the

individual commanders and inquiring into details of the action and our

losses. The general whose regiment had been inspected at Braunau was

informing the prince that as soon as the action began he had withdrawn

from the wood, mustered the men who were woodcutting, and, allowing the

French to pass him, had made a bayonet charge with two battalions and

had broken up the French troops.

"When I saw, your excellency, that their first battalion was

disorganized, I stopped in the road and thought: 'I'll let them come on

and will meet them with the fire of the whole battalion'--and that's

what I did."

The general had so wished to do this and was so sorry he had not managed

to do it that it seemed to him as if it had really happened. Perhaps it

might really have been so? Could one possibly make out amid all that

confusion what did or did not happen?

"By the way, your excellency, I should inform you," he continued--

remembering Dolokhov's conversation with Kutuzov and his last interview

with the gentleman-ranker--"that Private Dolokhov, who was reduced to

the ranks, took a French officer prisoner in my presence and

particularly distinguished himself."

"I saw the Pavlograd hussars attack there, your excellency," chimed in

Zherkov, looking uneasily around. He had not seen the hussars all that

day, but had heard about them from an infantry officer. "They broke up

two squares, your excellency."

Several of those present smiled at Zherkov's words, expecting one of his

usual jokes, but noticing that what he was saying redounded to the glory

of our arms and of the day's work, they assumed a serious expression,

though many of them knew that what he was saying was a lie devoid of any

foundation. Prince Bagration turned to the old colonel:

"Gentlemen, I thank you all; all arms have behaved heroically: infantry,

cavalry, and artillery. How was it that two guns were abandoned in the

center?" he inquired, searching with his eyes for someone. (Prince

Bagration did not ask about the guns on the left flank; he knew that all

the guns there had been abandoned at the very beginning of the action.)

"I think I sent you?" he added, turning to the staff officer on duty.

"One was damaged," answered the staff officer, "and the other I can't

understand. I was there all the time giving orders and had only just

left.... It is true that it was hot there," he added, modestly.

Someone mentioned that Captain Tushin was bivouacking close to the

village and had already been sent for.

"Oh, but you were there?" said Prince Bagration, addressing Prince

Andrew.

"Of course, we only just missed one another," said the staff officer,

with a smile to Bolkonski.

"I had not the pleasure of seeing you," said Prince Andrew, coldly and

abruptly.

All were silent. Tushin appeared at the threshold and made his way

timidly from behind the backs of the generals. As he stepped past the

generals in the crowded hut, feeling embarrassed as he always was by the

sight of his superiors, he did not notice the staff of the banner and

stumbled over it. Several of those present laughed.

"How was it a gun was abandoned?" asked Bagration, frowning, not so much

at the captain as at those who were laughing, among whom Zherkov laughed

loudest.

Only now, when he was confronted by the stern authorities, did his guilt

and the disgrace of having lost two guns and yet remaining alive present

themselves to Tushin in all their horror. He had been so excited that he

had not thought about it until that moment. The officers' laughter

confused him still more. He stood before Bagration with his lower jaw

trembling and was hardly able to mutter: "I don't know... your

excellency... I had no men... your excellency."

"You might have taken some from the covering troops."

Tushin did not say that there were no covering troops, though that was

perfectly true. He was afraid of getting some other officer into

trouble, and silently fixed his eyes on Bagration as a schoolboy who has

blundered looks at an examiner.

The silence lasted some time. Prince Bagration, apparently not wishing

to be severe, found nothing to say; the others did not venture to

intervene. Prince Andrew looked at Tushin from under his brows and his

fingers twitched nervously.

"Your excellency!" Prince Andrew broke the silence with his abrupt

voice, "you were pleased to send me to Captain Tushin's battery. I went

there and found two thirds of the men and horses knocked out, two guns

smashed, and no supports at all."

Prince Bagration and Tushin looked with equal intentness at Bolkonski,

who spoke with suppressed agitation.

"And, if your excellency will allow me to express my opinion," he

continued, "we owe today's success chiefly to the action of that battery

and the heroic endurance of Captain Tushin and his company," and without

awaiting a reply, Prince Andrew rose and left the table.

Prince Bagration looked at Tushin, evidently reluctant to show distrust

in Bolkonski's emphatic opinion yet not feeling able fully to credit it,

bent his head, and told Tushin that he could go. Prince Andrew went out

with him.

"Thank you; you saved me, my dear fellow!" said Tushin.

Prince Andrew gave him a look, but said nothing and went away. He felt

sad and depressed. It was all so strange, so unlike what he had hoped.

"Who are they? Why are they here? What do they want? And when will all

this end?" thought Rostov, looking at the changing shadows before him.

The pain in his arm became more and more intense. Irresistible

drowsiness overpowered him, red rings danced before his eyes, and the

impression of those voices and faces and a sense of loneliness merged

with the physical pain. It was they, these soldiers--wounded and

unwounded--it was they who were crushing, weighing down, and twisting

the sinews and scorching the flesh of his sprained arm and shoulder. To

rid himself of them he closed his eyes.

For a moment he dozed, but in that short interval innumerable things

appeared to him in a dream: his mother and her large white hand, Sonya's

thin little shoulders, Natasha's eyes and laughter, Denisov with his

voice and mustache, and Telyanin and all that affair with Telyanin and

Bogdanich. That affair was the same thing as this soldier with the harsh

voice, and it was that affair and this soldier that were so agonizingly,

incessantly pulling and pressing his arm and always dragging it in one

direction. He tried to get away from them, but they would not for an

instant let his shoulder move a hair's breadth. It would not ache--it

would be well--if only they did not pull it, but it was impossible to

get rid of them.

He opened his eyes and looked up. The black canopy of night hung less

than a yard above the glow of the charcoal. Flakes of falling snow were

fluttering in that light. Tushin had not returned, the doctor had not

come. He was alone now, except for a soldier who was sitting naked at

the other side of the fire, warming his thin yellow body.

"Nobody wants me!" thought Rostov. "There is no one to help me or pity

me. Yet I was once at home, strong, happy, and loved." He sighed and,

doing so, groaned involuntarily.

"Eh, is anything hurting you?" asked the soldier, shaking his shirt out

over the fire, and not waiting for an answer he gave a grunt and added:

"What a lot of men have been crippled today--frightful!"

Rostov did not listen to the soldier. He looked at the snowflakes

fluttering above the fire and remembered a Russian winter at his warm,

bright home, his fluffy fur coat, his quickly gliding sleigh, his

healthy body, and all the affection and care of his family. "And why did

I come here?" he wondered.

Next day the French army did not renew their attack, and the remnant of

Bagration's detachment was reunited to Kutuzov's army.

BOOK THREE: 1805

CHAPTER I

Prince Vasili was not a man who deliberately thought out his plans.

Still less did he think of injuring anyone for his own advantage. He was

merely a man of the world who had got on and to whom getting on had

become a habit. Schemes and devices for which he never rightly accounted

to himself, but which formed the whole interest of his life, were

constantly shaping themselves in his mind, arising from the

circumstances and persons he met. Of these plans he had not merely one

or two in his head but dozens, some only beginning to form themselves,

some approaching achievement, and some in course of disintegration. He

did not, for instance, say to himself: "This man now has influence, I

must gain his confidence and friendship and through him obtain a special

grant." Nor did he say to himself: "Pierre is a rich man, I must entice

him to marry my daughter and lend me the forty thousand rubles I need."

But when he came across a man of position his instinct immediately told

him that this man could be useful, and without any premeditation Prince

Vasili took the first opportunity to gain his confidence, flatter him,

become intimate with him, and finally make his request.

He had Pierre at hand in Moscow and procured for him an appointment as

Gentleman of the Bedchamber, which at that time conferred the status of

Councilor of State, and insisted on the young man accompanying him to

Petersburg and staying at his house. With apparent absent-mindedness,

yet with unhesitating assurance that he was doing the right thing,

Prince Vasili did everything to get Pierre to marry his daughter. Had he

thought out his plans beforehand he could not have been so natural and

shown such unaffected familiarity in intercourse with everybody both

above and below him in social standing. Something always drew him toward

those richer and more powerful than himself and he had rare skill in

seizing the most opportune moment for making use of people.

Pierre, on unexpectedly becoming Count Bezukhov and a rich man, felt

himself after his recent loneliness and freedom from cares so beset and

preoccupied that only in bed was he able to be by himself. He had to

sign papers, to present himself at government offices, the purpose of

which was not clear to him, to question his chief steward, to visit his

estate near Moscow, and to receive many people who formerly did not even

wish to know of his existence but would now have been offended and

grieved had he chosen not to see them. These different people--

businessmen, relations, and acquaintances alike--were all disposed to

treat the young heir in the most friendly and flattering manner: they

were all evidently firmly convinced of Pierre's noble qualities. He was

always hearing such words as: "With your remarkable kindness," or, "With

your excellent heart," "You are yourself so honorable Count," or, "Were

he as clever as you," and so on, till he began sincerely to believe in

his own exceptional kindness and extraordinary intelligence, the more so

as in the depth of his heart it had always seemed to him that he really

was very kind and intelligent. Even people who had formerly been

spiteful toward him and evidently unfriendly now became gentle and

affectionate. The angry eldest princess, with the long waist and hair

plastered down like a doll's, had come into Pierre's room after the

funeral. With drooping eyes and frequent blushes she told him she was

very sorry about their past misunderstandings and did not now feel she

had a right to ask him for anything, except only for permission, after

the blow she had received, to remain for a few weeks longer in the house

she so loved and where she had sacrificed so much. She could not refrain

from weeping at these words. Touched that this statuesque princess could

so change, Pierre took her hand and begged her forgiveness, without

knowing what for. From that day the eldest princess quite changed toward

Pierre and began knitting a striped scarf for him.

"Do this for my sake, mon cher; after all, she had to put up with a

great deal from the deceased," said Prince Vasili to him, handing him a

deed to sign for the princess' benefit.

Prince Vasili had come to the conclusion that it was necessary to throw

this bone--a bill for thirty thousand rubles--to the poor princess that

it might not occur to her to speak of his share in the affair of the

inlaid portfolio. Pierre signed the deed and after that the princess

grew still kinder. The younger sisters also became affectionate to him,

especially the youngest, the pretty one with the mole, who often made

him feel confused by her smiles and her own confusion when meeting him.

It seemed so natural to Pierre that everyone should like him, and it

would have seemed so unnatural had anyone disliked him, that he could

not but believe in the sincerity of those around him. Besides, he had no

time to ask himself whether these people were sincere or not. He was

always busy and always felt in a state of mild and cheerful

intoxication. He felt as though he were the center of some important and

general movement; that something was constantly expected of him, that if

he did not do it he would grieve and disappoint many people, but if he

did this and that, all would be well; and he did what was demanded of

him, but still that happy result always remained in the future.

More than anyone else, Prince Vasili took possession of Pierre's affairs

and of Pierre himself in those early days. From the death of Count

Bezukhov he did not let go his hold of the lad. He had the air of a man

oppressed by business, weary and suffering, who yet would not, for

pity's sake, leave this helpless youth who, after all, was the son of

his old friend and the possessor of such enormous wealth, to the caprice

of fate and the designs of rogues. During the few days he spent in

Moscow after the death of Count Bezukhov, he would call Pierre, or go to

him himself, and tell him what ought to be done in a tone of weariness

and assurance, as if he were adding every time: "You know I am

overwhelmed with business and it is purely out of charity that I trouble

myself about you, and you also know quite well that what I propose is

the only thing possible."

"Well, my dear fellow, tomorrow we are off at last," said Prince Vasili

one day, closing his eyes and fingering Pierre's elbow, speaking as if

he were saying something which had long since been agreed upon and could

not now be altered. "We start tomorrow and I'm giving you a place in my

carriage. I am very glad. All our important business here is now

settled, and I ought to have been off long ago. Here is something I have

received from the chancellor. I asked him for you, and you have been

entered in the diplomatic corps and made a Gentleman of the Bedchamber.

The diplomatic career now lies open before you."

Notwithstanding the tone of wearied assurance with which these words

were pronounced, Pierre, who had so long been considering his career,

wished to make some suggestion. But Prince Vasili interrupted him in the

special deep cooing tone, precluding the possibility of interrupting his

speech, which he used in extreme cases when special persuasion was

needed.

"Mais, mon cher, I did this for my own sake, to satisfy my conscience,

and there is nothing to thank me for. No one has ever complained yet of

being too much loved; and besides, you are free, you could throw it up

tomorrow. But you will see everything for yourself when you get to

Petersburg. It is high time for you to get away from these terrible

recollections." Prince Vasili sighed. "Yes, yes, my boy. And my valet

can go in your carriage. Ah! I was nearly forgetting," he added. "You

know, mon cher, your father and I had some accounts to settle, so I have

received what was due from the Ryazan estate and will keep it; you won't

require it. We'll go into the accounts later."

By "what was due from the Ryazan estate" Prince Vasili meant several

thousand rubles quitrent received from Pierre's peasants, which the

prince had retained for himself.

In Petersburg, as in Moscow, Pierre found the same atmosphere of

gentleness and affection. He could not refuse the post, or rather the

rank (for he did nothing), that Prince Vasili had procured for him, and

acquaintances, invitations, and social occupations were so numerous

that, even more than in Moscow, he felt a sense of bewilderment, bustle,

and continual expectation of some good, always in front of him but never

attained.

Of his former bachelor acquaintances many were no longer in Petersburg.

The Guards had gone to the front; Dolokhov had been reduced to the

ranks; Anatole was in the army somewhere in the provinces; Prince Andrew

was abroad; so Pierre had not the opportunity to spend his nights as he

used to like to spend them, or to open his mind by intimate talks with a

friend older than himself and whom he respected. His whole time was

taken up with dinners and balls and was spent chiefly at Prince Vasili's

house in the company of the stout princess, his wife, and his beautiful

daughter Helene.

Like the others, Anna Pavlovna Scherer showed Pierre the change of

attitude toward him that had taken place in society.

Formerly in Anna Pavlovna's presence, Pierre had always felt that what

he was saying was out of place, tactless and unsuitable, that remarks

which seemed to him clever while they formed in his mind became foolish

as soon as he uttered them, while on the contrary Hippolyte's stupidest

remarks came out clever and apt. Now everything Pierre said was

charmant. Even if Anna Pavlovna did not say so, he could see that she

wished to and only refrained out of regard for his modesty.

In the beginning of the winter of 1805-6 Pierre received one of Anna

Pavlovna's usual pink notes with an invitation to which was added: "You

will find the beautiful Helene here, whom it is always delightful to

see."

When he read that sentence, Pierre felt for the first time that some

link which other people recognized had grown up between himself and

Helene, and that thought both alarmed him, as if some obligation were

being imposed on him which he could not fulfill, and pleased him as an

entertaining supposition.

Anna Pavlovna's "At Home" was like the former one, only the novelty she

offered her guests this time was not Mortemart, but a diplomatist fresh

from Berlin with the very latest details of the Emperor Alexander's

visit to Potsdam, and of how the two august friends had pledged

themselves in an indissoluble alliance to uphold the cause of justice

against the enemy of the human race. Anna Pavlovna received Pierre with

a shade of melancholy, evidently relating to the young man's recent loss

by the death of Count Bezukhov (everyone constantly considered it a duty

to assure Pierre that he was greatly afflicted by the death of the

father he had hardly known), and her melancholy was just like the august

melancholy she showed at the mention of her most august Majesty the

Empress Marya Fedorovna. Pierre felt flattered by this. Anna Pavlovna

arranged the different groups in her drawing room with her habitual

skill. The large group, in which were Prince Vasili and the generals,

had the benefit of the diplomat. Another group was at the tea table.

Pierre wished to join the former, but Anna Pavlovna--who was in the

excited condition of a commander on a battlefield to whom thousands of

new and brilliant ideas occur which there is hardly time to put in

action--seeing Pierre, touched his sleeve with her finger, saying:

"Wait a bit, I have something in view for you this evening." (She

glanced at Helene and smiled at her.) "My dear Helene, be charitable to

my poor aunt who adores you. Go and keep her company for ten minutes.

And that it will not be too dull, here is the dear count who will not

refuse to accompany you."

The beauty went to the aunt, but Anna Pavlovna detained Pierre, looking

as if she had to give some final necessary instructions.

"Isn't she exquisite?" she said to Pierre, pointing to the stately

beauty as she glided away. "And how she carries herself! For so young a

girl, such tact, such masterly perfection of manner! It comes from her

heart. Happy the man who wins her! With her the least worldly of men

would occupy a most brilliant position in society. Don't you think so? I

only wanted to know your opinion," and Anna Pavlovna let Pierre go.

Pierre, in reply, sincerely agreed with her as to Helene's perfection of

manner. If he ever thought of Helene, it was just of her beauty and her

remarkable skill in appearing silently dignified in society.

The old aunt received the two young people in her corner, but seemed

desirous of hiding her adoration for Helene and inclined rather to show

her fear of Anna Pavlovna. She looked at her niece, as if inquiring what

she was to do with these people. On leaving them, Anna Pavlovna again

touched Pierre's sleeve, saying: "I hope you won't say that it is dull

in my house again," and she glanced at Helene.

Helene smiled, with a look implying that she did not admit the

possibility of anyone seeing her without being enchanted. The aunt

coughed, swallowed, and said in French that she was very pleased to see

Helene, then she turned to Pierre with the same words of welcome and the

same look. In the middle of a dull and halting conversation, Helene

turned to Pierre with the beautiful bright smile that she gave to

everyone. Pierre was so used to that smile, and it had so little meaning

for him, that he paid no attention to it. The aunt was just speaking of

a collection of snuffboxes that had belonged to Pierre's father, Count

Bezukhov, and showed them her own box. Princess Helene asked to see the

portrait of the aunt's husband on the box lid.

"That is probably the work of Vinesse," said Pierre, mentioning a

celebrated miniaturist, and he leaned over the table to take the

snuffbox while trying to hear what was being said at the other table.

He half rose, meaning to go round, but the aunt handed him the snuffbox,

passing it across Helene's back. Helene stooped forward to make room,

and looked round with a smile. She was, as always at evening parties,

wearing a dress such as was then fashionable, cut very low at front and

back. Her bust, which had always seemed like marble to Pierre, was so

close to him that his shortsighted eyes could not but perceive the

living charm of her neck and shoulders, so near to his lips that he need

only have bent his head a little to have touched them. He was conscious

of the warmth of her body, the scent of perfume, and the creaking of her

corset as she moved. He did not see her marble beauty forming a complete

whole with her dress, but all the charm of her body only covered by her

garments. And having once seen this he could not help being aware of it,

just as we cannot renew an illusion we have once seen through.

"So you have never noticed before how beautiful I am?" Helene seemed to

say. "You had not noticed that I am a woman? Yes, I am a woman who may

belong to anyone--to you too," said her glance. And at that moment

Pierre felt that Helene not only could, but must, be his wife, and that

it could not be otherwise.

He knew this at that moment as surely as if he had been standing at the

altar with her. How and when this would be he did not know, he did not

even know if it would be a good thing (he even felt, he knew not why,

that it would be a bad thing), but he knew it would happen.

Pierre dropped his eyes, lifted them again, and wished once more to see

her as a distant beauty far removed from him, as he had seen her every

day until then, but he could no longer do it. He could not, any more

than a man who has been looking at a tuft of steppe grass through the

mist and taking it for a tree can again take it for a tree after he has

once recognized it to be a tuft of grass. She was terribly close to him.

She already had power over him, and between them there was no longer any

barrier except the barrier of his own will.

"Well, I will leave you in your little corner," came Anna Pavlovna's

voice, "I see you are all right there."

And Pierre, anxiously trying to remember whether he had done anything

reprehensible, looked round with a blush. It seemed to him that everyone

knew what had happened to him as he knew it himself.

A little later when he went up to the large circle, Anna Pavlovna said

to him: "I hear you are refitting your Petersburg house?"

This was true. The architect had told him that it was necessary, and

Pierre, without knowing why, was having his enormous Petersburg house

done up.

"That's a good thing, but don't move from Prince Vasili's. It is good to

have a friend like the prince," she said, smiling at Prince Vasili. "I

know something about that. Don't I? And you are still so young. You need

advice. Don't be angry with me for exercising an old woman's privilege."

She paused, as women always do, expecting something after they have

mentioned their age. "If you marry it will be a different thing," she

continued, uniting them both in one glance. Pierre did not look at

Helene nor she at him. But she was just as terribly close to him. He

muttered something and colored.

When he got home he could not sleep for a long time for thinking of what

had happened. What had happened? Nothing. He had merely understood that

the woman he had known as a child, of whom when her beauty was mentioned

he had said absent-mindedly: "Yes, she's good looking," he had

understood that this woman might belong to him.

"But she's stupid. I have myself said she is stupid," he thought. "There

is something nasty, something wrong, in the feeling she excites in me. I

have been told that her brother Anatole was in love with her and she

with him, that there was quite a scandal and that that's why he was sent

away. Hippolyte is her brother... Prince Vasili is her father... It's

bad...." he reflected, but while he was thinking this (the reflection

was still incomplete), he caught himself smiling and was conscious that

another line of thought had sprung up, and while thinking of her

worthlessness he was also dreaming of how she would be his wife, how she

would love him become quite different, and how all he had thought and

heard of her might be false. And he again saw her not as the daughter of

Prince Vasili, but visualized her whole body only veiled by its gray

dress. "But no! Why did this thought never occur to me before?" and

again he told himself that it was impossible, that there would be

something unnatural, and as it seemed to him dishonorable, in this

marriage. He recalled her former words and looks and the words and looks

of those who had seen them together. He recalled Anna Pavlovna's words

and looks when she spoke to him about his house, recalled thousands of

such hints from Prince Vasili and others, and was seized by terror lest

he had already, in some way, bound himself to do something that was

evidently wrong and that he ought not to do. But at the very time he was

expressing this conviction to himself, in another part of his mind her

image rose in all its womanly beauty.

CHAPTER II

In November, 1805, Prince Vasili had to go on a tour of inspection in

four different provinces. He had arranged this for himself so as to

visit his neglected estates at the same time and pick up his son Anatole

where his regiment was stationed, and take him to visit Prince Nicholas

Bolkonski in order to arrange a match for him with the daughter of that

rich old man. But before leaving home and undertaking these new affairs,

Prince Vasili had to settle matters with Pierre, who, it is true, had

latterly spent whole days at home, that is, in Prince Vasili's house

where he was staying, and had been absurd, excited, and foolish in

Helene's presence (as a lover should be), but had not yet proposed to

her.

"This is all very fine, but things must be settled," said Prince Vasili

to himself, with a sorrowful sigh, one morning, feeling that Pierre who

was under such obligations to him ("But never mind that") was not

behaving very well in this matter. "Youth, frivolity... well, God be

with him," thought he, relishing his own goodness of heart, "but it must

be brought to a head. The day after tomorrow will be Lelya's name day. I

will invite two or three people, and if he does not understand what he

ought to do then it will be my affair--yes, my affair. I am her father."

Six weeks after Anna Pavlovna's "At Home" and after the sleepless night

when he had decided that to marry Helene would be a calamity and that he

ought to avoid her and go away, Pierre, despite that decision, had not

left Prince Vasili's and felt with terror that in people's eyes he was

every day more and more connected with her, that it was impossible for

him to return to his former conception of her, that he could not break

away from her, and that though it would be a terrible thing he would

have to unite his fate with hers. He might perhaps have been able to

free himself but that Prince Vasili (who had rarely before given

receptions) now hardly let a day go by without having an evening party

at which Pierre had to be present unless he wished to spoil the general

pleasure and disappoint everyone's expectation. Prince Vasili, in the

rare moments when he was at home, would take Pierre's hand in passing

and draw it downwards, or absent-mindedly hold out his wrinkled, clean-

shaven cheek for Pierre to kiss and would say: "Till tomorrow," or, "Be

in to dinner or I shall not see you," or, "I am staying in for your

sake," and so on. And though Prince Vasili, when he stayed in (as he

said) for Pierre's sake, hardly exchanged a couple of words with him,

Pierre felt unable to disappoint him. Every day he said to himself one

and the same thing: "It is time I understood her and made up my mind

what she really is. Was I mistaken before, or am I mistaken now? No, she

is not stupid, she is an excellent girl," he sometimes said to himself

"she never makes a mistake, never says anything stupid. She says little,

but what she does say is always clear and simple, so she is not stupid.

She never was abashed and is not abashed now, so she cannot be a bad

woman!" He had often begun to make reflections or think aloud in her

company, and she had always answered him either by a brief but

appropriate remark--showing that it did not interest her--or by a silent

look and smile which more palpably than anything else showed Pierre her

superiority. She was right in regarding all arguments as nonsense in

comparison with that smile.

She always addressed him with a radiantly confiding smile meant for him

alone, in which there was something more significant than in the general

smile that usually brightened her face. Pierre knew that everyone was

waiting for him to say a word and cross a certain line, and he knew that

sooner or later he would step across it, but an incomprehensible terror

seized him at the thought of that dreadful step. A thousand times during

that month and a half while he felt himself drawn nearer and nearer to

that dreadful abyss, Pierre said to himself: "What am I doing? I need

resolution. Can it be that I have none?"

He wished to take a decision, but felt with dismay that in this matter

he lacked that strength of will which he had known in himself and really

possessed. Pierre was one of those who are only strong when they feel

themselves quite innocent, and since that day when he was overpowered by

a feeling of desire while stooping over the snuffbox at Anna Pavlovna's,

an unacknowledged sense of the guilt of that desire paralyzed his will.

On Helene's name day, a small party of just their own people--as his

wife said--met for supper at Prince Vasili's. All these friends and

relations had been given to understand that the fate of the young girl

would be decided that evening. The visitors were seated at supper.

Princess Kuragina, a portly imposing woman who had once been handsome,

was sitting at the head of the table. On either side of her sat the more

important guests--an old general and his wife, and Anna Pavlovna

Scherer. At the other end sat the younger and less important guests, and

there too sat the members of the family, and Pierre and Helene, side by

side. Prince Vasili was not having any supper: he went round the table

in a merry mood, sitting down now by one, now by another, of the guests.

To each of them he made some careless and agreeable remark except to

Pierre and Helene, whose presence he seemed not to notice. He enlivened

the whole party. The wax candles burned brightly, the silver and crystal

gleamed, so did the ladies' toilets and the gold and silver of the men's

epaulets; servants in scarlet liveries moved round the table, the

clatter of plates, knives, and glasses mingled with the animated hum of

several conversations. At one end of the table, the old chamberlain was

heard assuring an old baroness that he loved her passionately, at which

she laughed; at the other could be heard the story of the misfortunes of

some Mary Viktorovna or other. At the center of the table, Prince Vasili

attracted everybody's attention. With a facetious smile on his face, he

was telling the ladies about last Wednesday's meeting of the Imperial

Council, at which Sergey Kuzmich Vyazmitinov, the new military governor

general of Petersburg, had received and read the then famous rescript of

the Emperor Alexander from the army to Sergey Kuzmich, in which the

Emperor said that he was receiving from all sides declarations of the

people's loyalty, that the declaration from Petersburg gave him

particular pleasure, and that he was proud to be at the head of such a

nation and would endeavor to be worthy of it. This rescript began with

the words: "Sergey Kuzmich, From all sides reports reach me," etc.

"Well, and so he never got farther than: 'Sergey Kuzmich'?" asked one of

the ladies.

"Exactly, not a hair's breadth farther," answered Prince Vasili,

laughing, "'Sergey Kuzmich... From all sides... From all sides... Sergey

Kuzmich...' Poor Vyazmitinov could not get any farther! He began the

rescript again and again, but as soon as he uttered 'Sergey' he sobbed,

'Kuz-mi-ch,' tears, and 'From all sides' was smothered in sobs and he

could get no farther. And again his handkerchief, and again: 'Sergey

Kuzmich, From all sides,'... and tears, till at last somebody else was

asked to read it."

"Kuzmich... From all sides... and then tears," someone repeated

laughing.

"Don't be unkind," cried Anna Pavlovna from her end of the table holding

up a threatening finger. "He is such a worthy and excellent man, our

dear Vyazmitinov...."

Everybody laughed a great deal. At the head of the table, where the

honored guests sat, everyone seemed to be in high spirits and under the

influence of a variety of exciting sensations. Only Pierre and Helene

sat silently side by side almost at the bottom of the table, a

suppressed smile brightening both their faces, a smile that had nothing

to do with Sergey Kuzmich--a smile of bashfulness at their own feelings.

But much as all the rest laughed, talked, and joked, much as they

enjoyed their Rhine wine, saute, and ices, and however they avoided

looking at the young couple, and heedless and unobservant as they seemed

of them, one could feel by the occasional glances they gave that the

story about Sergey Kuzmich, the laughter, and the food were all a

pretense, and that the whole attention of that company was directed to--

Pierre and Helene. Prince Vasili mimicked the sobbing of Sergey Kuzmich

and at the same time his eyes glanced toward his daughter, and while he

laughed the expression on his face clearly said: "Yes... it's getting

on, it will all be settled today." Anna Pavlovna threatened him on

behalf of "our dear Vyazmitinov," and in her eyes, which, for an

instant, glanced at Pierre, Prince Vasili read a congratulation on his

future son-in-law and on his daughter's happiness. The old princess

sighed sadly as she offered some wine to the old lady next to her and

glanced angrily at her daughter, and her sigh seemed to say: "Yes,

there's nothing left for you and me but to sip sweet wine, my dear, now

that the time has come for these young ones to be thus boldly,

provocatively happy." "And what nonsense all this is that I am saying!"

thought a diplomatist, glancing at the happy faces of the lovers.

"That's happiness!"

Into the insignificant, trifling, and artificial interests uniting that

society had entered the simple feeling of the attraction of a healthy

and handsome young man and woman for one another. And this human feeling

dominated everything else and soared above all their affected chatter.

Jests fell flat, news was not interesting, and the animation was

evidently forced. Not only the guests but even the footmen waiting at

table seemed to feel this, and they forgot their duties as they looked

at the beautiful Helene with her radiant face and at the red, broad, and

happy though uneasy face of Pierre. It seemed as if the very light of

the candles was focused on those two happy faces alone.

Pierre felt that he was the center of it all, and this both pleased and

embarrassed him. He was like a man entirely absorbed in some occupation.

He did not see, hear, or understand anything clearly. Only now and then

detached ideas and impressions from the world of reality shot

unexpectedly through his mind.

"So it is all finished!" he thought. "And how has it all happened? How

quickly! Now I know that not because of her alone, nor of myself alone,

but because of everyone, it must inevitably come about. They are all

expecting it, they are so sure that it will happen that I cannot, I

cannot, disappoint them. But how will it be? I do not know, but it will

certainly happen!" thought Pierre, glancing at those dazzling shoulders

close to his eyes.

Or he would suddenly feel ashamed of he knew not what. He felt it

awkward to attract everyone's attention and to be considered a lucky man

and, with his plain face, to be looked on as a sort of Paris possessed

of a Helen. "But no doubt it always is and must be so!" he consoled

himself. "And besides, what have I done to bring it about? How did it

begin? I traveled from Moscow with Prince Vasili. Then there was

nothing. So why should I not stay at his house? Then I played cards with

her and picked up her reticule and drove out with her. How did it begin,

when did it all come about?" And here he was sitting by her side as her

betrothed, seeing, hearing, feeling her nearness, her breathing, her

movements, her beauty. Then it would suddenly seem to him that it was

not she but he was so unusually beautiful, and that that was why they

all looked so at him, and flattered by this general admiration he would

expand his chest, raise his head, and rejoice at his good fortune.

Suddenly he heard a familiar voice repeating something to him a second

time. But Pierre was so absorbed that he did not understand what was

said.

"I am asking you when you last heard from Bolkonski," repeated Prince

Vasili a third time. "How absent-minded you are, my dear fellow."

Prince Vasili smiled, and Pierre noticed that everyone was smiling at

him and Helene. "Well, what of it, if you all know it?" thought Pierre.

"What of it? It's the truth!" and he himself smiled his gentle childlike

smile, and Helene smiled too.

"When did you get the letter? Was it from Olmutz?" repeated Prince

Vasili, who pretended to want to know this in order to settle a dispute.

"How can one talk or think of such trifles?" thought Pierre.

"Yes, from Olmutz," he answered, with a sigh.

After supper Pierre with his partner followed the others into the

drawing room. The guests began to disperse, some without taking leave of

Helene. Some, as if unwilling to distract her from an important

occupation, came up to her for a moment and made haste to go away,

refusing to let her see them off. The diplomatist preserved a mournful

silence as he left the drawing room. He pictured the vanity of his

diplomatic career in comparison with Pierre's happiness. The old general

grumbled at his wife when she asked how his leg was. "Oh, the old fool,"

he thought. "That Princess Helene will be beautiful still when she's

fifty."

"I think I may congratulate you," whispered Anna Pavlovna to the old

princess, kissing her soundly. "If I hadn't this headache I'd have

stayed longer."

The old princess did not reply, she was tormented by jealousy of her

daughter's happiness.

While the guests were taking their leave Pierre remained for a long time

alone with Helene in the little drawing room where they were sitting. He

had often before, during the last six weeks, remained alone with her,

but had never spoken to her of love. Now he felt that it was inevitable,

but he could not make up his mind to take the final step. He felt

ashamed; he felt that he was occupying someone else's place here beside

Helene. "This happiness is not for you," some inner voice whispered to

him. "This happiness is for those who have not in them what there is in

you."

But, as he had to say something, he began by asking her whether she was

satisfied with the party. She replied in her usual simple manner that

this name day of hers had been one of the pleasantest she had ever had.

Some of the nearest relatives had not yet left. They were sitting in the

large drawing room. Prince Vasili came up to Pierre with languid

footsteps. Pierre rose and said it was getting late. Prince Vasili gave

him a look of stern inquiry, as though what Pierre had just said was so

strange that one could not take it in. But then the expression of

severity changed, and he drew Pierre's hand downwards, made him sit

down, and smiled affectionately.

"Well, Lelya?" he asked, turning instantly to his daughter and

addressing her with the careless tone of habitual tenderness natural to

parents who have petted their children from babyhood, but which Prince

Vasili had only acquired by imitating other parents.

And he again turned to Pierre.

"Sergey Kuzmich--From all sides-" he said, unbuttoning the top button of

his waistcoat.

Pierre smiled, but his smile showed that he knew it was not the story

about Sergey Kuzmich that interested Prince Vasili just then, and Prince

Vasili saw that Pierre knew this. He suddenly muttered something and

went away. It seemed to Pierre that even the prince was disconcerted.

The sight of the discomposure of that old man of the world touched

Pierre: he looked at Helene and she too seemed disconcerted, and her

look seemed to say: "Well, it is your own fault."

"The step must be taken but I cannot, I cannot!" thought Pierre, and he

again began speaking about indifferent matters, about Sergey Kuzmich,

asking what the point of the story was as he had not heard it properly.

Helene answered with a smile that she too had missed it.

When Prince Vasili returned to the drawing room, the princess, his wife,

was talking in low tones to the elderly lady about Pierre.

"Of course, it is a very brilliant match, but happiness, my dear..."

"Marriages are made in heaven," replied the elderly lady.

Prince Vasili passed by, seeming not to hear the ladies, and sat down on

a sofa in a far corner of the room. He closed his eyes and seemed to be

dozing. His head sank forward and then he roused himself.

"Aline," he said to his wife, "go and see what they are about."

The princess went up to the door, passed by it with a dignified and

indifferent air, and glanced into the little drawing room. Pierre and

Helene still sat talking just as before.

"Still the same," she said to her husband.

Prince Vasili frowned, twisting his mouth, his cheeks quivered and his

face assumed the coarse, unpleasant expression peculiar to him. Shaking

himself, he rose, threw back his head, and with resolute steps went past

the ladies into the little drawing room. With quick steps he went

joyfully up to Pierre. His face was so unusually triumphant that Pierre

rose in alarm on seeing it.

"Thank God!" said Prince Vasili. "My wife has told me everything!" (He

put one arm around Pierre and the other around his daughter.)--"My dear

boy... Lelya... I am very pleased." (His voice trembled.) "I loved your

father... and she will make you a good wife... God bless you!..."

He embraced his daughter, and then again Pierre, and kissed him with his

malodorous mouth. Tears actually moistened his cheeks.

"Princess, come here!" he shouted.

The old princess came in and also wept. The elderly lady was using her

handkerchief too. Pierre was kissed, and he kissed the beautiful

Helene's hand several times. After a while they were left alone again.

"All this had to be and could not be otherwise," thought Pierre, "so it

is useless to ask whether it is good or bad. It is good because it's

definite and one is rid of the old tormenting doubt." Pierre held the

hand of his betrothed in silence, looking at her beautiful bosom as it

rose and fell.

"Helene!" he said aloud and paused.

"Something special is always said in such cases," he thought, but could

not remember what it was that people say. He looked at her face. She

drew nearer to him. Her face flushed.

"Oh, take those off... those..." she said, pointing to his spectacles.

Pierre took them off, and his eyes, besides the strange look eyes have

from which spectacles have just been removed, had also a frightened and

inquiring look. He was about to stoop over her hand and kiss it, but

with a rapid, almost brutal movement of her head, she intercepted his

lips and met them with her own. Her face struck Pierre, by its altered,

unpleasantly excited expression.

"It is too late now, it's done; besides I love her," thought Pierre.

"Je vous aime!" \* he said, remembering what has to be said at such

moments: but his words sounded so weak that he felt ashamed of himself.

\* "I love you."

Six weeks later he was married, and settled in Count Bezukhov's large,

newly furnished Petersburg house, the happy possessor, as people said,

of a wife who was a celebrated beauty and of millions of money.

CHAPTER III

Old Prince Nicholas Bolkonski received a letter from Prince Vasili in

November, 1805, announcing that he and his son would be paying him a

visit. "I am starting on a journey of inspection, and of course I shall

think nothing of an extra seventy miles to come and see you at the same

time, my honored benefactor," wrote Prince Vasili. "My son Anatole is

accompanying me on his way to the army, so I hope you will allow him

personally to express the deep respect that, emulating his father, he

feels for you."

"It seems that there will be no need to bring Mary out, suitors are

coming to us of their own accord," incautiously remarked the little

princess on hearing the news.

Prince Nicholas frowned, but said nothing.

A fortnight after the letter Prince Vasili's servants came one evening

in advance of him, and he and his son arrived next day.

Old Bolkonski had always had a poor opinion of Prince Vasili's

character, but more so recently, since in the new reigns of Paul and

Alexander Prince Vasili had risen to high position and honors. And now,

from the hints contained in his letter and given by the little princess,

he saw which way the wind was blowing, and his low opinion changed into

a feeling of contemptuous ill will. He snorted whenever he mentioned

him. On the day of Prince Vasili's arrival, Prince Bolkonski was

particularly discontented and out of temper. Whether he was in a bad

temper because Prince Vasili was coming, or whether his being in a bad

temper made him specially annoyed at Prince Vasili's visit, he was in a

bad temper, and in the morning Tikhon had already advised the architect

not to go to the prince with his report.

"Do you hear how he's walking?" said Tikhon, drawing the architect's

attention to the sound of the prince's footsteps. "Stepping flat on his

heels--we know what that means...."

However, at nine o'clock the prince, in his velvet coat with a sable

collar and cap, went out for his usual walk. It had snowed the day

before and the path to the hothouse, along which the prince was in the

habit of walking, had been swept: the marks of the broom were still

visible in the snow and a shovel had been left sticking in one of the

soft snowbanks that bordered both sides of the path. The prince went

through the conservatories, the serfs' quarters, and the outbuildings,

frowning and silent.

"Can a sleigh pass?" he asked his overseer, a venerable man, resembling

his master in manners and looks, who was accompanying him back to the

house.

"The snow is deep. I am having the avenue swept, your honor."

The prince bowed his head and went up to the porch. "God be thanked,"

thought the overseer, "the storm has blown over!"

"It would have been hard to drive up, your honor," he added. "I heard,

your honor, that a minister is coming to visit your honor."

The prince turned round to the overseer and fixed his eyes on him,

frowning.

"What? A minister? What minister? Who gave orders?" he said in his

shrill, harsh voice. "The road is not swept for the princess my

daughter, but for a minister! For me, there are no ministers!"

"Your honor, I thought..."

"You thought!" shouted the prince, his words coming more and more

rapidly and indistinctly. "You thought!... Rascals! Blackguards!... I'll

teach you to think!" and lifting his stick he swung it and would have

hit Alpatych, the overseer, had not the latter instinctively avoided the

blow. "Thought... Blackguards..." shouted the prince rapidly.

But although Alpatych, frightened at his own temerity in avoiding the

stroke, came up to the prince, bowing his bald head resignedly before

him, or perhaps for that very reason, the prince, though he continued to

shout: "Blackguards!... Throw the snow back on the road!" did not lift

his stick again but hurried into the house.

Before dinner, Princess Mary and Mademoiselle Bourienne, who knew that

the prince was in a bad humor, stood awaiting him; Mademoiselle

Bourienne with a radiant face that said: "I know nothing, I am the same

as usual," and Princess Mary pale, frightened, and with downcast eyes.

What she found hardest to bear was to know that on such occasions she

ought to behave like Mademoiselle Bourienne, but could not. She thought:

"If I seem not to notice he will think that I do not sympathize with

him; if I seem sad and out of spirits myself, he will say (as he has

done before) that I'm in the dumps."

The prince looked at his daughter's frightened face and snorted.

"Fool... or dummy!" he muttered.

"And the other one is not here. They've been telling tales," he thought-

-referring to the little princess who was not in the dining room.

"Where is the princess?" he asked. "Hiding?"

"She is not very well," answered Mademoiselle Bourienne with a bright

smile, "so she won't come down. It is natural in her state."

"Hm! Hm!" muttered the prince, sitting down.

His plate seemed to him not quite clean, and pointing to a spot he flung

it away. Tikhon caught it and handed it to a footman. The little

princess was not unwell, but had such an overpowering fear of the prince

that, hearing he was in a bad humor, she had decided not to appear.

"I am afraid for the baby," she said to Mademoiselle Bourienne: "Heaven

knows what a fright might do."

In general at Bald Hills the little princess lived in constant fear, and

with a sense of antipathy to the old prince which she did not realize

because the fear was so much the stronger feeling. The prince

reciprocated this antipathy, but it was overpowered by his contempt for

her. When the little princess had grown accustomed to life at Bald

Hills, she took a special fancy to Mademoiselle Bourienne, spent whole

days with her, asked her to sleep in her room, and often talked with her

about the old prince and criticized him.

"So we are to have visitors, mon prince?" remarked Mademoiselle

Bourienne, unfolding her white napkin with her rosy fingers. "His

Excellency Prince Vasili Kuragin and his son, I understand?" she said

inquiringly.

"Hm!--his excellency is a puppy.... I got him his appointment in the

service," said the prince disdainfully. "Why his son is coming I don't

understand. Perhaps Princess Elizabeth and Princess Mary know. I don't

want him." (He looked at his blushing daughter.) "Are you unwell today?

Eh? Afraid of the 'minister' as that idiot Alpatych called him this

morning?"

"No, mon pere."

Though Mademoiselle Bourienne had been so unsuccessful in her choice of

a subject, she did not stop talking, but chattered about the

conservatories and the beauty of a flower that had just opened, and

after the soup the prince became more genial.

After dinner, he went to see his daughter-in-law. The little princess

was sitting at a small table, chattering with Masha, her maid. She grew

pale on seeing her father-in-law.

She was much altered. She was now plain rather than pretty. Her cheeks

had sunk, her lip was drawn up, and her eyes drawn down.

"Yes, I feel a kind of oppression," she said in reply to the prince's

question as to how she felt.

"Do you want anything?"

"No, merci, mon pere."

"Well, all right, all right."

He left the room and went to the waiting room where Alpatych stood with

bowed head.

"Has the snow been shoveled back?"

"Yes, your excellency. Forgive me for heaven's sake... It was only my

stupidity."

"All right, all right," interrupted the prince, and laughing his

unnatural way, he stretched out his hand for Alpatych to kiss, and then

proceeded to his study.

Prince Vasili arrived that evening. He was met in the avenue by coachmen

and footmen, who, with loud shouts, dragged his sleighs up to one of the

lodges over the road purposely laden with snow.

Prince Vasili and Anatole had separate rooms assigned to them.

Anatole, having taken off his overcoat, sat with arms akimbo before a

table on a corner of which he smilingly and absent-mindedly fixed his

large and handsome eyes. He regarded his whole life as a continual round

of amusement which someone for some reason had to provide for him. And

he looked on this visit to a churlish old man and a rich and ugly

heiress in the same way. All this might, he thought, turn out very well

and amusingly. "And why not marry her if she really has so much money?

That never does any harm," thought Anatole.

He shaved and scented himself with the care and elegance which had

become habitual to him and, his handsome head held high, entered his

father's room with the good-humored and victorious air natural to him.

Prince Vasili's two valets were busy dressing him, and he looked round

with much animation and cheerfully nodded to his son as the latter

entered, as if to say: "Yes, that's how I want you to look."

"I say, Father, joking apart, is she very hideous?" Anatole asked, as if

continuing a conversation the subject of which had often been mentioned

during the journey.

"Enough! What nonsense! Above all, try to be respectful and cautious

with the old prince."

"If he starts a row I'll go away," said Prince Anatole. "I can't bear

those old men! Eh?"

"Remember, for you everything depends on this."

In the meantime, not only was it known in the maidservants' rooms that

the minister and his son had arrived, but the appearance of both had

been minutely described. Princess Mary was sitting alone in her room,

vainly trying to master her agitation.

"Why did they write, why did Lise tell me about it? It can never

happen!" she said, looking at herself in the glass. "How shall I enter

the drawing room? Even if I like him I can't now be myself with him."

The mere thought of her father's look filled her with terror. The little

princess and Mademoiselle Bourienne had already received from Masha, the

lady's maid, the necessary report of how handsome the minister's son

was, with his rosy cheeks and dark eyebrows, and with what difficulty

the father had dragged his legs upstairs while the son had followed him

like an eagle, three steps at a time. Having received this information,

the little princess and Mademoiselle Bourienne, whose chattering voices

had reached her from the corridor, went into Princess Mary's room.

"You know they've come, Marie?" said the little princess, waddling in,

and sinking heavily into an armchair.

She was no longer in the loose gown she generally wore in the morning,

but had on one of her best dresses. Her hair was carefully done and her

face was animated, which, however, did not conceal its sunken and faded

outlines. Dressed as she used to be in Petersburg society, it was still

more noticeable how much plainer she had become. Some unobtrusive touch

had been added to Mademoiselle Bourienne's toilet which rendered her

fresh and pretty face yet more attractive.

"What! Are you going to remain as you are, dear princess?" she began.

"They'll be announcing that the gentlemen are in the drawing room and we

shall have to go down, and you have not smartened yourself up at all!"

The little princess got up, rang for the maid, and hurriedly and merrily

began to devise and carry out a plan of how Princess Mary should be

dressed. Princess Mary's self-esteem was wounded by the fact that the

arrival of a suitor agitated her, and still more so by both her

companions' not having the least conception that it could be otherwise.

To tell them that she felt ashamed for herself and for them would be to

betray her agitation, while to decline their offers to dress her would

prolong their banter and insistence. She flushed, her beautiful eyes

grew dim, red blotches came on her face, and it took on the unattractive

martyrlike expression it so often wore, as she submitted herself to

Mademoiselle Bourienne and Lise. Both these women quite sincerely tried

to make her look pretty. She was so plain that neither of them could

think of her as a rival, so they began dressing her with perfect

sincerity, and with the naive and firm conviction women have that dress

can make a face pretty.

"No really, my dear, this dress is not pretty," said Lise, looking

sideways at Princess Mary from a little distance. "You have a maroon

dress, have it fetched. Really! You know the fate of your whole life may

be at stake. But this one is too light, it's not becoming!"

It was not the dress, but the face and whole figure of Princess Mary

that was not pretty, but neither Mademoiselle Bourienne nor the little

princess felt this; they still thought that if a blue ribbon were placed

in the hair, the hair combed up, and the blue scarf arranged lower on

the best maroon dress, and so on, all would be well. They forgot that

the frightened face and the figure could not be altered, and that

however they might change the setting and adornment of that face, it

would still remain piteous and plain. After two or three changes to

which Princess Mary meekly submitted, just as her hair had been arranged

on the top of her head (a style that quite altered and spoiled her

looks) and she had put on a maroon dress with a pale-blue scarf, the

little princess walked twice round her, now adjusting a fold of the

dress with her little hand, now arranging the scarf and looking at her

with her head bent first on one side and then on the other.

"No, it will not do," she said decidedly, clasping her hands. "No, Mary,

really this dress does not suit you. I prefer you in your little gray

everyday dress. Now please, do it for my sake. Katie," she said to the

maid, "bring the princess her gray dress, and you'll see, Mademoiselle

Bourienne, how I shall arrange it," she added, smiling with a foretaste

of artistic pleasure.

But when Katie brought the required dress, Princess Mary remained

sitting motionless before the glass, looking at her face, and saw in the

mirror her eyes full of tears and her mouth quivering, ready to burst

into sobs.

"Come, dear princess," said Mademoiselle Bourienne, "just one more

little effort."

The little princess, taking the dress from the maid, came up to Princess

Mary.

"Well, now we'll arrange something quite simple and becoming," she said.

The three voices, hers, Mademoiselle Bourienne's, and Katie's, who was

laughing at something, mingled in a merry sound, like the chirping of

birds.

"No, leave me alone," said Princess Mary.

Her voice sounded so serious and so sad that the chirping of the birds

was silenced at once. They looked at the beautiful, large, thoughtful

eyes full of tears and of thoughts, gazing shiningly and imploringly at

them, and understood that it was useless and even cruel to insist.

"At least, change your coiffure," said the little princess. "Didn't I

tell you," she went on, turning reproachfully to Mademoiselle Bourienne,

"Mary's is a face which such a coiffure does not suit in the least. Not

in the least! Please change it."

"Leave me alone, please leave me alone! It is all quite the same to me,"

answered a voice struggling with tears.

Mademoiselle Bourienne and the little princess had to own to themselves

that Princess Mary in this guise looked very plain, worse than usual,

but it was too late. She was looking at them with an expression they

both knew, an expression thoughtful and sad. This expression in Princess

Mary did not frighten them (she never inspired fear in anyone), but they

knew that when it appeared on her face, she became mute and was not to

be shaken in her determination.

"You will change it, won't you?" said Lise. And as Princess Mary gave no

answer, she left the room.

Princess Mary was left alone. She did not comply with Lise's request,

she not only left her hair as it was, but did not even look in her

glass. Letting her arms fall helplessly, she sat with downcast eyes and

pondered. A husband, a man, a strong dominant and strangely attractive

being rose in her imagination, and carried her into a totally different

happy world of his own. She fancied a child, her own--such as she had

seen the day before in the arms of her nurse's daughter--at her own

breast, the husband standing by and gazing tenderly at her and the

child. "But no, it is impossible, I am too ugly," she thought.

"Please come to tea. The prince will be out in a moment," came the

maid's voice at the door.

She roused herself, and felt appalled at what she had been thinking, and

before going down she went into the room where the icons hung and, her

eyes fixed on the dark face of a large icon of the Saviour lit by a

lamp, she stood before it with folded hands for a few moments. A painful

doubt filled her soul. Could the joy of love, of earthly love for a man,

be for her? In her thoughts of marriage Princess Mary dreamed of

happiness and of children, but her strongest, most deeply hidden longing

was for earthly love. The more she tried to hide this feeling from

others and even from herself, the stronger it grew. "O God," she said,

"how am I to stifle in my heart these temptations of the devil? How am I

to renounce forever these vile fancies, so as peacefully to fulfill Thy

will?" And scarcely had she put that question than God gave her the

answer in her own heart. "Desire nothing for thyself, seek nothing, be

not anxious or envious. Man's future and thy own fate must remain hidden

from thee, but live so that thou mayest be ready for anything. If it be

God's will to prove thee in the duties of marriage, be ready to fulfill

His will." With this consoling thought (but yet with a hope for the

fulfillment of her forbidden earthly longing) Princess Mary sighed, and

having crossed herself went down, thinking neither of her gown and

coiffure nor of how she would go in nor of what she would say. What

could all that matter in comparison with the will of God, without Whose

care not a hair of man's head can fall?

CHAPTER IV

When Princess Mary came down, Prince Vasili and his son were already in

the drawing room, talking to the little princess and Mademoiselle

Bourienne. When she entered with her heavy step, treading on her heels,

the gentlemen and Mademoiselle Bourienne rose and the little princess,

indicating her to the gentlemen, said: "Voila Marie!" Princess Mary saw

them all and saw them in detail. She saw Prince Vasili's face, serious

for an instant at the sight of her, but immediately smiling again, and

the little princess curiously noting the impression "Marie" produced on

the visitors. And she saw Mademoiselle Bourienne, with her ribbon and

pretty face, and her unusually animated look which was fixed on him, but

him she could not see, she only saw something large, brilliant, and

handsome moving toward her as she entered the room. Prince Vasili

approached first, and she kissed the bold forehead that bent over her

hand and answered his question by saying that, on the contrary, she

remembered him quite well. Then Anatole came up to her. She still could

not see him. She only felt a soft hand taking hers firmly, and she

touched with her lips a white forehead, over which was beautiful light-

brown hair smelling of pomade. When she looked up at him she was struck

by his beauty. Anatole stood with his right thumb under a button of his

uniform, his chest expanded and his back drawn in, slightly swinging one

foot, and, with his head a little bent, looked with beaming face at the

princess without speaking and evidently not thinking about her at all.

Anatole was not quick-witted, nor ready or eloquent in conversation, but

he had the faculty, so invaluable in society, of composure and

imperturbable self-possession. If a man lacking in self-confidence

remains dumb on a first introduction and betrays a consciousness of the

impropriety of such silence and an anxiety to find something to say, the

effect is bad. But Anatole was dumb, swung his foot, and smilingly

examined the princess' hair. It was evident that he could be silent in

this way for a very long time. "If anyone finds this silence

inconvenient, let him talk, but I don't want to," he seemed to say.

Besides this, in his behavior to women Anatole had a manner which

particularly inspires in them curiosity, awe, and even love--a

supercilious consciousness of his own superiority. It was as if he said

to them: "I know you, I know you, but why should I bother about you?

You'd be only too glad, of course." Perhaps he did not really think this

when he met women--even probably he did not, for in general he thought

very little--but his looks and manner gave that impression. The princess

felt this, and as if wishing to show him that she did not even dare

expect to interest him, she turned to his father. The conversation was

general and animated, thanks to Princess Lise's voice and little downy

lip that lifted over her white teeth. She met Prince Vasili with that

playful manner often employed by lively chatty people, and consisting in

the assumption that between the person they so address and themselves

there are some semi-private, long-established jokes and amusing

reminiscences, though no such reminiscences really exist--just as none

existed in this case. Prince Vasili readily adopted her tone and the

little princess also drew Anatole, whom she hardly knew, into these

amusing recollections of things that had never occurred. Mademoiselle

Bourienne also shared them and even Princess Mary felt herself

pleasantly made to share in these merry reminiscences.

"Here at least we shall have the benefit of your company all to

ourselves, dear prince," said the little princess (of course, in French)

to Prince Vasili. "It's not as at Annette's \* receptions where you

always ran away; you remember cette chere Annette!"

\* Anna Pavlovna.

"Ah, but you won't talk politics to me like Annette!"

"And our little tea table?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Why is it you were never at Annette's?" the little princess asked

Anatole. "Ah, I know, I know," she said with a sly glance, "your brother

Hippolyte told me about your goings on. Oh!" and she shook her finger at

him, "I have even heard of your doings in Paris!"

"And didn't Hippolyte tell you?" asked Prince Vasili, turning to his son

and seizing the little princess' arm as if she would have run away and

he had just managed to catch her, "didn't he tell you how he himself was

pining for the dear princess, and how she showed him the door? Oh, she

is a pearl among women, Princess," he added, turning to Princess Mary.

When Paris was mentioned, Mademoiselle Bourienne for her part seized the

opportunity of joining in the general current of recollections.

She took the liberty of inquiring whether it was long since Anatole had

left Paris and how he had liked that city. Anatole answered the

Frenchwoman very readily and, looking at her with a smile, talked to her

about her native land. When he saw the pretty little Bourienne, Anatole

came to the conclusion that he would not find Bald Hills dull either.

"Not at all bad!" he thought, examining her, "not at all bad, that

little companion! I hope she will bring her along with her when we're

married, la petite est gentille." \*

\* The little one is charming.

The old prince dressed leisurely in his study, frowning and considering

what he was to do. The coming of these visitors annoyed him. "What are

Prince Vasili and that son of his to me? Prince Vasili is a shallow

braggart and his son, no doubt, is a fine specimen," he grumbled to

himself. What angered him was that the coming of these visitors revived

in his mind an unsettled question he always tried to stifle, one about

which he always deceived himself. The question was whether he could ever

bring himself to part from his daughter and give her to a husband. The

prince never directly asked himself that question, knowing beforehand

that he would have to answer it justly, and justice clashed not only

with his feelings but with the very possibility of life. Life without

Princess Mary, little as he seemed to value her, was unthinkable to him.

"And why should she marry?" he thought. "To be unhappy for certain.

There's Lise, married to Andrew--a better husband one would think could

hardly be found nowadays--but is she contented with her lot? And who

would marry Marie for love? Plain and awkward! They'll take her for her

connections and wealth. Are there no women living unmarried, and even

the happier for it?" So thought Prince Bolkonski while dressing, and yet

the question he was always putting off demanded an immediate answer.

Prince Vasili had brought his son with the evident intention of

proposing, and today or tomorrow he would probably ask for an answer.

His birth and position in society were not bad. "Well, I've nothing

against it," the prince said to himself, "but he must be worthy of her.

And that is what we shall see."

"That is what we shall see! That is what we shall see!" he added aloud.

He entered the drawing room with his usual alert step, glancing rapidly

round the company. He noticed the change in the little princess' dress,

Mademoiselle Bourienne's ribbon, Princess Mary's unbecoming coiffure,

Mademoiselle Bourienne's and Anatole's smiles, and the loneliness of his

daughter amid the general conversation. "Got herself up like a fool!" he

thought, looking irritably at her. "She is shameless, and he ignores

her!"

He went straight up to Prince Vasili.

"Well! How d'ye do? How d'ye do? Glad to see you!"

"Friendship laughs at distance," began Prince Vasili in his usual rapid,

self-confident, familiar tone. "Here is my second son; please love and

befriend him."

Prince Bolkonski surveyed Anatole.

"Fine young fellow! Fine young fellow!" he said. "Well, come and kiss

me," and he offered his cheek.

Anatole kissed the old man, and looked at him with curiosity and perfect

composure, waiting for a display of the eccentricities his father had

told him to expect.

Prince Bolkonski sat down in his usual place in the corner of the sofa

and, drawing up an armchair for Prince Vasili, pointed to it and began

questioning him about political affairs and news. He seemed to listen

attentively to what Prince Vasili said, but kept glancing at Princess

Mary.

"And so they are writing from Potsdam already?" he said, repeating

Prince Vasili's last words. Then rising, he suddenly went up to his

daughter.

"Is it for visitors you've got yourself up like that, eh?" said he.

"Fine, very fine! You have done up your hair in this new way for the

visitors, and before the visitors I tell you that in future you are

never to dare to change your way of dress without my consent."

"It was my fault, mon pere," interceded the little princess, with a

blush.

"You must do as you please," said Prince Bolkonski, bowing to his

daughter-in-law, "but she need not make a fool of herself, she's plain

enough as it is."

And he sat down again, paying no more attention to his daughter, who was

reduced to tears.

"On the contrary, that coiffure suits the princess very well," said

Prince Vasili.

"Now you, young prince, what's your name?" said Prince Bolkonski,

turning to Anatole, "come here, let us talk and get acquainted."

"Now the fun begins," thought Anatole, sitting down with a smile beside

the old prince.

"Well, my dear boy, I hear you've been educated abroad, not taught to

read and write by the deacon, like your father and me. Now tell me, my

dear boy, are you serving in the Horse Guards?" asked the old man,

scrutinizing Anatole closely and intently.

"No, I have been transferred to the line," said Anatole, hardly able to

restrain his laughter.

"Ah! That's a good thing. So, my dear boy, you wish to serve the Tsar

and the country? It is wartime. Such a fine fellow must serve. Well, are

you off to the front?"

"No, Prince, our regiment has gone to the front, but I am attached...

what is it I am attached to, Papa?" said Anatole, turning to his father

with a laugh.

"A splendid soldier, splendid! 'What am I attached to!' Ha, ha, ha!"

laughed Prince Bolkonski, and Anatole laughed still louder. Suddenly

Prince Bolkonski frowned.

"You may go," he said to Anatole.

Anatole returned smiling to the ladies.

"And so you've had him educated abroad, Prince Vasili, haven't you?"

said the old prince to Prince Vasili.

"I have done my best for him, and I can assure you the education there

is much better than ours."

"Yes, everything is different nowadays, everything is changed. The lad's

a fine fellow, a fine fellow! Well, come with me now." He took Prince

Vasili's arm and led him to his study. As soon as they were alone

together, Prince Vasili announced his hopes and wishes to the old

prince.

"Well, do you think I shall prevent her, that I can't part from her?"

said the old prince angrily. "What an idea! I'm ready for it tomorrow!

Only let me tell you, I want to know my son-in-law better. You know my

principles--everything aboveboard? I will ask her tomorrow in your

presence; if she is willing, then he can stay on. He can stay and I'll

see." The old prince snorted. "Let her marry, it's all the same to me!"

he screamed in the same piercing tone as when parting from his son.

"I will tell you frankly," said Prince Vasili in the tone of a crafty

man convinced of the futility of being cunning with so keen-sighted a

companion. "You know, you see right through people. Anatole is no

genius, but he is an honest, goodhearted lad; an excellent son or

kinsman."

"All right, all right, we'll see!"

As always happens when women lead lonely lives for any length of time

without male society, on Anatole's appearance all the three women of

Prince Bolkonski's household felt that their life had not been real till

then. Their powers of reasoning, feeling, and observing immediately

increased tenfold, and their life, which seemed to have been passed in

darkness, was suddenly lit up by a new brightness, full of significance.

Princess Mary grew quite unconscious of her face and coiffure. The

handsome open face of the man who might perhaps be her husband absorbed

all her attention. He seemed to her kind, brave, determined, manly, and

magnanimous. She felt convinced of that. Thousands of dreams of a future

family life continually rose in her imagination. She drove them away and

tried to conceal them.

"But am I not too cold with him?" thought the princess. "I try to be

reserved because in the depth of my soul I feel too near to him already,

but then he cannot know what I think of him and may imagine that I do

not like him."

And Princess Mary tried, but could not manage, to be cordial to her new

guest. "Poor girl, she's devilish ugly!" thought Anatole.

Mademoiselle Bourienne, also roused to great excitement by Anatole's

arrival, thought in another way. Of course, she, a handsome young woman

without any definite position, without relations or even a country, did

not intend to devote her life to serving Prince Bolkonski, to reading

aloud to him and being friends with Princess Mary. Mademoiselle

Bourienne had long been waiting for a Russian prince who, able to

appreciate at a glance her superiority to the plain, badly dressed,

ungainly Russian princesses, would fall in love with her and carry her

off; and here at last was a Russian prince. Mademoiselle Bourienne knew

a story, heard from her aunt but finished in her own way, which she

liked to repeat to herself. It was the story of a girl who had been

seduced, and to whom her poor mother (sa pauvre mere) appeared, and

reproached her for yielding to a man without being married. Mademoiselle

Bourienne was often touched to tears as in imagination she told this

story to him, her seducer. And now he, a real Russian prince, had

appeared. He would carry her away and then sa pauvre mere would appear

and he would marry her. So her future shaped itself in Mademoiselle

Bourienne's head at the very time she was talking to Anatole about

Paris. It was not calculation that guided her (she did not even for a

moment consider what she should do), but all this had long been familiar

to her, and now that Anatole had appeared it just grouped itself around

him and she wished and tried to please him as much as possible.

The little princess, like an old war horse that hears the trumpet,

unconsciously and quite forgetting her condition, prepared for the

familiar gallop of coquetry, without any ulterior motive or any

struggle, but with naive and lighthearted gaiety.

Although in female society Anatole usually assumed the role of a man

tired of being run after by women, his vanity was flattered by the

spectacle of his power over these three women. Besides that, he was

beginning to feel for the pretty and provocative Mademoiselle Bourienne

that passionate animal feeling which was apt to master him with great

suddenness and prompt him to the coarsest and most reckless actions.

After tea, the company went into the sitting room and Princess Mary was

asked to play on the clavichord. Anatole, laughing and in high spirits,

came and leaned on his elbows, facing her and beside Mademoiselle

Bourienne. Princess Mary felt his look with a painfully joyous emotion.

Her favorite sonata bore her into a most intimately poetic world and the

look she felt upon her made that world still more poetic. But Anatole's

expression, though his eyes were fixed on her, referred not to her but

to the movements of Mademoiselle Bourienne's little foot, which he was

then touching with his own under the clavichord. Mademoiselle Bourienne

was also looking at Princess Mary, and in her lovely eyes there was a

look of fearful joy and hope that was also new to the princess.

"How she loves me!" thought Princess Mary. "How happy I am now, and how

happy I may be with such a friend and such a husband! Husband? Can it be

possible?" she thought, not daring to look at his face, but still

feeling his eyes gazing at her.

In the evening, after supper, when all were about to retire, Anatole

kissed Princess Mary's hand. She did not know how she found the courage,

but she looked straight into his handsome face as it came near to her

shortsighted eyes. Turning from Princess Mary he went up and kissed

Mademoiselle Bourienne's hand. (This was not etiquette, but then he did

everything so simply and with such assurance!) Mademoiselle Bourienne

flushed, and gave the princess a frightened look.

"What delicacy!" thought the princess. "Is it possible that Amelie"

(Mademoiselle Bourienne) "thinks I could be jealous of her, and not

value her pure affection and devotion to me?" She went up to her and

kissed her warmly. Anatole went up to kiss the little princess' hand.

"No! No! No! When your father writes to tell me that you are behaving

well I will give you my hand to kiss. Not till then!" she said. And

smilingly raising a finger at him, she left the room.

CHAPTER V

They all separated, but, except Anatole who fell asleep as soon as he

got into bed, all kept awake a long time that night.

"Is he really to be my husband, this stranger who is so kind--yes, kind,

that is the chief thing," thought Princess Mary; and fear, which she had

seldom experienced, came upon her. She feared to look round, it seemed

to her that someone was there standing behind the screen in the dark

corner. And this someone was he--the devil--and he was also this man

with the white forehead, black eyebrows, and red lips.

She rang for her maid and asked her to sleep in her room.

Mademoiselle Bourienne walked up and down the conservatory for a long

time that evening, vainly expecting someone, now smiling at someone, now

working herself up to tears with the imaginary words of her pauvre mere

rebuking her for her fall.

The little princess grumbled to her maid that her bed was badly made.

She could not lie either on her face or on her side. Every position was

awkward and uncomfortable, and her burden oppressed her now more than

ever because Anatole's presence had vividly recalled to her the time

when she was not like that and when everything was light and gay. She

sat in an armchair in her dressing jacket and nightcap and Katie, sleepy

and disheveled, beat and turned the heavy feather bed for the third

time, muttering to herself.

"I told you it was all lumps and holes!" the little princess repeated.

"I should be glad enough to fall asleep, so it's not my fault!" and her

voice quivered like that of a child about to cry.

The old prince did not sleep either. Tikhon, half asleep, heard him

pacing angrily about and snorting. The old prince felt as though he had

been insulted through his daughter. The insult was the more pointed

because it concerned not himself but another, his daughter, whom he

loved more than himself. He kept telling himself that he would consider

the whole matter and decide what was right and how he should act, but

instead of that he only excited himself more and more.

"The first man that turns up--she forgets her father and everything

else, runs upstairs and does up her hair and wags her tail and is unlike

herself! Glad to throw her father over! And she knew I should notice it.

Fr... fr... fr! And don't I see that that idiot had eyes only for

Bourienne--I shall have to get rid of her. And how is it she has not

pride enough to see it? If she has no pride for herself she might at

least have some for my sake! She must be shown that the blockhead thinks

nothing of her and looks only at Bourienne. No, she has no pride... but

I'll let her see...."

The old prince knew that if he told his daughter she was making a

mistake and that Anatole meant to flirt with Mademoiselle Bourienne,

Princess Mary's self-esteem would be wounded and his point (not to be

parted from her) would be gained, so pacifying himself with this

thought, he called Tikhon and began to undress.

"What devil brought them here?" thought he, while Tikhon was putting the

nightshirt over his dried-up old body and gray-haired chest. "I never

invited them. They came to disturb my life--and there is not much of it

left."

"Devil take 'em!" he muttered, while his head was still covered by the

shirt.

Tikhon knew his master's habit of sometimes thinking aloud, and

therefore met with unaltered looks the angrily inquisitive expression of

the face that emerged from the shirt.

"Gone to bed?" asked the prince.

Tikhon, like all good valets, instinctively knew the direction of his

master's thoughts. He guessed that the question referred to Prince

Vasili and his son.

"They have gone to bed and put out their lights, your excellency."

"No good... no good..." said the prince rapidly, and thrusting his feet

into his slippers and his arms into the sleeves of his dressing gown, he

went to the couch on which he slept.

Though no words had passed between Anatole and Mademoiselle Bourienne,

they quite understood one another as to the first part of their romance,

up to the appearance of the pauvre mere; they understood that they had

much to say to one another in private and so they had been seeking an

opportunity since morning to meet one another alone. When Princess Mary

went to her father's room at the usual hour, Mademoiselle Bourienne and

Anatole met in the conservatory.

Princess Mary went to the door of the study with special trepidation. It

seemed to her that not only did everybody know that her fate would be

decided that day, but that they also knew what she thought about it. She

read this in Tikhon's face and in that of Prince Vasili's valet, who

made her a low bow when she met him in the corridor carrying hot water.

The old prince was very affectionate and careful in his treatment of his

daughter that morning. Princess Mary well knew this painstaking

expression of her father's. His face wore that expression when his dry

hands clenched with vexation at her not understanding a sum in

arithmetic, when rising from his chair he would walk away from her,

repeating in a low voice the same words several times over.

He came to the point at once, treating her ceremoniously.

"I have had a proposition made me concerning you," he said with an

unnatural smile. "I expect you have guessed that Prince Vasili has not

come and brought his pupil with him" (for some reason Prince Bolkonski

referred to Anatole as a "pupil") "for the sake of my beautiful eyes.

Last night a proposition was made me on your account and, as you know my

principles, I refer it to you."

"How am I to understand you, mon pere?" said the princess, growing pale

and then blushing.

"How understand me!" cried her father angrily. "Prince Vasili finds you

to his taste as a daughter-in-law and makes a proposal to you on his

pupil's behalf. That's how it's to be understood! 'How understand

it'!... And I ask you!"

"I do not know what you think, Father," whispered the princess.

"I? I? What of me? Leave me out of the question. I'm not going to get

married. What about you? That's what I want to know."

The princess saw that her father regarded the matter with disapproval,

but at that moment the thought occurred to her that her fate would be

decided now or never. She lowered her eyes so as not to see the gaze

under which she felt that she could not think, but would only be able to

submit from habit, and she said: "I wish only to do your will, but if I

had to express my own desire..." She had no time to finish. The old

prince interrupted her.

"That's admirable!" he shouted. "He will take you with your dowry and

take Mademoiselle Bourienne into the bargain. She'll be the wife, while

you..."

The prince stopped. He saw the effect these words had produced on his

daughter. She lowered her head and was ready to burst into tears.

"Now then, now then, I'm only joking!" he said. "Remember this,

Princess, I hold to the principle that a maiden has a full right to

choose. I give you freedom. Only remember that your life's happiness

depends on your decision. Never mind me!"

"But I do not know, Father!"

"There's no need to talk! He receives his orders and will marry you or

anybody; but you are free to choose.... Go to your room, think it over,

and come back in an hour and tell me in his presence: yes or no. I know

you will pray over it. Well, pray if you like, but you had better think

it over. Go! Yes or no, yes or no, yes or no!" he still shouted when the

princess, as if lost in a fog, had already staggered out of the study.

Her fate was decided and happily decided. But what her father had said

about Mademoiselle Bourienne was dreadful. It was untrue to be sure, but

still it was terrible, and she could not help thinking of it. She was

going straight on through the conservatory, neither seeing nor hearing

anything, when suddenly the well-known whispering of Mademoiselle

Bourienne aroused her. She raised her eyes, and two steps away saw

Anatole embracing the Frenchwoman and whispering something to her. With

a horrified expression on his handsome face, Anatole looked at Princess

Mary, but did not at once take his arm from the waist of Mademoiselle

Bourienne who had not yet seen her.

"Who's that? Why? Wait a moment!" Anatole's face seemed to say. Princess

Mary looked at them in silence. She could not understand it. At last

Mademoiselle Bourienne gave a scream and ran away. Anatole bowed to

Princess Mary with a gay smile, as if inviting her to join in a laugh at

this strange incident, and then shrugging his shoulders went to the door

that led to his own apartments.

An hour later, Tikhon came to call Princess Mary to the old prince; he

added that Prince Vasili was also there. When Tikhon came to her

Princess Mary was sitting on the sofa in her room, holding the weeping

Mademoiselle Bourienne in her arms and gently stroking her hair. The

princess' beautiful eyes with all their former calm radiance were

looking with tender affection and pity at Mademoiselle Bourienne's

pretty face.

"No, Princess, I have lost your affection forever!" said Mademoiselle

Bourienne.

"Why? I love you more than ever," said Princess Mary, "and I will try to

do all I can for your happiness."

"But you despise me. You who are so pure can never understand being so

carried away by passion. Oh, only my poor mother..."

"I quite understand," answered Princess Mary, with a sad smile. "Calm

yourself, my dear. I will go to my father," she said, and went out.

Prince Vasili, with one leg thrown high over the other and a snuffbox in

his hand, was sitting there with a smile of deep emotion on his face, as

if stirred to his heart's core and himself regretting and laughing at

his own sensibility, when Princess Mary entered. He hurriedly took a

pinch of snuff.

"Ah, my dear, my dear!" he began, rising and taking her by both hands.

Then, sighing, he added: "My son's fate is in your hands. Decide, my

dear, good, gentle Marie, whom I have always loved as a daughter!"

He drew back and a real tear appeared in his eye.

"Fr... fr..." snorted Prince Bolkonski. "The prince is making a

proposition to you in his pupil's--I mean, his son's--name. Do you wish

or not to be Prince Anatole Kuragin's wife? Reply: yes or no," he

shouted, "and then I shall reserve the right to state my opinion also.

Yes, my opinion, and only my opinion," added Prince Bolkonski, turning

to Prince Vasili and answering his imploring look. "Yes, or no?"

"My desire is never to leave you, Father, never to separate my life from

yours. I don't wish to marry," she answered positively, glancing at

Prince Vasili and at her father with her beautiful eyes.

"Humbug! Nonsense! Humbug, humbug, humbug!" cried Prince Bolkonski,

frowning and taking his daughter's hand; he did not kiss her, but only

bending his forehead to hers just touched it, and pressed her hand so

that she winced and uttered a cry.

Prince Vasili rose.

"My dear, I must tell you that this is a moment I shall never, never

forget. But, my dear, will you not give us a little hope of touching

this heart, so kind and generous? Say 'perhaps'... The future is so

long. Say 'perhaps.'"

"Prince, what I have said is all there is in my heart. I thank you for

the honor, but I shall never be your son's wife."

"Well, so that's finished, my dear fellow! I am very glad to have seen

you. Very glad! Go back to your rooms, Princess. Go!" said the old

prince. "Very, very glad to have seen you," repeated he, embracing

Prince Vasili.

"My vocation is a different one," thought Princess Mary. "My vocation is

to be happy with another kind of happiness, the happiness of love and

self-sacrifice. And cost what it may, I will arrange poor Amelie's

happiness, she loves him so passionately, and so passionately repents. I

will do all I can to arrange the match between them. If he is not rich I

will give her the means; I will ask my father and Andrew. I shall be so

happy when she is his wife. She is so unfortunate, a stranger, alone,

helpless! And, oh God, how passionately she must love him if she could

so far forget herself! Perhaps I might have done the same!..." thought

Princess Mary.

CHAPTER VI

It was long since the Rostovs had news of Nicholas. Not till midwinter

was the count at last handed a letter addressed in his son's

handwriting. On receiving it, he ran on tiptoe to his study in alarm and

haste, trying to escape notice, closed the door, and began to read the

letter.

Anna Mikhaylovna, who always knew everything that passed in the house,

on hearing of the arrival of the letter went softly into the room and

found the count with it in his hand, sobbing and laughing at the same

time.

Anna Mikhaylovna, though her circumstances had improved, was still

living with the Rostovs.

"My dear friend?" said she, in a tone of pathetic inquiry, prepared to

sympathize in any way.

The count sobbed yet more.

"Nikolenka... a letter... wa... a... s... wounded... my darling boy...

the countess... promoted to be an officer... thank God... How tell the

little countess!"

Anna Mikhaylovna sat down beside him, with her own handkerchief wiped

the tears from his eyes and from the letter, then having dried her own

eyes she comforted the count, and decided that at dinner and till

teatime she would prepare the countess, and after tea, with God's help,

would inform her.

At dinner Anna Mikhaylovna talked the whole time about the war news and

about Nikolenka, twice asked when the last letter had been received from

him, though she knew that already, and remarked that they might very

likely be getting a letter from him that day. Each time that these hints

began to make the countess anxious and she glanced uneasily at the count

and at Anna Mikhaylovna, the latter very adroitly turned the

conversation to insignificant matters. Natasha, who, of the whole

family, was the most gifted with a capacity to feel any shades of

intonation, look, and expression, pricked up her ears from the beginning

of the meal and was certain that there was some secret between her

father and Anna Mikhaylovna, that it had something to do with her

brother, and that Anna Mikhaylovna was preparing them for it. Bold as

she was, Natasha, who knew how sensitive her mother was to anything

relating to Nikolenka, did not venture to ask any questions at dinner,

but she was too excited to eat anything and kept wriggling about on her

chair regardless of her governess' remarks. After dinner, she rushed

head long after Anna Mikhaylovna and, dashing at her, flung herself on

her neck as soon as she overtook her in the sitting room.

"Auntie, darling, do tell me what it is!"

"Nothing, my dear."

"No, dearest, sweet one, honey, I won't give up--I know you know

something."

Anna Mikhaylovna shook her head.

"You are a little slyboots," she said.

"A letter from Nikolenka! I'm sure of it!" exclaimed Natasha, reading

confirmation in Anna Mikhaylovna's face.

"But for God's sake, be careful, you know how it may affect your mamma."

"I will, I will, only tell me! You won't? Then I will go and tell at

once."

Anna Mikhaylovna, in a few words, told her the contents of the letter,

on condition that she should tell no one.

"No, on my true word of honor," said Natasha, crossing herself, "I won't

tell anyone!" and she ran off at once to Sonya.

"Nikolenka... wounded... a letter," she announced in gleeful triumph.

"Nicholas!" was all Sonya said, instantly turning white.

Natasha, seeing the impression the news of her brother's wound produced

on Sonya, felt for the first time the sorrowful side of the news.

She rushed to Sonya, hugged her, and began to cry.

"A little wound, but he has been made an officer; he is well now, he

wrote himself," said she through her tears.

"There now! It's true that all you women are crybabies," remarked Petya,

pacing the room with large, resolute strides. "Now I'm very glad, very

glad indeed, that my brother has distinguished himself so. You are all

blubberers and understand nothing."

Natasha smiled through her tears.

"You haven't read the letter?" asked Sonya.

"No, but she said that it was all over and that he's now an officer."

"Thank God!" said Sonya, crossing herself. "But perhaps she deceived

you. Let us go to Mamma."

Petya paced the room in silence for a time.

"If I'd been in Nikolenka's place I would have killed even more of those

Frenchmen," he said. "What nasty brutes they are! I'd have killed so

many that there'd have been a heap of them."

"Hold your tongue, Petya, what a goose you are!"

"I'm not a goose, but they are who cry about trifles," said Petya.

"Do you remember him?" Natasha suddenly asked, after a moment's silence.

Sonya smiled.

"Do I remember Nicholas?"

"No, Sonya, but do you remember so that you remember him perfectly,

remember everything?" said Natasha, with an expressive gesture,

evidently wishing to give her words a very definite meaning. "I remember

Nikolenka too, I remember him well," she said. "But I don't remember

Boris. I don't remember him a bit."

"What! You don't remember Boris?" asked Sonya in surprise.

"It's not that I don't remember--I know what he is like, but not as I

remember Nikolenka. Him--I just shut my eyes and remember, but Boris...

No!" (She shut her eyes.) "No! there's nothing at all."

"Oh, Natasha!" said Sonya, looking ecstatically and earnestly at her

friend as if she did not consider her worthy to hear what she meant to

say and as if she were saying it to someone else, with whom joking was

out of the question, "I am in love with your brother once for all and,

whatever may happen to him or to me, shall never cease to love him as

long as I live."

Natasha looked at Sonya with wondering and inquisitive eyes, and said

nothing. She felt that Sonya was speaking the truth, that there was such

love as Sonya was speaking of. But Natasha had not yet felt anything

like it. She believed it could be, but did not understand it.

"Shall you write to him?" she asked.

Sonya became thoughtful. The question of how to write to Nicholas, and

whether she ought to write, tormented her. Now that he was already an

officer and a wounded hero, would it be right to remind him of herself

and, as it might seem, of the obligations to her he had taken on

himself?

"I don't know. I think if he writes, I will write too," she said,

blushing.

"And you won't feel ashamed to write to him?"

Sonya smiled.

"No."

"And I should be ashamed to write to Boris. I'm not going to."

"Why should you be ashamed?"

"Well, I don't know. It's awkward and would make me ashamed."

"And I know why she'd be ashamed," said Petya, offended by Natasha's

previous remark. "It's because she was in love with that fat one in

spectacles" (that was how Petya described his namesake, the new Count

Bezukhov) "and now she's in love with that singer" (he meant Natasha's

Italian singing master), "that's why she's ashamed!"

"Petya, you're a stupid!" said Natasha.

"Not more stupid than you, madam," said the nine-year-old Petya, with

the air of an old brigadier.

The countess had been prepared by Anna Mikhaylovna's hints at dinner. On

retiring to her own room, she sat in an armchair, her eyes fixed on a

miniature portrait of her son on the lid of a snuffbox, while the tears

kept coming into her eyes. Anna Mikhaylovna, with the letter, came on

tiptoe to the countess' door and paused.

"Don't come in," she said to the old count who was following her. "Come

later." And she went in, closing the door behind her.

The count put his ear to the keyhole and listened.

At first he heard the sound of indifferent voices, then Anna

Mikhaylovna's voice alone in a long speech, then a cry, then silence,

then both voices together with glad intonations, and then footsteps.

Anna Mikhaylovna opened the door. Her face wore the proud expression of

a surgeon who has just performed a difficult operation and admits the

public to appreciate his skill.

"It is done!" she said to the count, pointing triumphantly to the

countess, who sat holding in one hand the snuffbox with its portrait and

in the other the letter, and pressing them alternately to her lips.

When she saw the count, she stretched out her arms to him, embraced his

bald head, over which she again looked at the letter and the portrait,

and in order to press them again to her lips, she slightly pushed away

the bald head. Vera, Natasha, Sonya, and Petya now entered the room, and

the reading of the letter began. After a brief description of the

campaign and the two battles in which he had taken part, and his

promotion, Nicholas said that he kissed his father's and mother's hands

asking for their blessing, and that he kissed Vera, Natasha, and Petya.

Besides that, he sent greetings to Monsieur Schelling, Madame Schoss,

and his old nurse, and asked them to kiss for him "dear Sonya, whom he

loved and thought of just the same as ever." When she heard this Sonya

blushed so that tears came into her eyes and, unable to bear the looks

turned upon her, ran away into the dancing hall, whirled round it at

full speed with her dress puffed out like a balloon, and, flushed and

smiling, plumped down on the floor. The countess was crying.

"Why are you crying, Mamma?" asked Vera. "From all he says one should be

glad and not cry."

This was quite true, but the count, the countess, and Natasha looked at

her reproachfully. "And who is it she takes after?" thought the

countess.

Nicholas' letter was read over hundreds of times, and those who were

considered worthy to hear it had to come to the countess, for she did

not let it out of her hands. The tutors came, and the nurses, and

Dmitri, and several acquaintances, and the countess reread the letter

each time with fresh pleasure and each time discovered in it fresh

proofs of Nikolenka's virtues. How strange, how extraordinary, how

joyful it seemed, that her son, the scarcely perceptible motion of whose

tiny limbs she had felt twenty years ago within her, that son about whom

she used to have quarrels with the too indulgent count, that son who had

first learned to say "pear" and then "granny," that this son should now

be away in a foreign land amid strange surroundings, a manly warrior

doing some kind of man's work of his own, without help or guidance. The

universal experience of ages, showing that children do grow

imperceptibly from the cradle to manhood, did not exist for the

countess. Her son's growth toward manhood, at each of its stages, had

seemed as extraordinary to her as if there had never existed the

millions of human beings who grew up in the same way. As twenty years

before, it seemed impossible that the little creature who lived

somewhere under her heart would ever cry, suck her breast, and begin to

speak, so now she could not believe that that little creature could be

this strong, brave man, this model son and officer that, judging by this

letter, he now was.

"What a style! How charmingly he describes!" said she, reading the

descriptive part of the letter. "And what a soul! Not a word about

himself.... Not a word! About some Denisov or other, though he himself,

I dare say, is braver than any of them. He says nothing about his

sufferings. What a heart! How like him it is! And how he has remembered

everybody! Not forgetting anyone. I always said when he was only so

high--I always said...."

For more than a week preparations were being made, rough drafts of

letters to Nicholas from all the household were written and copied out,

while under the supervision of the countess and the solicitude of the

count, money and all things necessary for the uniform and equipment of

the newly commissioned officer were collected. Anna Mikhaylovna,

practical woman that she was, had even managed by favor with army

authorities to secure advantageous means of communication for herself

and her son. She had opportunities of sending her letters to the Grand

Duke Constantine Pavlovich, who commanded the Guards. The Rostovs

supposed that The Russian Guards, Abroad, was quite a definite address,

and that if a letter reached the Grand Duke in command of the Guards

there was no reason why it should not reach the Pavlograd regiment,

which was presumably somewhere in the same neighborhood. And so it was

decided to send the letters and money by the Grand Duke's courier to

Boris and Boris was to forward them to Nicholas. The letters were from

the old count, the countess, Petya, Vera, Natasha, and Sonya, and

finally there were six thousand rubles for his outfit and various other

things the old count sent to his son.

CHAPTER VII

On the twelfth of November, Kutuzov's active army, in camp before

Olmutz, was preparing to be reviewed next day by the two Emperors--the

Russian and the Austrian. The Guards, just arrived from Russia, spent

the night ten miles from Olmutz and next morning were to come straight

to the review, reaching the field at Olmutz by ten o'clock.

That day Nicholas Rostov received a letter from Boris, telling him that

the Ismaylov regiment was quartered for the night ten miles from Olmutz

and that he wanted to see him as he had a letter and money for him.

Rostov was particularly in need of money now that the troops, after

their active service, were stationed near Olmutz and the camp swarmed

with well-provisioned sutlers and Austrian Jews offering all sorts of

tempting wares. The Pavlograds held feast after feast, celebrating

awards they had received for the campaign, and made expeditions to

Olmutz to visit a certain Caroline the Hungarian, who had recently

opened a restaurant there with girls as waitresses. Rostov, who had just

celebrated his promotion to a cornetcy and bought Denisov's horse,

Bedouin, was in debt all round, to his comrades and the sutlers. On

receiving Boris' letter he rode with a fellow officer to Olmutz, dined

there, drank a bottle of wine, and then set off alone to the Guards'

camp to find his old playmate. Rostov had not yet had time to get his

uniform. He had on a shabby cadet jacket, decorated with a soldier's

cross, equally shabby cadet's riding breeches lined with worn leather,

and an officer's saber with a sword knot. The Don horse he was riding

was one he had bought from a Cossack during the campaign, and he wore a

crumpled hussar cap stuck jauntily back on one side of his head. As he

rode up to the camp he thought how he would impress Boris and all his

comrades of the Guards by his appearance--that of a fighting hussar who

had been under fire.

The Guards had made their whole march as if on a pleasure trip, parading

their cleanliness and discipline. They had come by easy stages, their

knapsacks conveyed on carts, and the Austrian authorities had provided

excellent dinners for the officers at every halting place. The regiments

had entered and left the town with their bands playing, and by the Grand

Duke's orders the men had marched all the way in step (a practice on

which the Guards prided themselves), the officers on foot and at their

proper posts. Boris had been quartered, and had marched all the way,

with Berg who was already in command of a company. Berg, who had

obtained his captaincy during the campaign, had gained the confidence of

his superiors by his promptitude and accuracy and had arranged his money

matters very satisfactorily. Boris, during the campaign, had made the

acquaintance of many persons who might prove useful to him, and by a

letter of recommendation he had brought from Pierre had become

acquainted with Prince Andrew Bolkonski, through whom he hoped to obtain

a post on the commander-in-chief's staff. Berg and Boris, having rested

after yesterday's march, were sitting, clean and neatly dressed, at a

round table in the clean quarters allotted to them, playing chess. Berg

held a smoking pipe between his knees. Boris, in the accurate way

characteristic of him, was building a little pyramid of chessmen with

his delicate white fingers while awaiting Berg's move, and watched his

opponent's face, evidently thinking about the game as he always thought

only of whatever he was engaged on.

"Well, how are you going to get out of that?" he remarked.

"We'll try to," replied Berg, touching a pawn and then removing his

hand.

At that moment the door opened.

"Here he is at last!" shouted Rostov. "And Berg too! Oh, you

petisenfans, allay cushay dormir!" he exclaimed, imitating his Russian

nurse's French, at which he and Boris used to laugh long ago.

"Dear me, how you have changed!"

Boris rose to meet Rostov, but in doing so did not omit to steady and

replace some chessmen that were falling. He was about to embrace his

friend, but Nicholas avoided him. With that peculiar feeling of youth,

that dread of beaten tracks, and wish to express itself in a manner

different from that of its elders which is often insincere, Nicholas

wished to do something special on meeting his friend. He wanted to pinch

him, push him, do anything but kiss him--a thing everybody did. But

notwithstanding this, Boris embraced him in a quiet, friendly way and

kissed him three times.

They had not met for nearly half a year and, being at the age when young

men take their first steps on life's road, each saw immense changes in

the other, quite a new reflection of the society in which they had taken

those first steps. Both had changed greatly since they last met and both

were in a hurry to show the changes that had taken place in them.

"Oh, you damned dandies! Clean and fresh as if you'd been to a fete, not

like us sinners of the line," cried Rostov, with martial swagger and

with baritone notes in his voice, new to Boris, pointing to his own mud-

bespattered breeches. The German landlady, hearing Rostov's loud voice,

popped her head in at the door.

"Eh, is she pretty?" he asked with a wink.

"Why do you shout so? You'll frighten them!" said Boris. "I did not

expect you today," he added. "I only sent you the note yesterday by

Bolkonski--an adjutant of Kutuzov's, who's a friend of mine. I did not

think he would get it to you so quickly.... Well, how are you? Been

under fire already?" asked Boris.

Without answering, Rostov shook the soldier's Cross of St. George

fastened to the cording of his uniform and, indicating a bandaged arm,

glanced at Berg with a smile.

"As you see," he said.

"Indeed? Yes, yes!" said Boris, with a smile. "And we too have had a

splendid march. You know, of course, that His Imperial Highness rode

with our regiment all the time, so that we had every comfort and every

advantage. What receptions we had in Poland! What dinners and balls! I

can't tell you. And the Tsarevich was very gracious to all our

officers."

And the two friends told each other of their doings, the one of his

hussar revels and life in the fighting line, the other of the pleasures

and advantages of service under members of the Imperial family.

"Oh, you Guards!" said Rostov. "I say, send for some wine."

Boris made a grimace.

"If you really want it," said he.

He went to his bed, drew a purse from under the clean pillow, and sent

for wine.

"Yes, and I have some money and a letter to give you," he added.

Rostov took the letter and, throwing the money on the sofa, put both

arms on the table and began to read. After reading a few lines, he

glanced angrily at Berg, then, meeting his eyes, hid his face behind the

letter.

"Well, they've sent you a tidy sum," said Berg, eying the heavy purse

that sank into the sofa. "As for us, Count, we get along on our pay. I

can tell you for myself..."

"I say, Berg, my dear fellow," said Rostov, "when you get a letter from

home and meet one of your own people whom you want to talk everything

over with, and I happen to be there, I'll go at once, to be out of your

way! Do go somewhere, anywhere... to the devil!" he exclaimed, and

immediately seizing him by the shoulder and looking amiably into his

face, evidently wishing to soften the rudeness of his words, he added,

"Don't be hurt, my dear fellow; you know I speak from my heart as to an

old acquaintance."

"Oh, don't mention it, Count! I quite understand," said Berg, getting up

and speaking in a muffled and guttural voice.

"Go across to our hosts: they invited you," added Boris.

Berg put on the cleanest of coats, without a spot or speck of dust,

stood before a looking glass and brushed the hair on his temples

upwards, in the way affected by the Emperor Alexander, and, having

assured himself from the way Rostov looked at it that his coat had been

noticed, left the room with a pleasant smile.

"Oh dear, what a beast I am!" muttered Rostov, as he read the letter.

"Why?"

"Oh, what a pig I am, not to have written and to have given them such a

fright! Oh, what a pig I am!" he repeated, flushing suddenly. "Well,

have you sent Gabriel for some wine? All right let's have some!"

In the letter from his parents was enclosed a letter of recommendation

to Bagration which the old countess at Anna Mikhaylovna's advice had

obtained through an acquaintance and sent to her son, asking him to take

it to its destination and make use of it.

"What nonsense! Much I need it!" said Rostov, throwing the letter under

the table.

"Why have you thrown that away?" asked Boris.

"It is some letter of recommendation... what the devil do I want it

for!"

"Why 'What the devil'?" said Boris, picking it up and reading the

address. "This letter would be of great use to you."

"I want nothing, and I won't be anyone's adjutant."

"Why not?" inquired Boris.

"It's a lackey's job!"

"You are still the same dreamer, I see," remarked Boris, shaking his

head.

"And you're still the same diplomatist! But that's not the point...

Come, how are you?" asked Rostov.

"Well, as you see. So far everything's all right, but I confess I should

much like to be an adjutant and not remain at the front."

"Why?"

"Because when once a man starts on military service, he should try to

make as successful a career of it as possible."

"Oh, that's it!" said Rostov, evidently thinking of something else.

He looked intently and inquiringly into his friend's eyes, evidently

trying in vain to find the answer to some question.

Old Gabriel brought in the wine.

"Shouldn't we now send for Berg?" asked Boris. "He would drink with you.

I can't."

"Well, send for him... and how do you get on with that German?" asked

Rostov, with a contemptuous smile.

"He is a very, very nice, honest, and pleasant fellow," answered Boris.

Again Rostov looked intently into Boris' eyes and sighed. Berg returned,

and over the bottle of wine conversation between the three officers

became animated. The Guardsmen told Rostov of their march and how they

had been made much of in Russia, Poland, and abroad. They spoke of the

sayings and doings of their commander, the Grand Duke, and told stories

of his kindness and irascibility. Berg, as usual, kept silent when the

subject did not relate to himself, but in connection with the stories of

the Grand Duke's quick temper he related with gusto how in Galicia he

had managed to deal with the Grand Duke when the latter made a tour of

the regiments and was annoyed at the irregularity of a movement. With a

pleasant smile Berg related how the Grand Duke had ridden up to him in a

violent passion, shouting: "Arnauts!" ("Arnauts" was the Tsarevich's

favorite expression when he was in a rage) and called for the company

commander.

"Would you believe it, Count, I was not at all alarmed, because I knew I

was right. Without boasting, you know, I may say that I know the Army

Orders by heart and know the Regulations as well as I do the Lord's

Prayer. So, Count, there never is any negligence in my company, and so

my conscience was at ease. I came forward...." (Berg stood up and showed

how he presented himself, with his hand to his cap, and really it would

have been difficult for a face to express greater respect and self-

complacency than his did.) "Well, he stormed at me, as the saying is,

stormed and stormed and stormed! It was not a matter of life but rather

of death, as the saying is. 'Albanians!' and 'devils!' and 'To

Siberia!'" said Berg with a sagacious smile. "I knew I was in the right

so I kept silent; was not that best, Count?... 'Hey, are you dumb?' he

shouted. Still I remained silent. And what do you think, Count? The next

day it was not even mentioned in the Orders of the Day. That's what

keeping one's head means. That's the way, Count," said Berg, lighting

his pipe and emitting rings of smoke.

"Yes, that was fine," said Rostov, smiling.

But Boris noticed that he was preparing to make fun of Berg, and

skillfully changed the subject. He asked him to tell them how and where

he got his wound. This pleased Rostov and he began talking about it, and

as he went on became more and more animated. He told them of his Schon

Grabern affair, just as those who have taken part in a battle generally

do describe it, that is, as they would like it to have been, as they

have heard it described by others, and as sounds well, but not at all as

it really was. Rostov was a truthful young man and would on no account

have told a deliberate lie. He began his story meaning to tell

everything just as it happened, but imperceptibly, involuntarily, and

inevitably he lapsed into falsehood. If he had told the truth to his

hearers--who like himself had often heard stories of attacks and had

formed a definite idea of what an attack was and were expecting to hear

just such a story--they would either not have believed him or, still

worse, would have thought that Rostov was himself to blame since what

generally happens to the narrators of cavalry attacks had not happened

to him. He could not tell them simply that everyone went at a trot and

that he fell off his horse and sprained his arm and then ran as hard as

he could from a Frenchman into the wood. Besides, to tell everything as

it really happened, it would have been necessary to make an effort of

will to tell only what happened. It is very difficult to tell the truth,

and young people are rarely capable of it. His hearers expected a story

of how beside himself and all aflame with excitement, he had flown like

a storm at the square, cut his way in, slashed right and left, how his

saber had tasted flesh and he had fallen exhausted, and so on. And so he

told them all that.

In the middle of his story, just as he was saying: "You cannot imagine

what a strange frenzy one experiences during an attack," Prince Andrew,

whom Boris was expecting, entered the room. Prince Andrew, who liked to

help young men, was flattered by being asked for his assistance and

being well disposed toward Boris, who had managed to please him the day

before, he wished to do what the young man wanted. Having been sent with

papers from Kutuzov to the Tsarevich, he looked in on Boris, hoping to

find him alone. When he came in and saw an hussar of the line recounting

his military exploits (Prince Andrew could not endure that sort of man),

he gave Boris a pleasant smile, frowned as with half-closed eyes he

looked at Rostov, bowed slightly and wearily, and sat down languidly on

the sofa: he felt it unpleasant to have dropped in on bad company.

Rostov flushed up on noticing this, but he did not care, this was a mere

stranger. Glancing, however, at Boris, he saw that he too seemed ashamed

of the hussar of the line.

In spite of Prince Andrew's disagreeable, ironical tone, in spite of the

contempt with which Rostov, from his fighting army point of view,

regarded all these little adjutants on the staff of whom the newcomer

was evidently one, Rostov felt confused, blushed, and became silent.

Boris inquired what news there might be on the staff, and what, without

indiscretion, one might ask about our plans.

"We shall probably advance," replied Bolkonski, evidently reluctant to

say more in the presence of a stranger.

Berg took the opportunity to ask, with great politeness, whether, as was

rumored, the allowance of forage money to captains of companies would be

doubled. To this Prince Andrew answered with a smile that he could give

no opinion on such an important government order, and Berg laughed

gaily.

"As to your business," Prince Andrew continued, addressing Boris, "we

will talk of it later" (and he looked round at Rostov). "Come to me

after the review and we will do what is possible."

And, having glanced round the room, Prince Andrew turned to Rostov,

whose state of unconquerable childish embarrassment now changing to

anger he did not condescend to notice, and said: "I think you were

talking of the Schon Grabern affair? Were you there?"

"I was there," said Rostov angrily, as if intending to insult the aide-

de-camp.

Bolkonski noticed the hussar's state of mind, and it amused him. With a

slightly contemptuous smile, he said: "Yes, there are many stories now

told about that affair!"

"Yes, stories!" repeated Rostov loudly, looking with eyes suddenly grown

furious, now at Boris, now at Bolkonski. "Yes, many stories! But our

stories are the stories of men who have been under the enemy's fire! Our

stories have some weight, not like the stories of those fellows on the

staff who get rewards without doing anything!"

"Of whom you imagine me to be one?" said Prince Andrew, with a quiet and

particularly amiable smile.

A strange feeling of exasperation and yet of respect for this man's

self-possession mingled at that moment in Rostov's soul.

"I am not talking about you," he said, "I don't know you and, frankly, I

don't want to. I am speaking of the staff in general."

"And I will tell you this," Prince Andrew interrupted in a tone of quiet

authority, "you wish to insult me, and I am ready to agree with you that

it would be very easy to do so if you haven't sufficient self-respect,

but admit that the time and place are very badly chosen. In a day or two

we shall all have to take part in a greater and more serious duel, and

besides, Drubetskoy, who says he is an old friend of yours, is not at

all to blame that my face has the misfortune to displease you. However,"

he added rising, "you know my name and where to find me, but don't

forget that I do not regard either myself or you as having been at all

insulted, and as a man older than you, my advice is to let the matter

drop. Well then, on Friday after the review I shall expect you,

Drubetskoy. Au revoir!" exclaimed Prince Andrew, and with a bow to them

both he went out.

Only when Prince Andrew was gone did Rostov think of what he ought to

have said. And he was still more angry at having omitted to say it. He

ordered his horse at once and, coldly taking leave of Boris, rode home.

Should he go to headquarters next day and challenge that affected

adjutant, or really let the matter drop, was the question that worried

him all the way. He thought angrily of the pleasure he would have at

seeing the fright of that small and frail but proud man when covered by

his pistol, and then he felt with surprise that of all the men he knew

there was none he would so much like to have for a friend as that very

adjutant whom he so hated.

CHAPTER VIII

The day after Rostov had been to see Boris, a review was held of the

Austrian and Russian troops, both those freshly arrived from Russia and

those who had been campaigning under Kutuzov. The two Emperors, the

Russian with his heir the Tsarevich, and the Austrian with the Archduke,

inspected the allied army of eighty thousand men.

From early morning the smart clean troops were on the move, forming up

on the field before the fortress. Now thousands of feet and bayonets

moved and halted at the officers' command, turned with banners flying,

formed up at intervals, and wheeled round other similar masses of

infantry in different uniforms; now was heard the rhythmic beat of hoofs

and the jingling of showy cavalry in blue, red, and green braided

uniforms, with smartly dressed bandsmen in front mounted on black, roan,

or gray horses; then again, spreading out with the brazen clatter of the

polished shining cannon that quivered on the gun carriages and with the

smell of linstocks, came the artillery which crawled between the

infantry and cavalry and took up its appointed position. Not only the

generals in full parade uniforms, with their thin or thick waists drawn

in to the utmost, their red necks squeezed into their stiff collars, and

wearing scarves and all their decorations, not only the elegant, pomaded

officers, but every soldier with his freshly washed and shaven face and

his weapons clean and polished to the utmost, and every horse groomed

till its coat shone like satin and every hair of its wetted mane lay

smooth--felt that no small matter was happening, but an important and

solemn affair. Every general and every soldier was conscious of his own

insignificance, aware of being but a drop in that ocean of men, and yet

at the same time was conscious of his strength as a part of that

enormous whole.

From early morning strenuous activities and efforts had begun and by ten

o'clock all had been brought into due order. The ranks were drawn up on

the vast field. The whole army was extended in three lines: the cavalry

in front, behind it the artillery, and behind that again the infantry.

A space like a street was left between each two lines of troops. The

three parts of that army were sharply distinguished: Kutuzov's fighting

army (with the Pavlograds on the right flank of the front); those

recently arrived from Russia, both Guards and regiments of the line; and

the Austrian troops. But they all stood in the same lines, under one

command, and in a like order.

Like wind over leaves ran an excited whisper: "They're coming! They're

coming!" Alarmed voices were heard, and a stir of final preparation

swept over all the troops.

From the direction of Olmutz in front of them, a group was seen

approaching. And at that moment, though the day was still, a light gust

of wind blowing over the army slightly stirred the streamers on the

lances and the unfolded standards fluttered against their staffs. It

looked as if by that slight motion the army itself was expressing its

joy at the approach of the Emperors. One voice was heard shouting: "Eyes

front!" Then, like the crowing of cocks at sunrise, this was repeated by

others from various sides and all became silent.

In the deathlike stillness only the tramp of horses was heard. This was

the Emperors' suites. The Emperors rode up to the flank, and the

trumpets of the first cavalry regiment played the general march. It

seemed as though not the trumpeters were playing, but as if the army

itself, rejoicing at the Emperors' approach, had naturally burst into

music. Amid these sounds, only the youthful kindly voice of the Emperor

Alexander was clearly heard. He gave the words of greeting, and the

first regiment roared "Hurrah!" so deafeningly, continuously, and

joyfully that the men themselves were awed by their multitude and the

immensity of the power they constituted.

Rostov, standing in the front lines of Kutuzov's army which the Tsar

approached first, experienced the same feeling as every other man in

that army: a feeling of self-forgetfulness, a proud consciousness of

might, and a passionate attraction to him who was the cause of this

triumph.

He felt that at a single word from that man all this vast mass (and he

himself an insignificant atom in it) would go through fire and water,

commit crime, die, or perform deeds of highest heroism, and so he could

not but tremble and his heart stand still at the imminence of that word.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" thundered from all sides, one regiment after

another greeting the Tsar with the strains of the march, and then

"Hurrah!"... Then the general march, and again "Hurrah! Hurrah!" growing

ever stronger and fuller and merging into a deafening roar.

Till the Tsar reached it, each regiment in its silence and immobility

seemed like a lifeless body, but as soon as he came up it became alive,

its thunder joining the roar of the whole line along which he had

already passed. Through the terrible and deafening roar of those voices,

amid the square masses of troops standing motionless as if turned to

stone, hundreds of riders composing the suites moved carelessly but

symmetrically and above all freely, and in front of them two men--the

Emperors. Upon them the undivided, tensely passionate attention of that

whole mass of men was concentrated.

The handsome young Emperor Alexander, in the uniform of the Horse

Guards, wearing a cocked hat with its peaks front and back, with his

pleasant face and resonant though not loud voice, attracted everyone's

attention.

Rostov was not far from the trumpeters, and with his keen sight had

recognized the Tsar and watched his approach. When he was within twenty

paces, and Nicholas could clearly distinguish every detail of his

handsome, happy young face, he experienced a feeling of tenderness and

ecstasy such as he had never before known. Every trait and every

movement of the Tsar's seemed to him enchanting.

Stopping in front of the Pavlograds, the Tsar said something in French

to the Austrian Emperor and smiled.

Seeing that smile, Rostov involuntarily smiled himself and felt a still

stronger flow of love for his sovereign. He longed to show that love in

some way and knowing that this was impossible was ready to cry. The Tsar

called the colonel of the regiment and said a few words to him.

"Oh God, what would happen to me if the Emperor spoke to me?" thought

Rostov. "I should die of happiness!"

The Tsar addressed the officers also: "I thank you all, gentlemen, I

thank you with my whole heart." To Rostov every word sounded like a

voice from heaven. How gladly would he have died at once for his Tsar!

"You have earned the St. George's standards and will be worthy of them."

"Oh, to die, to die for him," thought Rostov.

The Tsar said something more which Rostov did not hear, and the

soldiers, straining their lungs, shouted "Hurrah!"

Rostov too, bending over his saddle, shouted "Hurrah!" with all his

might, feeling that he would like to injure himself by that shout, if

only to express his rapture fully.

The Tsar stopped a few minutes in front of the hussars as if undecided.

"How can the Emperor be undecided?" thought Rostov, but then even this

indecision appeared to him majestic and enchanting, like everything else

the Tsar did.

That hesitation lasted only an instant. The Tsar's foot, in the narrow

pointed boot then fashionable, touched the groin of the bobtailed bay

mare he rode, his hand in a white glove gathered up the reins, and he

moved off accompanied by an irregularly swaying sea of aides-de-camp.

Farther and farther he rode away, stopping at other regiments, till at

last only his white plumes were visible to Rostov from amid the suites

that surrounded the Emperors.

Among the gentlemen of the suite, Rostov noticed Bolkonski, sitting his

horse indolently and carelessly. Rostov recalled their quarrel of

yesterday and the question presented itself whether he ought or ought

not to challenge Bolkonski. "Of course not!" he now thought. "Is it

worth thinking or speaking of it at such a moment? At a time of such

love, such rapture, and such self-sacrifice, what do any of our quarrels

and affronts matter? I love and forgive everybody now."

When the Emperor had passed nearly all the regiments, the troops began a

ceremonial march past him, and Rostov on Bedouin, recently purchased

from Denisov, rode past too, at the rear of his squadron--that is, alone

and in full view of the Emperor.

Before he reached him, Rostov, who was a splendid horseman, spurred

Bedouin twice and successfully put him to the showy trot in which the

animal went when excited. Bending his foaming muzzle to his chest, his

tail extended, Bedouin, as if also conscious of the Emperor's eye upon

him, passed splendidly, lifting his feet with a high and graceful

action, as if flying through the air without touching the ground.

Rostov himself, his legs well back and his stomach drawn in and feeling

himself one with his horse, rode past the Emperor with a frowning but

blissful face "like a vewy devil," as Denisov expressed it.

"Fine fellows, the Pavlograds!" remarked the Emperor.

"My God, how happy I should be if he ordered me to leap into the fire

this instant!" thought Rostov.

When the review was over, the newly arrived officers, and also

Kutuzov's, collected in groups and began to talk about the awards, about

the Austrians and their uniforms, about their lines, about Bonaparte,

and how badly the latter would fare now, especially if the Essen corps

arrived and Prussia took our side.

But the talk in every group was chiefly about the Emperor Alexander. His

every word and movement was described with ecstasy.

They all had but one wish: to advance as soon as possible against the

enemy under the Emperor's command. Commanded by the Emperor himself they

could not fail to vanquish anyone, be it whom it might: so thought

Rostov and most of the officers after the review.

All were then more confident of victory than the winning of two battles

would have made them.

CHAPTER IX

The day after the review, Boris, in his best uniform and with his

comrade Berg's best wishes for success, rode to Olmutz to see Bolkonski,

wishing to profit by his friendliness and obtain for himself the best

post he could--preferably that of adjutant to some important personage,

a position in the army which seemed to him most attractive. "It is all

very well for Rostov, whose father sends him ten thousand rubles at a

time, to talk about not wishing to cringe to anybody and not be anyone's

lackey, but I who have nothing but my brains have to make a career and

must not miss opportunities, but must avail myself of them!" he

reflected.

He did not find Prince Andrew in Olmutz that day, but the appearance of

the town where the headquarters and the diplomatic corps were stationed

and the two Emperors were living with their suites, households, and

courts only strengthened his desire to belong to that higher world.

He knew no one, and despite his smart Guardsman's uniform, all these

exalted personages passing in the streets in their elegant carriages

with their plumes, ribbons, and medals, both courtiers and military men,

seemed so immeasurably above him, an insignificant officer of the

Guards, that they not only did not wish to, but simply could not, be

aware of his existence. At the quarters of the commander-in-chief,

Kutuzov, where he inquired for Bolkonski, all the adjutants and even the

orderlies looked at him as if they wished to impress on him that a great

many officers like him were always coming there and that everybody was

heartily sick of them. In spite of this, or rather because of it, next

day, November 15, after dinner he again went to Olmutz and, entering the

house occupied by Kutuzov, asked for Bolkonski. Prince Andrew was in and

Boris was shown into a large hall probably formerly used for dancing,

but in which five beds now stood, and furniture of various kinds: a

table, chairs, and a clavichord. One adjutant, nearest the door, was

sitting at the table in a Persian dressing gown, writing. Another, the

red, stout Nesvitski, lay on a bed with his arms under his head,

laughing with an officer who had sat down beside him. A third was

playing a Viennese waltz on the clavichord, while a fourth, lying on the

clavichord, sang the tune. Bolkonski was not there. None of these

gentlemen changed his position on seeing Boris. The one who was writing

and whom Boris addressed turned round crossly and told him Bolkonski was

on duty and that he should go through the door on the left into the

reception room if he wished to see him. Boris thanked him and went to

the reception room, where he found some ten officers and generals.

When he entered, Prince Andrew, his eyes drooping contemptuously (with

that peculiar expression of polite weariness which plainly says, "If it

were not my duty I would not talk to you for a moment"), was listening

to an old Russian general with decorations, who stood very erect, almost

on tiptoe, with a soldier's obsequious expression on his purple face,

reporting something.

"Very well, then, be so good as to wait," said Prince Andrew to the

general, in Russian, speaking with the French intonation he affected

when he wished to speak contemptuously, and noticing Boris, Prince

Andrew, paying no more heed to the general who ran after him imploring

him to hear something more, nodded and turned to him with a cheerful

smile.

At that moment Boris clearly realized what he had before surmised, that

in the army, besides the subordination and discipline prescribed in the

military code, which he and the others knew in the regiment, there was

another, more important, subordination, which made this tight-laced,

purple-faced general wait respectfully while Captain Prince Andrew, for

his own pleasure, chose to chat with Lieutenant Drubetskoy. More than

ever was Boris resolved to serve in future not according to the written

code, but under this unwritten law. He felt now that merely by having

been recommended to Prince Andrew he had already risen above the general

who at the front had the power to annihilate him, a lieutenant of the

Guards. Prince Andrew came up to him and took his hand.

"I am very sorry you did not find me in yesterday. I was fussing about

with Germans all day. We went with Weyrother to survey the dispositions.

When Germans start being accurate, there's no end to it!"

Boris smiled, as if he understood what Prince Andrew was alluding to as

something generally known. But it was the first time he had heard

Weyrother's name, or even the term "dispositions."

"Well, my dear fellow, so you still want to be an adjutant? I have been

thinking about you."

"Yes, I was thinking"--for some reason Boris could not help blushing--

"of asking the commander-in-chief. He has had a letter from Prince

Kuragin about me. I only wanted to ask because I fear the Guards won't

be in action," he added as if in apology.

"All right, all right. We'll talk it over," replied Prince Andrew. "Only

let me report this gentleman's business, and I shall be at your

disposal."

While Prince Andrew went to report about the purple-faced general, that

gentleman--evidently not sharing Boris' conception of the advantages of

the unwritten code of subordination--looked so fixedly at the

presumptuous lieutenant who had prevented his finishing what he had to

say to the adjutant that Boris felt uncomfortable. He turned away and

waited impatiently for Prince Andrew's return from the commander-in-

chief's room.

"You see, my dear fellow, I have been thinking about you," said Prince

Andrew when they had gone into the large room where the clavichord was.

"It's no use your going to the commander-in-chief. He would say a lot of

pleasant things, ask you to dinner" ("That would not be bad as regards

the unwritten code," thought Boris), "but nothing more would come of it.

There will soon be a battalion of us aides-de-camp and adjutants! But

this is what we'll do: I have a good friend, an adjutant general and an

excellent fellow, Prince Dolgorukov; and though you may not know it, the

fact is that now Kutuzov with his staff and all of us count for nothing.

Everything is now centered round the Emperor. So we will go to

Dolgorukov; I have to go there anyhow and I have already spoken to him

about you. We shall see whether he cannot attach you to himself or find

a place for you somewhere nearer the sun."

Prince Andrew always became specially keen when he had to guide a young

man and help him to worldly success. Under cover of obtaining help of

this kind for another, which from pride he would never accept for

himself, he kept in touch with the circle which confers success and

which attracted him. He very readily took up Boris' cause and went with

him to Dolgorukov.

It was late in the evening when they entered the palace at Olmutz

occupied by the Emperors and their retinues.

That same day a council of war had been held in which all the members of

the Hofkriegsrath and both Emperors took part. At that council, contrary

to the views of the old generals Kutuzov and Prince Schwartzenberg, it

had been decided to advance immediately and give battle to Bonaparte.

The council of war was just over when Prince Andrew accompanied by Boris

arrived at the palace to find Dolgorukov. Everyone at headquarters was

still under the spell of the day's council, at which the party of the

young had triumphed. The voices of those who counseled delay and advised

waiting for something else before advancing had been so completely

silenced and their arguments confuted by such conclusive evidence of the

advantages of attacking that what had been discussed at the council--the

coming battle and the victory that would certainly result from it--no

longer seemed to be in the future but in the past. All the advantages

were on our side. Our enormous forces, undoubtedly superior to

Napoleon's, were concentrated in one place, the troops inspired by the

Emperors' presence were eager for action. The strategic position where

the operations would take place was familiar in all its details to the

Austrian General Weyrother: a lucky accident had ordained that the

Austrian army should maneuver the previous year on the very fields where

the French had now to be fought; the adjacent locality was known and

shown in every detail on the maps, and Bonaparte, evidently weakened,

was undertaking nothing.

Dolgorukov, one of the warmest advocates of an attack, had just returned

from the council, tired and exhausted but eager and proud of the victory

that had been gained. Prince Andrew introduced his protege, but Prince

Dolgorukov politely and firmly pressing his hand said nothing to Boris

and, evidently unable to suppress the thoughts which were uppermost in

his mind at that moment, addressed Prince Andrew in French.

"Ah, my dear fellow, what a battle we have gained! God grant that the

one that will result from it will be as victorious! However, dear

fellow," he said abruptly and eagerly, "I must confess to having been

unjust to the Austrians and especially to Weyrother. What exactitude,

what minuteness, what knowledge of the locality, what foresight for

every eventuality, every possibility even to the smallest detail! No, my

dear fellow, no conditions better than our present ones could have been

devised. This combination of Austrian precision with Russian valor--what

more could be wished for?"

"So the attack is definitely resolved on?" asked Bolkonski.

"And do you know, my dear fellow, it seems to me that Bonaparte has

decidedly lost bearings, you know that a letter was received from him

today for the Emperor." Dolgorukov smiled significantly.

"Is that so? And what did he say?" inquired Bolkonski.

"What can he say? Tra-di-ri-di-ra and so on... merely to gain time. I

tell you he is in our hands, that's certain! But what was most amusing,"

he continued, with a sudden, good-natured laugh, "was that we could not

think how to address the reply! If not as 'Consul' and of course not as

'Emperor,' it seemed to me it should be to 'General Bonaparte.'"

"But between not recognizing him as Emperor and calling him General

Bonaparte, there is a difference," remarked Bolkonski.

"That's just it," interrupted Dolgorukov quickly, laughing. "You know

Bilibin--he's a very clever fellow. He suggested addressing him as

'Usurper and Enemy of Mankind.'"

Dolgorukov laughed merrily.

"Only that?" said Bolkonski.

"All the same, it was Bilibin who found a suitable form for the address.

He is a wise and clever fellow."

"What was it?"

"To the Head of the French Government... Au chef du gouvernement

francais," said Dolgorukov, with grave satisfaction. "Good, wasn't it?"

"Yes, but he will dislike it extremely," said Bolkonski.

"Oh yes, very much! My brother knows him, he's dined with him--the

present Emperor--more than once in Paris, and tells me he never met a

more cunning or subtle diplomatist--you know, a combination of French

adroitness and Italian play-acting! Do you know the tale about him and

Count Markov? Count Markov was the only man who knew how to handle him.

You know the story of the handkerchief? It is delightful!"

And the talkative Dolgorukov, turning now to Boris, now to Prince

Andrew, told how Bonaparte wishing to test Markov, our ambassador,

purposely dropped a handkerchief in front of him and stood looking at

Markov, probably expecting Markov to pick it up for him, and how Markov

immediately dropped his own beside it and picked it up without touching

Bonaparte's.

"Delightful!" said Bolkonski. "But I have come to you, Prince, as a

petitioner on behalf of this young man. You see..." but before Prince

Andrew could finish, an aide-de-camp came in to summon Dolgorukov to the

Emperor.

"Oh, what a nuisance," said Dolgorukov, getting up hurriedly and

pressing the hands of Prince Andrew and Boris. "You know I should be

very glad to do all in my power both for you and for this dear young

man." Again he pressed the hand of the latter with an expression of

good-natured, sincere, and animated levity. "But you see... another

time!"

Boris was excited by the thought of being so close to the higher powers

as he felt himself to be at that moment. He was conscious that here he

was in contact with the springs that set in motion the enormous

movements of the mass of which in his regiment he felt himself a tiny,

obedient, and insignificant atom. They followed Prince Dolgorukov out

into the corridor and met--coming out of the door of the Emperor's room

by which Dolgorukov had entered--a short man in civilian clothes with a

clever face and sharply projecting jaw which, without spoiling his face,

gave him a peculiar vivacity and shiftiness of expression. This short

man nodded to Dolgorukov as to an intimate friend and stared at Prince

Andrew with cool intensity, walking straight toward him and evidently

expecting him to bow or to step out of his way. Prince Andrew did

neither: a look of animosity appeared on his face and the other turned

away and went down the side of the corridor.

"Who was that?" asked Boris.

"He is one of the most remarkable, but to me most unpleasant of men--the

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prince Adam Czartoryski.... It is such men

as he who decide the fate of nations," added Bolkonski with a sigh he

could not suppress, as they passed out of the palace.

Next day, the army began its campaign, and up to the very battle of

Austerlitz, Boris was unable to see either Prince Andrew or Dolgorukov

again and remained for a while with the Ismaylov regiment.

CHAPTER X

At dawn on the sixteenth of November, Denisov's squadron, in which

Nicholas Rostov served and which was in Prince Bagration's detachment,

moved from the place where it had spent the night, advancing into action

as arranged, and after going behind other columns for about two thirds

of a mile was stopped on the highroad. Rostov saw the Cossacks and then

the first and second squadrons of hussars and infantry battalions and

artillery pass by and go forward and then Generals Bagration and

Dolgorukov ride past with their adjutants. All the fear before action

which he had experienced as previously, all the inner struggle to

conquer that fear, all his dreams of distinguishing himself as a true

hussar in this battle, had been wasted. Their squadron remained in

reserve and Nicholas Rostov spent that day in a dull and wretched mood.

At nine in the morning, he heard firing in front and shouts of hurrah,

and saw wounded being brought back (there were not many of them), and at

last he saw how a whole detachment of French cavalry was brought in,

convoyed by a sotnya of Cossacks. Evidently the affair was over and,

though not big, had been a successful engagement. The men and officers

returning spoke of a brilliant victory, of the occupation of the town of

Wischau and the capture of a whole French squadron. The day was bright

and sunny after a sharp night frost, and the cheerful glitter of that

autumn day was in keeping with the news of victory which was conveyed,

not only by the tales of those who had taken part in it, but also by the

joyful expression on the faces of soldiers, officers, generals, and

adjutants, as they passed Rostov going or coming. And Nicholas, who had

vainly suffered all the dread that precedes a battle and had spent that

happy day in inactivity, was all the more depressed.

"Come here, Wostov. Let's dwink to dwown our gwief!" shouted Denisov,

who had settled down by the roadside with a flask and some food.

The officers gathered round Denisov's canteen, eating and talking.

"There! They are bringing another!" cried one of the officers,

indicating a captive French dragoon who was being brought in on foot by

two Cossacks.

One of them was leading by the bridle a fine large French horse he had

taken from the prisoner.

"Sell us that horse!" Denisov called out to the Cossacks.

"If you like, your honor!"

The officers got up and stood round the Cossacks and their prisoner. The

French dragoon was a young Alsatian who spoke French with a German

accent. He was breathless with agitation, his face was red, and when he

heard some French spoken he at once began speaking to the officers,

addressing first one, then another. He said he would not have been

taken, it was not his fault but the corporal's who had sent him to seize

some horsecloths, though he had told him the Russians were there. And at

every word he added: "But don't hurt my little horse!" and stroked the

animal. It was plain that he did not quite grasp where he was. Now he

excused himself for having been taken prisoner and now, imagining

himself before his own officers, insisted on his soldierly discipline

and zeal in the service. He brought with him into our rearguard all the

freshness of atmosphere of the French army, which was so alien to us.

The Cossacks sold the horse for two gold pieces, and Rostov, being the

richest of the officers now that he had received his money, bought it.

"But don't hurt my little horse!" said the Alsatian good-naturedly to

Rostov when the animal was handed over to the hussar.

Rostov smilingly reassured the dragoon and gave him money.

"Alley! Alley!" said the Cossack, touching the prisoner's arm to make

him go on.

"The Emperor! The Emperor!" was suddenly heard among the hussars.

All began to run and bustle, and Rostov saw coming up the road behind

him several riders with white plumes in their hats. In a moment everyone

was in his place, waiting.

Rostov did not know or remember how he ran to his place and mounted.

Instantly his regret at not having been in action and his dejected mood

amid people of whom he was weary had gone, instantly every thought of

himself had vanished. He was filled with happiness at his nearness to

the Emperor. He felt that this nearness by itself made up to him for the

day he had lost. He was happy as a lover when the longed-for moment of

meeting arrives. Not daring to look round and without looking round, he

was ecstatically conscious of his approach. He felt it not only from the

sound of the hoofs of the approaching cavalcade, but because as he drew

near everything grew brighter, more joyful, more significant, and more

festive around him. Nearer and nearer to Rostov came that sun shedding

beams of mild and majestic light around, and already he felt himself

enveloped in those beams, he heard his voice, that kindly, calm, and

majestic voice that was yet so simple! And as if in accord with Rostov's

feeling, there was a deathly stillness amid which was heard the

Emperor's voice.

"The Pavlograd hussars?" he inquired.

"The reserves, sire!" replied a voice, a very human one compared to that

which had said: "The Pavlograd hussars?"

The Emperor drew level with Rostov and halted. Alexander's face was even

more beautiful than it had been three days before at the review. It

shone with such gaiety and youth, such innocent youth, that it suggested

the liveliness of a fourteen-year-old boy, and yet it was the face of

the majestic Emperor. Casually, while surveying the squadron, the

Emperor's eyes met Rostov's and rested on them for not more than two

seconds. Whether or no the Emperor understood what was going on in

Rostov's soul (it seemed to Rostov that he understood everything), at

any rate his light-blue eyes gazed for about two seconds into Rostov's

face. A gentle, mild light poured from them. Then all at once he raised

his eyebrows, abruptly touched his horse with his left foot, and

galloped on.

The younger Emperor could not restrain his wish to be present at the

battle and, in spite of the remonstrances of his courtiers, at twelve

o'clock left the third column with which he had been and galloped toward

the vanguard. Before he came up with the hussars, several adjutants met

him with news of the successful result of the action.

This battle, which consisted in the capture of a French squadron, was

represented as a brilliant victory over the French, and so the Emperor

and the whole army, especially while the smoke hung over the

battlefield, believed that the French had been defeated and were

retreating against their will. A few minutes after the Emperor had

passed, the Pavlograd division was ordered to advance. In Wischau

itself, a petty German town, Rostov saw the Emperor again. In the market

place, where there had been some rather heavy firing before the

Emperor's arrival, lay several killed and wounded soldiers whom there

had not been time to move. The Emperor, surrounded by his suite of

officers and courtiers, was riding a bobtailed chestnut mare, a

different one from that which he had ridden at the review, and bending

to one side he gracefully held a gold lorgnette to his eyes and looked

at a soldier who lay prone, with blood on his uncovered head. The

wounded soldier was so dirty, coarse, and revolting that his proximity

to the Emperor shocked Rostov. Rostov saw how the Emperor's rather round

shoulders shuddered as if a cold shiver had run down them, how his left

foot began convulsively tapping the horse's side with the spur, and how

the well-trained horse looked round unconcerned and did not stir. An

adjutant, dismounting, lifted the soldier under the arms to place him on

a stretcher that had been brought. The soldier groaned.

"Gently, gently! Can't you do it more gently?" said the Emperor

apparently suffering more than the dying soldier, and he rode away.

Rostov saw tears filling the Emperor's eyes and heard him, as he was

riding away, say to Czartoryski: "What a terrible thing war is: what a

terrible thing! Quelle terrible chose que la guerre!"

The troops of the vanguard were stationed before Wischau, within sight

of the enemy's lines, which all day long had yielded ground to us at the

least firing. The Emperor's gratitude was announced to the vanguard,

rewards were promised, and the men received a double ration of vodka.

The campfires crackled and the soldiers' songs resounded even more

merrily than on the previous night. Denisov celebrated his promotion to

the rank of major, and Rostov, who had already drunk enough, at the end

of the feast proposed the Emperor's health. "Not 'our Sovereign, the

Emperor,' as they say at official dinners," said he, "but the health of

our Sovereign, that good, enchanting, and great man! Let us drink to his

health and to the certain defeat of the French!"

"If we fought before," he said, "not letting the French pass, as at

Schon Grabern, what shall we not do now when he is at the front? We will

all die for him gladly! Is it not so, gentlemen? Perhaps I am not saying

it right, I have drunk a good deal--but that is how I feel, and so do

you too! To the health of Alexander the First! Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!" rang the enthusiastic voices of the officers.

And the old cavalry captain, Kirsten, shouted enthusiastically and no

less sincerely than the twenty-year-old Rostov.

When the officers had emptied and smashed their glasses, Kirsten filled

others and, in shirt sleeves and breeches, went glass in hand to the

soldiers' bonfires and with his long gray mustache, his white chest

showing under his open shirt, he stood in a majestic pose in the light

of the campfire, waving his uplifted arm.

"Lads! here's to our Sovereign, the Emperor, and victory over our

enemies! Hurrah!" he exclaimed in his dashing, old, hussar's baritone.

The hussars crowded round and responded heartily with loud shouts.

Late that night, when all had separated, Denisov with his short hand

patted his favorite, Rostov, on the shoulder.

"As there's no one to fall in love with on campaign, he's fallen in love

with the Tsar," he said.

"Denisov, don't make fun of it!" cried Rostov. "It is such a lofty,

beautiful feeling, such a..."

"I believe it, I believe it, fwiend, and I share and appwove..."

"No, you don't understand!"

And Rostov got up and went wandering among the campfires, dreaming of

what happiness it would be to die--not in saving the Emperor's life (he

did not even dare to dream of that), but simply to die before his eyes.

He really was in love with the Tsar and the glory of the Russian arms

and the hope of future triumph. And he was not the only man to

experience that feeling during those memorable days preceding the battle

of Austerlitz: nine tenths of the men in the Russian army were then in

love, though less ecstatically, with their Tsar and the glory of the

Russian arms.

CHAPTER XI

The next day the Emperor stopped at Wischau, and Villier, his physician,

was repeatedly summoned to see him. At headquarters and among the troops

near by the news spread that the Emperor was unwell. He ate nothing and

had slept badly that night, those around him reported. The cause of this

indisposition was the strong impression made on his sensitive mind by

the sight of the killed and wounded.

At daybreak on the seventeenth, a French officer who had come with a

flag of truce, demanding an audience with the Russian Emperor, was

brought into Wischau from our outposts. This officer was Savary. The

Emperor had only just fallen asleep and so Savary had to wait. At midday

he was admitted to the Emperor, and an hour later he rode off with

Prince Dolgorukov to the advanced post of the French army.

It was rumored that Savary had been sent to propose to Alexander a

meeting with Napoleon. To the joy and pride of the whole army, a

personal interview was refused, and instead of the Sovereign, Prince

Dolgorukov, the victor at Wischau, was sent with Savary to negotiate

with Napoleon if, contrary to expectations, these negotiations were

actuated by a real desire for peace.

Toward evening Dolgorukov came back, went straight to the Tsar, and

remained alone with him for a long time.

On the eighteenth and nineteenth of November, the army advanced two

days' march and the enemy's outposts after a brief interchange of shots

retreated. In the highest army circles from midday on the nineteenth, a

great, excitedly bustling activity began which lasted till the morning

of the twentieth, when the memorable battle of Austerlitz was fought.

Till midday on the nineteenth, the activity--the eager talk, running to

and fro, and dispatching of adjutants--was confined to the Emperor's

headquarters. But on the afternoon of that day, this activity reached

Kutuzov's headquarters and the staffs of the commanders of columns. By

evening, the adjutants had spread it to all ends and parts of the army,

and in the night from the nineteenth to the twentieth, the whole eighty

thousand allied troops rose from their bivouacs to the hum of voices,

and the army swayed and started in one enormous mass six miles long.

The concentrated activity which had begun at the Emperor's headquarters

in the morning and had started the whole movement that followed was like

the first movement of the main wheel of a large tower clock. One wheel

slowly moved, another was set in motion, and a third, and wheels began

to revolve faster and faster, levers and cogwheels to work, chimes to

play, figures to pop out, and the hands to advance with regular motion

as a result of all that activity.

Just as in the mechanism of a clock, so in the mechanism of the military

machine, an impulse once given leads to the final result; and just as

indifferently quiescent till the moment when motion is transmitted to

them are the parts of the mechanism which the impulse has not yet

reached. Wheels creak on their axles as the cogs engage one another and

the revolving pulleys whirr with the rapidity of their movement, but a

neighboring wheel is as quiet and motionless as though it were prepared

to remain so for a hundred years; but the moment comes when the lever

catches it and obeying the impulse that wheel begins to creak and joins

in the common motion the result and aim of which are beyond its ken.

Just as in a clock, the result of the complicated motion of innumerable

wheels and pulleys is merely a slow and regular movement of the hands

which show the time, so the result of all the complicated human

activities of 160,000 Russians and French--all their passions, desires,

remorse, humiliations, sufferings, outbursts of pride, fear, and

enthusiasm--was only the loss of the battle of Austerlitz, the so-called

battle of the three Emperors--that is to say, a slow movement of the

hand on the dial of human history.

Prince Andrew was on duty that day and in constant attendance on the

commander-in-chief.

At six in the evening, Kutuzov went to the Emperor's headquarters and

after staying but a short time with the Tsar went to see the grand

marshal of the court, Count Tolstoy.

Bolkonski took the opportunity to go in to get some details of the

coming action from Dolgorukov. He felt that Kutuzov was upset and

dissatisfied about something and that at headquarters they were

dissatisfied with him, and also that at the Emperor's headquarters

everyone adopted toward him the tone of men who know something others do

not know: he therefore wished to speak to Dolgorukov.

"Well, how d'you do, my dear fellow?" said Dolgorukov, who was sitting

at tea with Bilibin. "The fete is for tomorrow. How is your old fellow?

Out of sorts?"

"I won't say he is out of sorts, but I fancy he would like to be heard."

"But they heard him at the council of war and will hear him when he

talks sense, but to temporize and wait for something now when Bonaparte

fears nothing so much as a general battle is impossible."

"Yes, you have seen him?" said Prince Andrew. "Well, what is Bonaparte

like? How did he impress you?"

"Yes, I saw him, and am convinced that he fears nothing so much as a

general engagement," repeated Dolgorukov, evidently prizing this general

conclusion which he had arrived at from his interview with Napoleon. "If

he weren't afraid of a battle why did he ask for that interview? Why

negotiate, and above all why retreat, when to retreat is so contrary to

his method of conducting war? Believe me, he is afraid, afraid of a

general battle. His hour has come! Mark my words!"

"But tell me, what is he like, eh?" said Prince Andrew again.

"He is a man in a gray overcoat, very anxious that I should call him

'Your Majesty,' but who, to his chagrin, got no title from me! That's

the sort of man he is, and nothing more," replied Dolgorukov, looking

round at Bilibin with a smile.

"Despite my great respect for old Kutuzov," he continued, "we should be

a nice set of fellows if we were to wait about and so give him a chance

to escape, or to trick us, now that we certainly have him in our hands!

No, we mustn't forget Suvorov and his rule--not to put yourself in a

position to be attacked, but yourself to attack. Believe me in war the

energy of young men often shows the way better than all the experience

of old Cunctators."

"But in what position are we going to attack him? I have been at the

outposts today and it is impossible to say where his chief forces are

situated," said Prince Andrew.

He wished to explain to Dolgorukov a plan of attack he had himself

formed.

"Oh, that is all the same," Dolgorukov said quickly, and getting up he

spread a map on the table. "All eventualities have been foreseen. If he

is standing before Brunn..."

And Prince Dolgorukov rapidly but indistinctly explained Weyrother's

plan of a flanking movement.

Prince Andrew began to reply and to state his own plan, which might have

been as good as Weyrother's, but for the disadvantage that Weyrother's

had already been approved. As soon as Prince Andrew began to demonstrate

the defects of the latter and the merits of his own plan, Prince

Dolgorukov ceased to listen to him and gazed absent-mindedly not at the

map, but at Prince Andrew's face.

"There will be a council of war at Kutuzov's tonight, though; you can

say all this there," remarked Dolgorukov.

"I will do so," said Prince Andrew, moving away from the map.

"Whatever are you bothering about, gentlemen?" said Bilibin, who, till

then, had listened with an amused smile to their conversation and now

was evidently ready with a joke. "Whether tomorrow brings victory or

defeat, the glory of our Russian arms is secure. Except your Kutuzov,

there is not a single Russian in command of a column! The commanders

are: Herr General Wimpfen, le Comte de Langeron, le Prince de

Lichtenstein, le Prince, de Hohenlohe, and finally Prishprish, and so on

like all those Polish names."

"Be quiet, backbiter!" said Dolgorukov. "It is not true; there are now

two Russians, Miloradovich, and Dokhturov, and there would be a third,

Count Arakcheev, if his nerves were not too weak."

"However, I think General Kutuzov has come out," said Prince Andrew. "I

wish you good luck and success, gentlemen!" he added and went out after

shaking hands with Dolgorukov and Bilibin.

On the way home, Prince Andrew could not refrain from asking Kutuzov,

who was sitting silently beside him, what he thought of tomorrow's

battle.

Kutuzov looked sternly at his adjutant and, after a pause, replied: "I

think the battle will be lost, and so I told Count Tolstoy and asked him

to tell the Emperor. What do you think he replied? 'But, my dear

general, I am engaged with rice and cutlets, look after military matters

yourself!' Yes... That was the answer I got!"

CHAPTER XII

Shortly after nine o'clock that evening, Weyrother drove with his plans

to Kutuzov's quarters where the council of war was to be held. All the

commanders of columns were summoned to the commander-in-chief's and with

the exception of Prince Bagration, who declined to come, were all there

at the appointed time.

Weyrother, who was in full control of the proposed battle, by his

eagerness and briskness presented a marked contrast to the dissatisfied

and drowsy Kutuzov, who reluctantly played the part of chairman and

president of the council of war. Weyrother evidently felt himself to be

at the head of a movement that had already become unrestrainable. He was

like a horse running downhill harnessed to a heavy cart. Whether he was

pulling it or being pushed by it he did not know, but rushed along at

headlong speed with no time to consider what this movement might lead

to. Weyrother had been twice that evening to the enemy's picket line to

reconnoiter personally, and twice to the Emperors, Russian and Austrian,

to report and explain, and to his headquarters where he had dictated the

dispositions in German, and now, much exhausted, he arrived at

Kutuzov's.

He was evidently so busy that he even forgot to be polite to the

commander in chief. He interrupted him, talked rapidly and indistinctly,

without looking at the man he was addressing, and did not reply to

questions put to him. He was bespattered with mud and had a pitiful,

weary, and distracted air, though at the same time he was haughty and

self-confident.

Kutuzov was occupying a nobleman's castle of modest dimensions near

Ostralitz. In the large drawing room which had become the commander in

chief's office were gathered Kutuzov himself, Weyrother, and the members

of the council of war. They were drinking tea, and only awaited Prince

Bagration to begin the council. At last Bagration's orderly came with

the news that the prince could not attend. Prince Andrew came in to

inform the commander-in-chief of this and, availing himself of

permission previously given him by Kutuzov to be present at the council,

he remained in the room.

"Since Prince Bagration is not coming, we may begin," said Weyrother,

hurriedly rising from his seat and going up to the table on which an

enormous map of the environs of Brunn was spread out.

Kutuzov, with his uniform unbuttoned so that his fat neck bulged over

his collar as if escaping, was sitting almost asleep in a low chair,

with his podgy old hands resting symmetrically on its arms. At the sound

of Weyrother's voice, he opened his one eye with an effort.

"Yes, yes, if you please! It is already late," said he, and nodding his

head he let it droop and again closed his eye.

If at first the members of the council thought that Kutuzov was

pretending to sleep, the sounds his nose emitted during the reading that

followed proved that the commander-in-chief at that moment was absorbed

by a far more serious matter than a desire to show his contempt for the

dispositions or anything else--he was engaged in satisfying the

irresistible human need for sleep. He really was asleep. Weyrother, with

the gesture of a man too busy to lose a moment, glanced at Kutuzov and,

having convinced himself that he was asleep, took up a paper and in a

loud, monotonous voice began to read out the dispositions for the

impending battle, under a heading which he also read out:

"Dispositions for an attack on the enemy position behind Kobelnitz and

Sokolnitz, November 30, 1805."

The dispositions were very complicated and difficult. They began as

follows:

"As the enemy's left wing rests on wooded hills and his right extends

along Kobelnitz and Sokolnitz behind the ponds that are there, while we,

on the other hand, with our left wing by far outflank his right, it is

advantageous to attack the enemy's latter wing especially if we occupy

the villages of Sokolnitz and Kobelnitz, whereby we can both fall on his

flank and pursue him over the plain between Schlappanitz and the

Thuerassa forest, avoiding the defiles of Schlappanitz and Bellowitz

which cover the enemy's front. For this object it is necessary that...

The first column marches... The second column marches... The third

column marches..." and so on, read Weyrother.

The generals seemed to listen reluctantly to the difficult dispositions.

The tall, fair-haired General Buxhowden stood, leaning his back against

the wall, his eyes fixed on a burning candle, and seemed not to listen

or even to wish to be thought to listen. Exactly opposite Weyrother,

with his glistening wide-open eyes fixed upon him and his mustache

twisted upwards, sat the ruddy Miloradovich in a military pose, his

elbows turned outwards, his hands on his knees, and his shoulders

raised. He remained stubbornly silent, gazing at Weyrother's face, and

only turned away his eyes when the Austrian chief of staff finished

reading. Then Miloradovich looked round significantly at the other

generals. But one could not tell from that significant look whether he

agreed or disagreed and was satisfied or not with the arrangements. Next

to Weyrother sat Count Langeron who, with a subtle smile that never left

his typically southern French face during the whole time of the reading,

gazed at his delicate fingers which rapidly twirled by its corners a

gold snuffbox on which was a portrait. In the middle of one of the

longest sentences, he stopped the rotary motion of the snuffbox, raised

his head, and with inimical politeness lurking in the corners of his

thin lips interrupted Weyrother, wishing to say something. But the

Austrian general, continuing to read, frowned angrily and jerked his

elbows, as if to say: "You can tell me your views later, but now be so

good as to look at the map and listen." Langeron lifted his eyes with an

expression of perplexity, turned round to Miloradovich as if seeking an

explanation, but meeting the latter's impressive but meaningless gaze

drooped his eyes sadly and again took to twirling his snuffbox.

"A geography lesson!" he muttered as if to himself, but loud enough to

be heard.

Przebyszewski, with respectful but dignified politeness, held his hand

to his ear toward Weyrother, with the air of a man absorbed in

attention. Dohkturov, a little man, sat opposite Weyrother, with an

assiduous and modest mien, and stooping over the outspread map

conscientiously studied the dispositions and the unfamiliar locality. He

asked Weyrother several times to repeat words he had not clearly heard

and the difficult names of villages. Weyrother complied and Dohkturov

noted them down.

When the reading which lasted more than an hour was over, Langeron again

brought his snuffbox to rest and, without looking at Weyrother or at

anyone in particular, began to say how difficult it was to carry out

such a plan in which the enemy's position was assumed to be known,

whereas it was perhaps not known, since the enemy was in movement.

Langeron's objections were valid but it was obvious that their chief aim

was to show General Weyrother--who had read his dispositions with as

much self-confidence as if he were addressing school children--that he

had to do, not with fools, but with men who could teach him something in

military matters.

When the monotonous sound of Weyrother's voice ceased, Kutuzov opened

his eye as a miller wakes up when the soporific drone of the mill wheel

is interrupted. He listened to what Langeron said, as if remarking, "So

you are still at that silly business!" quickly closed his eye again, and

let his head sink still lower.

Langeron, trying as virulently as possible to sting Weyrother's vanity

as author of the military plan, argued that Bonaparte might easily

attack instead of being attacked, and so render the whole of this plan

perfectly worthless. Weyrother met all objections with a firm and

contemptuous smile, evidently prepared beforehand to meet all objections

be they what they might.

"If he could attack us, he would have done so today," said he.

"So you think he is powerless?" said Langeron.

"He has forty thousand men at most," replied Weyrother, with the smile

of a doctor to whom an old wife wishes to explain the treatment of a

case.

"In that case he is inviting his doom by awaiting our attack," said

Langeron, with a subtly ironical smile, again glancing round for support

to Miloradovich who was near him.

But Miloradovich was at that moment evidently thinking of anything

rather than of what the generals were disputing about.

"Ma foi!" said he, "tomorrow we shall see all that on the battlefield."

Weyrother again gave that smile which seemed to say that to him it was

strange and ridiculous to meet objections from Russian generals and to

have to prove to them what he had not merely convinced himself of, but

had also convinced the sovereign Emperors of.

"The enemy has quenched his fires and a continual noise is heard from

his camp," said he. "What does that mean? Either he is retreating, which

is the only thing we need fear, or he is changing his position." (He

smiled ironically.) "But even if he also took up a position in the

Thuerassa, he merely saves us a great deal of trouble and all our

arrangements to the minutest detail remain the same."

"How is that?..." began Prince Andrew, who had for long been waiting an

opportunity to express his doubts.

Kutuzov here woke up, coughed heavily, and looked round at the generals.

"Gentlemen, the dispositions for tomorrow--or rather for today, for it

is past midnight--cannot now be altered," said he. "You have heard them,

and we shall all do our duty. But before a battle, there is nothing more

important..." he paused, "than to have a good sleep."

He moved as if to rise. The generals bowed and retired. It was past

midnight. Prince Andrew went out.

The council of war, at which Prince Andrew had not been able to express

his opinion as he had hoped to, left on him a vague and uneasy

impression. Whether Dolgorukov and Weyrother, or Kutuzov, Langeron, and

the others who did not approve of the plan of attack, were right--he did

not know. "But was it really not possible for Kutuzov to state his views

plainly to the Emperor? Is it possible that on account of court and

personal considerations tens of thousands of lives, and my life, my

life," he thought, "must be risked?"

"Yes, it is very likely that I shall be killed tomorrow," he thought.

And suddenly, at this thought of death, a whole series of most distant,

most intimate, memories rose in his imagination: he remembered his last

parting from his father and his wife; he remembered the days when he

first loved her. He thought of her pregnancy and felt sorry for her and

for himself, and in a nervously emotional and softened mood he went out

of the hut in which he was billeted with Nesvitski and began to walk up

and down before it.

The night was foggy and through the fog the moonlight gleamed

mysteriously. "Yes, tomorrow, tomorrow!" he thought. "Tomorrow

everything may be over for me! All these memories will be no more, none

of them will have any meaning for me. Tomorrow perhaps, even certainly,

I have a presentiment that for the first time I shall have to show all I

can do." And his fancy pictured the battle, its loss, the concentration

of fighting at one point, and the hesitation of all the commanders. And

then that happy moment, that Toulon for which he had so long waited,

presents itself to him at last. He firmly and clearly expresses his

opinion to Kutuzov, to Weyrother, and to the Emperors. All are struck by

the justness of his views, but no one undertakes to carry them out, so

he takes a regiment, a division-stipulates that no one is to interfere

with his arrangements--leads his division to the decisive point, and

gains the victory alone. "But death and suffering?" suggested another

voice. Prince Andrew, however, did not answer that voice and went on

dreaming of his triumphs. The dispositions for the next battle are

planned by him alone. Nominally he is only an adjutant on Kutuzov's

staff, but he does everything alone. The next battle is won by him

alone. Kutuzov is removed and he is appointed... "Well and then?" asked

the other voice. "If before that you are not ten times wounded, killed,

or betrayed, well... what then?..." "Well then," Prince Andrew answered

himself, "I don't know what will happen and don't want to know, and

can't, but if I want this--want glory, want to be known to men, want to

be loved by them, it is not my fault that I want it and want nothing but

that and live only for that. Yes, for that alone! I shall never tell

anyone, but, oh God! what am I to do if I love nothing but fame and

men's esteem? Death, wounds, the loss of family--I fear nothing. And

precious and dear as many persons are to me--father, sister, wife--those

dearest to me--yet dreadful and unnatural as it seems, I would give them

all at once for a moment of glory, of triumph over men, of love from men

I don't know and never shall know, for the love of these men here," he

thought, as he listened to voices in Kutuzov's courtyard. The voices

were those of the orderlies who were packing up; one voice, probably a

coachman's, was teasing Kutuzov's old cook whom Prince Andrew knew, and

who was called Tit. He was saying, "Tit, I say, Tit!"

"Well?" returned the old man.

"Go, Tit, thresh a bit!" said the wag.

"Oh, go to the devil!" called out a voice, drowned by the laughter of

the orderlies and servants.

"All the same, I love and value nothing but triumph over them all, I

value this mystic power and glory that is floating here above me in this

mist!"

CHAPTER XIII

That same night, Rostov was with a platoon on skirmishing duty in front

of Bagration's detachment. His hussars were placed along the line in

couples and he himself rode along the line trying to master the

sleepiness that kept coming over him. An enormous space, with our army's

campfires dimly glowing in the fog, could be seen behind him; in front

of him was misty darkness. Rostov could see nothing, peer as he would

into that foggy distance: now something gleamed gray, now there was

something black, now little lights seemed to glimmer where the enemy

ought to be, now he fancied it was only something in his own eyes. His

eyes kept closing, and in his fancy appeared--now the Emperor, now

Denisov, and now Moscow memories--and he again hurriedly opened his eyes

and saw close before him the head and ears of the horse he was riding,

and sometimes, when he came within six paces of them, the black figures

of hussars, but in the distance was still the same misty darkness. "Why

not?... It might easily happen," thought Rostov, "that the Emperor will

meet me and give me an order as he would to any other officer; he'll

say: 'Go and find out what's there.' There are many stories of his

getting to know an officer in just such a chance way and attaching him

to himself! What if he gave me a place near him? Oh, how I would guard

him, how I would tell him the truth, how I would unmask his deceivers!"

And in order to realize vividly his love devotion to the sovereign,

Rostov pictured to himself an enemy or a deceitful German, whom he would

not only kill with pleasure but whom he would slap in the face before

the Emperor. Suddenly a distant shout aroused him. He started and opened

his eyes.

"Where am I? Oh yes, in the skirmishing line... pass and watchword--

shaft, Olmutz. What a nuisance that our squadron will be in reserve

tomorrow," he thought. "I'll ask leave to go to the front, this may be

my only chance of seeing the Emperor. It won't be long now before I am

off duty. I'll take another turn and when I get back I'll go to the

general and ask him." He readjusted himself in the saddle and touched up

his horse to ride once more round his hussars. It seemed to him that it

was getting lighter. To the left he saw a sloping descent lit up, and

facing it a black knoll that seemed as steep as a wall. On this knoll

there was a white patch that Rostov could not at all make out: was it a

glade in the wood lit up by the moon, or some unmelted snow, or some

white houses? He even thought something moved on that white spot. "I

expect it's snow... that spot... a spot--une tache," he thought. "There

now... it's not a tache... Natasha... sister, black eyes... Na...

tasha... (Won't she be surprised when I tell her how I've seen the

Emperor?) Natasha... take my sabretache..."--"Keep to the right, your

honor, there are bushes here," came the voice of an hussar, past whom

Rostov was riding in the act of falling asleep. Rostov lifted his head

that had sunk almost to his horse's mane and pulled up beside the

hussar. He was succumbing to irresistible, youthful, childish

drowsiness. "But what was I thinking? I mustn't forget. How shall I

speak to the Emperor? No, that's not it--that's tomorrow. Oh yes!

Natasha... sabretache... saber them... Whom? The hussars... Ah, the

hussars with mustaches. Along the Tverskaya Street rode the hussar with

mustaches... I thought about him too, just opposite Guryev's house...

Old Guryev.... Oh, but Denisov's a fine fellow. But that's all nonsense.

The chief thing is that the Emperor is here. How he looked at me and

wished to say something, but dared not.... No, it was I who dared not.

But that's nonsense, the chief thing is not to forget the important

thing I was thinking of. Yes, Na-tasha, sabretache, oh, yes, yes! That's

right!" And his head once more sank to his horse's neck. All at once it

seemed to him that he was being fired at. "What? What? What?... Cut them

down! What?..." said Rostov, waking up. At the moment he opened his eyes

he heard in front of him, where the enemy was, the long-drawn shouts of

thousands of voices. His horse and the horse of the hussar near him

pricked their ears at these shouts. Over there, where the shouting came

from, a fire flared up and went out again, then another, and all along

the French line on the hill fires flared up and the shouting grew louder

and louder. Rostov could hear the sound of French words but could not

distinguish them. The din of many voices was too great; all he could

hear was: "ahahah!" and "rrrr!"

"What's that? What do you make of it?" said Rostov to the hussar beside

him. "That must be the enemy's camp!"

The hussar did not reply.

"Why, don't you hear it?" Rostov asked again, after waiting for a reply.

"Who can tell, your honor?" replied the hussar reluctantly.

"From the direction, it must be the enemy," repeated Rostov.

"It may be he or it may be nothing," muttered the hussar. "It's dark...

Steady!" he cried to his fidgeting horse.

Rostov's horse was also getting restive: it pawed the frozen ground,

pricking its ears at the noise and looking at the lights. The shouting

grew still louder and merged into a general roar that only an army of

several thousand men could produce. The lights spread farther and

farther, probably along the line of the French camp. Rostov no longer

wanted to sleep. The gay triumphant shouting of the enemy army had a

stimulating effect on him. "Vive l'Empereur! L'Empereur!" he now heard

distinctly.

"They can't be far off, probably just beyond the stream," he said to the

hussar beside him.

The hussar only sighed without replying and coughed angrily. The sound

of horse's hoofs approaching at a trot along the line of hussars was

heard, and out of the foggy darkness the figure of a sergeant of hussars

suddenly appeared, looming huge as an elephant.

"Your honor, the generals!" said the sergeant, riding up to Rostov.

Rostov, still looking round toward the fires and the shouts, rode with

the sergeant to meet some mounted men who were riding along the line.

One was on a white horse. Prince Bagration and Prince Dolgorukov with

their adjutants had come to witness the curious phenomenon of the lights

and shouts in the enemy's camp. Rostov rode up to Bagration, reported to

him, and then joined the adjutants listening to what the generals were

saying.

"Believe me," said Prince Dolgorukov, addressing Bagration, "it is

nothing but a trick! He has retreated and ordered the rearguard to

kindle fires and make a noise to deceive us."

"Hardly," said Bagration. "I saw them this evening on that knoll; if

they had retreated they would have withdrawn from that too.... Officer!"

said Bagration to Rostov, "are the enemy's skirmishers still there?"

"They were there this evening, but now I don't know, your excellency.

Shall I go with some of my hussars to see?" replied Rostov.

Bagration stopped and, before replying, tried to see Rostov's face in

the mist.

"Well, go and see," he said, after a pause.

"Yes, sir."

Rostov spurred his horse, called to Sergeant Fedchenko and two other

hussars, told them to follow him, and trotted downhill in the direction

from which the shouting came. He felt both frightened and pleased to be

riding alone with three hussars into that mysterious and dangerous misty

distance where no one had been before him. Bagration called to him from

the hill not to go beyond the stream, but Rostov pretended not to hear

him and did not stop but rode on and on, continually mistaking bushes

for trees and gullies for men and continually discovering his mistakes.

Having descended the hill at a trot, he no longer saw either our own or

the enemy's fires, but heard the shouting of the French more loudly and

distinctly. In the valley he saw before him something like a river, but

when he reached it he found it was a road. Having come out onto the road

he reined in his horse, hesitating whether to ride along it or cross it

and ride over the black field up the hillside. To keep to the road which

gleamed white in the mist would have been safer because it would be

easier to see people coming along it. "Follow me!" said he, crossed the

road, and began riding up the hill at a gallop toward the point where

the French pickets had been standing that evening.

"Your honor, there he is!" cried one of the hussars behind him. And

before Rostov had time to make out what the black thing was that had

suddenly appeared in the fog, there was a flash, followed by a report,

and a bullet whizzing high up in the mist with a plaintive sound passed

out of hearing. Another musket missed fire but flashed in the pan.

Rostov turned his horse and galloped back. Four more reports followed at

intervals, and the bullets passed somewhere in the fog singing in

different tones. Rostov reined in his horse, whose spirits had risen,

like his own, at the firing, and went back at a footpace. "Well, some

more! Some more!" a merry voice was saying in his soul. But no more

shots came.

Only when approaching Bagration did Rostov let his horse gallop again,

and with his hand at the salute rode up to the general.

Dolgorukov was still insisting that the French had retreated and had

only lit fires to deceive us.

"What does that prove?" he was saying as Rostov rode up. "They might

retreat and leave the pickets."

"It's plain that they have not all gone yet, Prince," said Bagration.

"Wait till tomorrow morning, we'll find out everything tomorrow."

"The picket is still on the hill, your excellency, just where it was in

the evening," reported Rostov, stooping forward with his hand at the

salute and unable to repress the smile of delight induced by his ride

and especially by the sound of the bullets.

"Very good, very good," said Bagration. "Thank you, officer."

"Your excellency," said Rostov, "may I ask a favor?"

"What is it?"

"Tomorrow our squadron is to be in reserve. May I ask to be attached to

the first squadron?"

"What's your name?"

"Count Rostov."

"Oh, very well, you may stay in attendance on me."

"Count Ilya Rostov's son?" asked Dolgorukov.

But Rostov did not reply.

"Then I may reckon on it, your excellency?"

"I will give the order."

"Tomorrow very likely I may be sent with some message to the Emperor,"

thought Rostov.

"Thank God!"

The fires and shouting in the enemy's army were occasioned by the fact

that while Napoleon's proclamation was being read to the troops the

Emperor himself rode round his bivouacs. The soldiers, on seeing him,

lit wisps of straw and ran after him, shouting, "Vive l'Empereur!"

Napoleon's proclamation was as follows:

Soldiers! The Russian army is advancing against you to avenge the

Austrian army of Ulm. They are the same battalions you broke at

Hollabrunn and have pursued ever since to this place. The position we

occupy is a strong one, and while they are marching to go round me on

the right they will expose a flank to me. Soldiers! I will myself direct

your battalions. I will keep out of fire if you with your habitual valor

carry disorder and confusion into the enemy's ranks, but should victory

be in doubt, even for a moment, you will see your Emperor exposing

himself to the first blows of the enemy, for there must be no doubt of

victory, especially on this day when what is at stake is the honor of

the French infantry, so necessary to the honor of our nation.

Do not break your ranks on the plea of removing the wounded! Let every

man be fully imbued with the thought that we must defeat these hirelings

of England, inspired by such hatred of our nation! This victory will

conclude our campaign and we can return to winter quarters, where fresh

French troops who are being raised in France will join us, and the peace

I shall conclude will be worthy of my people, of you, and of myself.

NAPOLEON

CHAPTER XIV

At five in the morning it was still quite dark. The troops of the

center, the reserves, and Bagration's right flank had not yet moved, but

on the left flank the columns of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, which

were to be the first to descend the heights to attack the French right

flank and drive it into the Bohemian mountains according to plan, were

already up and astir. The smoke of the campfires, into which they were

throwing everything superfluous, made the eyes smart. It was cold and

dark. The officers were hurriedly drinking tea and breakfasting, the

soldiers, munching biscuit and beating a tattoo with their feet to warm

themselves, gathering round the fires throwing into the flames the

remains of sheds, chairs, tables, wheels, tubs, and everything that they

did not want or could not carry away with them. Austrian column guides

were moving in and out among the Russian troops and served as heralds of

the advance. As soon as an Austrian officer showed himself near a

commanding officer's quarters, the regiment began to move: the soldiers

ran from the fires, thrust their pipes into their boots, their bags into

the carts, got their muskets ready, and formed rank. The officers

buttoned up their coats, buckled on their swords and pouches, and moved

along the ranks shouting. The train drivers and orderlies harnessed and

packed the wagons and tied on the loads. The adjutants and battalion and

regimental commanders mounted, crossed themselves, gave final

instructions, orders, and commissions to the baggage men who remained

behind, and the monotonous tramp of thousands of feet resounded. The

column moved forward without knowing where and unable, from the masses

around them, the smoke and the increasing fog, to see either the place

they were leaving or that to which they were going.

A soldier on the march is hemmed in and borne along by his regiment as

much as a sailor is by his ship. However far he has walked, whatever

strange, unknown, and dangerous places he reaches, just as a sailor is

always surrounded by the same decks, masts, and rigging of his ship, so

the soldier always has around him the same comrades, the same ranks, the

same sergeant major Ivan Mitrich, the same company dog Jack, and the

same commanders. The sailor rarely cares to know the latitude in which

his ship is sailing, but on the day of battle--heaven knows how and

whence--a stern note of which all are conscious sounds in the moral

atmosphere of an army, announcing the approach of something decisive and

solemn, and awakening in the men an unusual curiosity. On the day of

battle the soldiers excitedly try to get beyond the interests of their

regiment, they listen intently, look about, and eagerly ask concerning

what is going on around them.

The fog had grown so dense that though it was growing light they could

not see ten paces ahead. Bushes looked like gigantic trees and level

ground like cliffs and slopes. Anywhere, on any side, one might

encounter an enemy invisible ten paces off. But the columns advanced for

a long time, always in the same fog, descending and ascending hills,

avoiding gardens and enclosures, going over new and unknown ground, and

nowhere encountering the enemy. On the contrary, the soldiers became

aware that in front, behind, and on all sides, other Russian columns

were moving in the same direction. Every soldier felt glad to know that

to the unknown place where he was going, many more of our men were going

too.

"There now, the Kurskies have also gone past," was being said in the

ranks.

"It's wonderful what a lot of our troops have gathered, lads! Last night

I looked at the campfires and there was no end of them. A regular

Moscow!"

Though none of the column commanders rode up to the ranks or talked to

the men (the commanders, as we saw at the council of war, were out of

humor and dissatisfied with the affair, and so did not exert themselves

to cheer the men but merely carried out the orders), yet the troops

marched gaily, as they always do when going into action, especially to

an attack. But when they had marched for about an hour in the dense fog,

the greater part of the men had to halt and an unpleasant consciousness

of some dislocation and blunder spread through the ranks. How such a

consciousness is communicated is very difficult to define, but it

certainly is communicated very surely, and flows rapidly, imperceptibly,

and irrepressibly, as water does in a creek. Had the Russian army been

alone without any allies, it might perhaps have been a long time before

this consciousness of mismanagement became a general conviction, but as

it was, the disorder was readily and naturally attributed to the stupid

Germans, and everyone was convinced that a dangerous muddle had been

occasioned by the sausage eaters.

"Why have we stopped? Is the way blocked? Or have we already come up

against the French?"

"No, one can't hear them. They'd be firing if we had."

"They were in a hurry enough to start us, and now here we stand in the

middle of a field without rhyme or reason. It's all those damned

Germans' muddling! What stupid devils!"

"Yes, I'd send them on in front, but no fear, they're crowding up

behind. And now here we stand hungry."

"I say, shall we soon be clear? They say the cavalry are blocking the

way," said an officer.

"Ah, those damned Germans! They don't know their own country!" said

another.

"What division are you?" shouted an adjutant, riding up.

"The Eighteenth."

"Then why are you here? You should have gone on long ago, now you won't

get there till evening."

"What stupid orders! They don't themselves know what they are doing!"

said the officer and rode off.

Then a general rode past shouting something angrily, not in Russian.

"Tafa-lafa! But what he's jabbering no one can make out," said a

soldier, mimicking the general who had ridden away. "I'd shoot them, the

scoundrels!"

"We were ordered to be at the place before nine, but we haven't got

halfway. Fine orders!" was being repeated on different sides.

And the feeling of energy with which the troops had started began to

turn into vexation and anger at the stupid arrangements and at the

Germans.

The cause of the confusion was that while the Austrian cavalry was

moving toward our left flank, the higher command found that our center

was too far separated from our right flank and the cavalry were all

ordered to turn back to the right. Several thousand cavalry crossed in

front of the infantry, who had to wait.

At the front an altercation occurred between an Austrian guide and a

Russian general. The general shouted a demand that the cavalry should be

halted, the Austrian argued that not he, but the higher command, was to

blame. The troops meanwhile stood growing listless and dispirited. After

an hour's delay they at last moved on, descending the hill. The fog that

was dispersing on the hill lay still more densely below, where they were

descending. In front in the fog a shot was heard and then another, at

first irregularly at varying intervals--trata... tat--and then more and

more regularly and rapidly, and the action at the Goldbach Stream began.

Not expecting to come on the enemy down by the stream, and having

stumbled on him in the fog, hearing no encouraging word from their

commanders, and with a consciousness of being too late spreading through

the ranks, and above all being unable to see anything in front or around

them in the thick fog, the Russians exchanged shots with the enemy

lazily and advanced and again halted, receiving no timely orders from

the officers or adjutants who wandered about in the fog in those unknown

surroundings unable to find their own regiments. In this way the action

began for the first, second, and third columns, which had gone down into

the valley. The fourth column, with which Kutuzov was, stood on the

Pratzen Heights.

Below, where the fight was beginning, there was still thick fog; on the

higher ground it was clearing, but nothing could be seen of what was

going on in front. Whether all the enemy forces were, as we supposed,

six miles away, or whether they were near by in that sea of mist, no one

knew till after eight o'clock.

It was nine o'clock in the morning. The fog lay unbroken like a sea down

below, but higher up at the village of Schlappanitz where Napoleon stood

with his marshals around him, it was quite light. Above him was a clear

blue sky, and the sun's vast orb quivered like a huge hollow, crimson

float on the surface of that milky sea of mist. The whole French army,

and even Napoleon himself with his staff, were not on the far side of

the streams and hollows of Sokolnitz and Schlappanitz beyond which we

intended to take up our position and begin the action, but were on this

side, so close to our own forces that Napoleon with the naked eye could

distinguish a mounted man from one on foot. Napoleon, in the blue cloak

which he had worn on his Italian campaign, sat on his small gray Arab

horse a little in front of his marshals. He gazed silently at the hills

which seemed to rise out of the sea of mist and on which the Russian

troops were moving in the distance, and he listened to the sounds of

firing in the valley. Not a single muscle of his face--which in those

days was still thin--moved. His gleaming eyes were fixed intently on one

spot. His predictions were being justified. Part of the Russian force

had already descended into the valley toward the ponds and lakes and

part were leaving these Pratzen Heights which he intended to attack and

regarded as the key to the position. He saw over the mist that in a

hollow between two hills near the village of Pratzen, the Russian

columns, their bayonets glittering, were moving continuously in one

direction toward the valley and disappearing one after another into the

mist. From information he had received the evening before, from the

sound of wheels and footsteps heard by the outposts during the night, by

the disorderly movement of the Russian columns, and from all

indications, he saw clearly that the allies believed him to be far away

in front of them, and that the columns moving near Pratzen constituted

the center of the Russian army, and that that center was already

sufficiently weakened to be successfully attacked. But still he did not

begin the engagement.

Today was a great day for him--the anniversary of his coronation. Before

dawn he had slept for a few hours, and refreshed, vigorous, and in good

spirits, he mounted his horse and rode out into the field in that happy

mood in which everything seems possible and everything succeeds. He sat

motionless, looking at the heights visible above the mist, and his cold

face wore that special look of confident, self-complacent happiness that

one sees on the face of a boy happily in love. The marshals stood behind

him not venturing to distract his attention. He looked now at the

Pratzen Heights, now at the sun floating up out of the mist.

When the sun had entirely emerged from the fog, and fields and mist were

aglow with dazzling light--as if he had only awaited this to begin the

action--he drew the glove from his shapely white hand, made a sign with

it to the marshals, and ordered the action to begin. The marshals,

accompanied by adjutants, galloped off in different directions, and a

few minutes later the chief forces of the French army moved rapidly

toward those Pratzen Heights which were being more and more denuded by

Russian troops moving down the valley to their left.

CHAPTER XV

At eight o'clock Kutuzov rode to Pratzen at the head of the fourth

column, Miloradovich's, the one that was to take the place of

Przebyszewski's and Langeron's columns which had already gone down into

the valley. He greeted the men of the foremost regiment and gave them

the order to march, thereby indicating that he intended to lead that

column himself. When he had reached the village of Pratzen he halted.

Prince Andrew was behind, among the immense number forming the

commander-in-chief's suite. He was in a state of suppressed excitement

and irritation, though controlledly calm as a man is at the approach of

a long-awaited moment. He was firmly convinced that this was the day of

his Toulon, or his bridge of Arcola. How it would come about he did not

know, but he felt sure it would do so. The locality and the position of

our troops were known to him as far as they could be known to anyone in

our army. His own strategic plan, which obviously could not now be

carried out, was forgotten. Now, entering into Weyrother's plan, Prince

Andrew considered possible contingencies and formed new projects such as

might call for his rapidity of perception and decision.

To the left down below in the mist, the musketry fire of unseen forces

could be heard. It was there Prince Andrew thought the fight would

concentrate. "There we shall encounter difficulties, and there," thought

he, "I shall be sent with a brigade or division, and there, standard in

hand, I shall go forward and break whatever is in front of me."

He could not look calmly at the standards of the passing battalions.

Seeing them he kept thinking, "That may be the very standard with which

I shall lead the army."

In the morning all that was left of the night mist on the heights was a

hoar frost now turning to dew, but in the valleys it still lay like a

milk-white sea. Nothing was visible in the valley to the left into which

our troops had descended and from whence came the sounds of firing.

Above the heights was the dark clear sky, and to the right the vast orb

of the sun. In front, far off on the farther shore of that sea of mist,

some wooded hills were discernible, and it was there the enemy probably

was, for something could be descried. On the right the Guards were

entering the misty region with a sound of hoofs and wheels and now and

then a gleam of bayonets; to the left beyond the village similar masses

of cavalry came up and disappeared in the sea of mist. In front and

behind moved infantry. The commander-in-chief was standing at the end of

the village letting the troops pass by him. That morning Kutuzov seemed

worn and irritable. The infantry passing before him came to a halt

without any command being given, apparently obstructed by something in

front.

"Do order them to form into battalion columns and go round the village!"

he said angrily to a general who had ridden up. "Don't you understand,

your excellency, my dear sir, that you must not defile through narrow

village streets when we are marching against the enemy?"

"I intended to re-form them beyond the village, your excellency,"

answered the general.

Kutuzov laughed bitterly.

"You'll make a fine thing of it, deploying in sight of the enemy! Very

fine!"

"The enemy is still far away, your excellency. According to the

dispositions..."

"The dispositions!" exclaimed Kutuzov bitterly. "Who told you that?...

Kindly do as you are ordered."

"Yes, sir."

"My dear fellow," Nesvitski whispered to Prince Andrew, "the old man is

as surly as a dog."

An Austrian officer in a white uniform with green plumes in his hat

galloped up to Kutuzov and asked in the Emperor's name had the fourth

column advanced into action.

Kutuzov turned round without answering and his eye happened to fall upon

Prince Andrew, who was beside him. Seeing him, Kutuzov's malevolent and

caustic expression softened, as if admitting that what was being done

was not his adjutant's fault, and still not answering the Austrian

adjutant, he addressed Bolkonski.

"Go, my dear fellow, and see whether the third division has passed the

village. Tell it to stop and await my orders."

Hardly had Prince Andrew started than he stopped him.

"And ask whether sharpshooters have been posted," he added. "What are

they doing? What are they doing?" he murmured to himself, still not

replying to the Austrian.

Prince Andrew galloped off to execute the order.

Overtaking the battalions that continued to advance, he stopped the

third division and convinced himself that there really were no

sharpshooters in front of our columns. The colonel at the head of the

regiment was much surprised at the commander-in-chief's order to throw

out skirmishers. He had felt perfectly sure that there were other troops

in front of him and that the enemy must be at least six miles away.

There was really nothing to be seen in front except a barren descent

hidden by dense mist. Having given orders in the commander-in-chief's

name to rectify this omission, Prince Andrew galloped back. Kutuzov

still in the same place, his stout body resting heavily in the saddle

with the lassitude of age, sat yawning wearily with closed eyes. The

troops were no longer moving, but stood with the butts of their muskets

on the ground.

"All right, all right!" he said to Prince Andrew, and turned to a

general who, watch in hand, was saying it was time they started as all

the left-flank columns had already descended.

"Plenty of time, your excellency," muttered Kutuzov in the midst of a

yawn. "Plenty of time," he repeated.

Just then at a distance behind Kutuzov was heard the sound of regiments

saluting, and this sound rapidly came nearer along the whole extended

line of the advancing Russian columns. Evidently the person they were

greeting was riding quickly. When the soldiers of the regiment in front

of which Kutuzov was standing began to shout, he rode a little to one

side and looked round with a frown. Along the road from Pratzen galloped

what looked like a squadron of horsemen in various uniforms. Two of them

rode side by side in front, at full gallop. One in a black uniform with

white plumes in his hat rode a bobtailed chestnut horse, the other who

was in a white uniform rode a black one. These were the two Emperors

followed by their suites. Kutuzov, affecting the manners of an old

soldier at the front, gave the command "Attention!" and rode up to the

Emperors with a salute. His whole appearance and manner were suddenly

transformed. He put on the air of a subordinate who obeys without

reasoning. With an affectation of respect which evidently struck

Alexander unpleasantly, he rode up and saluted.

This unpleasant impression merely flitted over the young and happy face

of the Emperor like a cloud of haze across a clear sky and vanished.

After his illness he looked rather thinner that day than on the field of

Olmutz where Bolkonski had seen him for the first time abroad, but there

was still the same bewitching combination of majesty and mildness in his

fine gray eyes, and on his delicate lips the same capacity for varying

expression and the same prevalent appearance of goodhearted innocent

youth.

At the Olmutz review he had seemed more majestic; here he seemed

brighter and more energetic. He was slightly flushed after galloping two

miles, and reining in his horse he sighed restfully and looked round at

the faces of his suite, young and animated as his own. Czartoryski,

Novosiltsev, Prince Volkonsky, Strogonov, and the others, all richly

dressed gay young men on splendid, well-groomed, fresh, only slightly

heated horses, exchanging remarks and smiling, had stopped behind the

Emperor. The Emperor Francis, a rosy, long faced young man, sat very

erect on his handsome black horse, looking about him in a leisurely and

preoccupied manner. He beckoned to one of his white adjutants and asked

some question--"Most likely he is asking at what o'clock they started,"

thought Prince Andrew, watching his old acquaintance with a smile he

could not repress as he recalled his reception at Brunn. In the

Emperors' suite were the picked young orderly officers of the Guard and

line regiments, Russian and Austrian. Among them were grooms leading the

Tsar's beautiful relay horses covered with embroidered cloths.

As when a window is opened a whiff of fresh air from the fields enters a

stuffy room, so a whiff of youthfulness, energy, and confidence of

success reached Kutuzov's cheerless staff with the galloping advent of

all these brilliant young men.

"Why aren't you beginning, Michael Ilarionovich?" said the Emperor

Alexander hurriedly to Kutuzov, glancing courteously at the same time at

the Emperor Francis.

"I am waiting, Your Majesty," answered Kutuzov, bending forward

respectfully.

The Emperor, frowning slightly, bent his ear forward as if he had not

quite heard.

"Waiting, Your Majesty," repeated Kutuzov. (Prince Andrew noted that

Kutuzov's upper lip twitched unnaturally as he said the word "waiting.")

"Not all the columns have formed up yet, Your Majesty."

The Tsar heard but obviously did not like the reply; he shrugged his

rather round shoulders and glanced at Novosiltsev who was near him, as

if complaining of Kutuzov.

"You know, Michael Ilarionovich, we are not on the Empress' Field where

a parade does not begin till all the troops are assembled," said the

Tsar with another glance at the Emperor Francis, as if inviting him if

not to join in at least to listen to what he was saying. But the Emperor

Francis continued to look about him and did not listen.

"That is just why I do not begin, sire," said Kutuzov in a resounding

voice, apparently to preclude the possibility of not being heard, and

again something in his face twitched--"That is just why I do not begin,

sire, because we are not on parade and not on the Empress' Field," said

clearly and distinctly.

In the Emperor's suite all exchanged rapid looks that expressed

dissatisfaction and reproach. "Old though he may be, he should not, he

certainly should not, speak like that," their glances seemed to say.

The Tsar looked intently and observantly into Kutuzov's eye waiting to

hear whether he would say anything more. But Kutuzov, with respectfully

bowed head, seemed also to be waiting. The silence lasted for about a

minute.

"However, if you command it, Your Majesty," said Kutuzov, lifting his

head and again assuming his former tone of a dull, unreasoning, but

submissive general.

He touched his horse and having called Miloradovich, the commander of

the column, gave him the order to advance.

The troops again began to move, and two battalions of the Novgorod and

one of the Apsheron regiment went forward past the Emperor.

As this Apsheron battalion marched by, the red-faced Miloradovich,

without his greatcoat, with his Orders on his breast and an enormous

tuft of plumes in his cocked hat worn on one side with its corners front

and back, galloped strenuously forward, and with a dashing salute reined

in his horse before the Emperor.

"God be with you, general!" said the Emperor.

"Ma foi, sire, nous ferons ce qui sera dans notre possibilite, sire," \*

he answered gaily, raising nevertheless ironic smiles among the

gentlemen of the Tsar's suite by his poor French.

\* "Indeed, Sire, we shall do everything it is possible to do, Sire."

Miloradovich wheeled his horse sharply and stationed himself a little

behind the Emperor. The Apsheron men, excited by the Tsar's presence,

passed in step before the Emperors and their suites at a bold, brisk

pace.

"Lads!" shouted Miloradovich in a loud, self-confident, and cheery

voice, obviously so elated by the sound of firing, by the prospect of

battle, and by the sight of the gallant Apsherons, his comrades in

Suvorov's time, now passing so gallantly before the Emperors, that he

forgot the sovereigns' presence. "Lads, it's not the first village

you've had to take," cried he.

"Glad to do our best!" shouted the soldiers.

The Emperor's horse started at the sudden cry. This horse that had

carried the sovereign at reviews in Russia bore him also here on the

field of Austerlitz, enduring the heedless blows of his left foot and

pricking its ears at the sound of shots just as it had done on the

Empress' Field, not understanding the significance of the firing, nor of

the nearness of the Emperor Francis' black cob, nor of all that was

being said, thought, and felt that day by its rider.

The Emperor turned with a smile to one of his followers and made a

remark to him, pointing to the gallant Apsherons.

CHAPTER XVI

Kutuzov accompanied by his adjutants rode at a walking pace behind the

carabineers.

When he had gone less than half a mile in the rear of the column he

stopped at a solitary, deserted house that had probably once been an

inn, where two roads parted. Both of them led downhill and troops were

marching along both.

The fog had begun to clear and enemy troops were already dimly visible

about a mile and a half off on the opposite heights. Down below, on the

left, the firing became more distinct. Kutuzov had stopped and was

speaking to an Austrian general. Prince Andrew, who was a little behind

looking at them, turned to an adjutant to ask him for a field glass.

"Look, look!" said this adjutant, looking not at the troops in the

distance, but down the hill before him. "It's the French!"

The two generals and the adjutant took hold of the field glass, trying

to snatch it from one another. The expression on all their faces

suddenly changed to one of horror. The French were supposed to be a mile

and a half away, but had suddenly and unexpectedly appeared just in

front of us.

"It's the enemy?... No!... Yes, see it is!... for certain.... But how is

that?" said different voices.

With the naked eye Prince Andrew saw below them to the right, not more

than five hundred paces from where Kutuzov was standing, a dense French

column coming up to meet the Apsherons.

"Here it is! The decisive moment has arrived. My turn has come," thought

Prince Andrew, and striking his horse he rode up to Kutuzov.

"The Apsherons must be stopped, your excellency," cried he. But at that

very instant a cloud of smoke spread all round, firing was heard quite

close at hand, and a voice of naive terror barely two steps from Prince

Andrew shouted, "Brothers! All's lost!" And at this as if at a command,

everyone began to run.

Confused and ever-increasing crowds were running back to where five

minutes before the troops had passed the Emperors. Not only would it

have been difficult to stop that crowd, it was even impossible not to be

carried back with it oneself. Bolkonski only tried not to lose touch

with it, and looked around bewildered and unable to grasp what was

happening in front of him. Nesvitski with an angry face, red and unlike

himself, was shouting to Kutuzov that if he did not ride away at once he

would certainly be taken prisoner. Kutuzov remained in the same place

and without answering drew out a handkerchief. Blood was flowing from

his cheek. Prince Andrew forced his way to him.

"You are wounded?" he asked, hardly able to master the trembling of his

lower jaw.

"The wound is not here, it is there!" said Kutuzov, pressing the

handkerchief to his wounded cheek and pointing to the fleeing soldiers.

"Stop them!" he shouted, and at the same moment, probably realizing that

it was impossible to stop them, spurred his horse and rode to the right.

A fresh wave of the flying mob caught him and bore him back with it.

The troops were running in such a dense mass that once surrounded by

them it was difficult to get out again. One was shouting, "Get on! Why

are you hindering us?" Another in the same place turned round and fired

in the air; a third was striking the horse Kutuzov himself rode. Having

by a great effort got away to the left from that flood of men, Kutuzov,

with his suite diminished by more than half, rode toward a sound of

artillery fire near by. Having forced his way out of the crowd of

fugitives, Prince Andrew, trying to keep near Kutuzov, saw on the slope

of the hill amid the smoke a Russian battery that was still firing and

Frenchmen running toward it. Higher up stood some Russian infantry,

neither moving forward to protect the battery nor backward with the

fleeing crowd. A mounted general separated himself from the infantry and

approached Kutuzov. Of Kutuzov's suite only four remained. They were all

pale and exchanged looks in silence.

"Stop those wretches!" gasped Kutuzov to the regimental commander,

pointing to the flying soldiers; but at that instant, as if to punish

him for those words, bullets flew hissing across the regiment and across

Kutuzov's suite like a flock of little birds.

The French had attacked the battery and, seeing Kutuzov, were firing at

him. After this volley the regimental commander clutched at his leg;

several soldiers fell, and a second lieutenant who was holding the flag

let it fall from his hands. It swayed and fell, but caught on the

muskets of the nearest soldiers. The soldiers started firing without

orders.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" groaned Kutuzov despairingly and looked around....

"Bolkonski!" he whispered, his voice trembling from a consciousness of

the feebleness of age, "Bolkonski!" he whispered, pointing to the

disordered battalion and at the enemy, "what's that?"

But before he had finished speaking, Prince Andrew, feeling tears of

shame and anger choking him, had already leapt from his horse and run to

the standard.

"Forward, lads!" he shouted in a voice piercing as a child's.

"Here it is!" thought he, seizing the staff of the standard and hearing

with pleasure the whistle of bullets evidently aimed at him. Several

soldiers fell.

"Hurrah!" shouted Prince Andrew, and, scarcely able to hold up the heavy

standard, he ran forward with full confidence that the whole battalion

would follow him.

And really he only ran a few steps alone. One soldier moved and then

another and soon the whole battalion ran forward shouting "Hurrah!" and

overtook him. A sergeant of the battalion ran up and took the flag that

was swaying from its weight in Prince Andrew's hands, but he was

immediately killed. Prince Andrew again seized the standard and,

dragging it by the staff, ran on with the battalion. In front he saw our

artillerymen, some of whom were fighting, while others, having abandoned

their guns, were running toward him. He also saw French infantry

soldiers who were seizing the artillery horses and turning the guns

round. Prince Andrew and the battalion were already within twenty paces

of the cannon. He heard the whistle of bullets above him unceasingly and

to right and left of him soldiers continually groaned and dropped. But

he did not look at them: he looked only at what was going on in front of

him--at the battery. He now saw clearly the figure of a red-haired

gunner with his shako knocked awry, pulling one end of a mop while a

French soldier tugged at the other. He could distinctly see the

distraught yet angry expression on the faces of these two men, who

evidently did not realize what they were doing.

"What are they about?" thought Prince Andrew as he gazed at them. "Why

doesn't the red-haired gunner run away as he is unarmed? Why doesn't the

Frenchman stab him? He will not get away before the Frenchman remembers

his bayonet and stabs him...."

And really another French soldier, trailing his musket, ran up to the

struggling men, and the fate of the red-haired gunner, who had

triumphantly secured the mop and still did not realize what awaited him,

was about to be decided. But Prince Andrew did not see how it ended. It

seemed to him as though one of the soldiers near him hit him on the head

with the full swing of a bludgeon. It hurt a little, but the worst of it

was that the pain distracted him and prevented his seeing what he had

been looking at.

"What's this? Am I falling? My legs are giving way," thought he, and

fell on his back. He opened his eyes, hoping to see how the struggle of

the Frenchmen with the gunners ended, whether the red-haired gunner had

been killed or not and whether the cannon had been captured or saved.

But he saw nothing. Above him there was now nothing but the sky--the

lofty sky, not clear yet still immeasurably lofty, with gray clouds

gliding slowly across it. "How quiet, peaceful, and solemn; not at all

as I ran," thought Prince Andrew--"not as we ran, shouting and fighting,

not at all as the gunner and the Frenchman with frightened and angry

faces struggled for the mop: how differently do those clouds glide

across that lofty infinite sky! How was it I did not see that lofty sky

before? And how happy I am to have found it at last! Yes! All is vanity,

all falsehood, except that infinite sky. There is nothing, nothing, but

that. But even it does not exist, there is nothing but quiet and peace.

Thank God!..."

CHAPTER XVII

On our right flank commanded by Bagration, at nine o'clock the battle

had not yet begun. Not wishing to agree to Dolgorukov's demand to

commence the action, and wishing to avert responsibility from himself,

Prince Bagration proposed to Dolgorukov to send to inquire of the

commander-in-chief. Bagration knew that as the distance between the two

flanks was more than six miles, even if the messenger were not killed

(which he very likely would be), and found the commander-in-chief (which

would be very difficult), he would not be able to get back before

evening.

Bagration cast his large, expressionless, sleepy eyes round his suite,

and the boyish face Rostov, breathless with excitement and hope, was the

first to catch his eye. He sent him.

"And if I should meet His Majesty before I meet the commander-in-chief,

your excellency?" said Rostov, with his hand to his cap.

"You can give the message to His Majesty," said Dolgorukov, hurriedly

interrupting Bagration.

On being relieved from picket duty Rostov had managed to get a few

hours' sleep before morning and felt cheerful, bold, and resolute, with

elasticity of movement, faith in his good fortune, and generally in that

state of mind which makes everything seem possible, pleasant, and easy.

All his wishes were being fulfilled that morning: there was to be a

general engagement in which he was taking part, more than that, he was

orderly to the bravest general, and still more, he was going with a

message to Kutuzov, perhaps even to the sovereign himself. The morning

was bright, he had a good horse under him, and his heart was full of joy

and happiness. On receiving the order he gave his horse the rein and

galloped along the line. At first he rode along the line of Bagration's

troops, which had not yet advanced into action but were standing

motionless; then he came to the region occupied by Uvarov's cavalry and

here he noticed a stir and signs of preparation for battle; having

passed Uvarov's cavalry he clearly heard the sound of cannon and

musketry ahead of him. The firing grew louder and louder.

In the fresh morning air were now heard, not two or three musket shots

at irregular intervals as before, followed by one or two cannon shots,

but a roll of volleys of musketry from the slopes of the hill before

Pratzen, interrupted by such frequent reports of cannon that sometimes

several of them were not separated from one another but merged into a

general roar.

He could see puffs of musketry smoke that seemed to chase one another

down the hillsides, and clouds of cannon smoke rolling, spreading, and

mingling with one another. He could also, by the gleam of bayonets

visible through the smoke, make out moving masses of infantry and narrow

lines of artillery with green caissons.

Rostov stopped his horse for a moment on a hillock to see what was going

on, but strain his attention as he would he could not understand or make

out anything of what was happening: there in the smoke men of some sort

were moving about, in front and behind moved lines of troops; but why,

whither, and who they were, it was impossible to make out. These sights

and sounds had no depressing or intimidating effect on him; on the

contrary, they stimulated his energy and determination.

"Go on! Go on! Give it them!" he mentally exclaimed at these sounds, and

again proceeded to gallop along the line, penetrating farther and

farther into the region where the army was already in action.

"How it will be there I don't know, but all will be well!" thought

Rostov.

After passing some Austrian troops he noticed that the next part of the

line (the Guards) was already in action.

"So much the better! I shall see it close," he thought.

He was riding almost along the front line. A handful of men came

galloping toward him. They were our uhlans who with disordered ranks

were returning from the attack. Rostov got out of their way,

involuntarily noticed that one of them was bleeding, and galloped on.

"That is no business of mine," he thought. He had not ridden many

hundred yards after that before he saw to his left, across the whole

width of the field, an enormous mass of cavalry in brilliant white

uniforms, mounted on black horses, trotting straight toward him and

across his path. Rostov put his horse to full gallop to get out of the

way of these men, and he would have got clear had they continued at the

same speed, but they kept increasing their pace, so that some of the

horses were already galloping. Rostov heard the thud of their hoofs and

the jingle of their weapons and saw their horses, their figures, and

even their faces, more and more distinctly. They were our Horse Guards,

advancing to attack the French cavalry that was coming to meet them.

The Horse Guards were galloping, but still holding in their horses.

Rostov could already see their faces and heard the command: "Charge!"

shouted by an officer who was urging his thoroughbred to full speed.

Rostov, fearing to be crushed or swept into the attack on the French,

galloped along the front as hard as his horse could go, but still was

not in time to avoid them.

The last of the Horse Guards, a huge pockmarked fellow, frowned angrily

on seeing Rostov before him, with whom he would inevitably collide. This

Guardsman would certainly have bowled Rostov and his Bedouin over

(Rostov felt himself quite tiny and weak compared to these gigantic men

and horses) had it not occurred to Rostov to flourish his whip before

the eyes of the Guardsman's horse. The heavy black horse, sixteen hands

high, shied, throwing back its ears; but the pockmarked Guardsman drove

his huge spurs in violently, and the horse, flourishing its tail and

extending its neck, galloped on yet faster. Hardly had the Horse Guards

passed Rostov before he heard them shout, "Hurrah!" and looking back saw

that their foremost ranks were mixed up with some foreign cavalry with

red epaulets, probably French. He could see nothing more, for

immediately afterwards cannon began firing from somewhere and smoke

enveloped everything.

At that moment, as the Horse Guards, having passed him, disappeared in

the smoke, Rostov hesitated whether to gallop after them or to go where

he was sent. This was the brilliant charge of the Horse Guards that

amazed the French themselves. Rostov was horrified to hear later that of

all that mass of huge and handsome men, of all those brilliant, rich

youths, officers and cadets, who had galloped past him on their

thousand-ruble horses, only eighteen were left after the charge.

"Why should I envy them? My chance is not lost, and maybe I shall see

the Emperor immediately!" thought Rostov and galloped on.

When he came level with the Foot Guards he noticed that about them and

around them cannon balls were flying, of which he was aware not so much

because he heard their sound as because he saw uneasiness on the

soldiers' faces and unnatural warlike solemnity on those of the

officers.

Passing behind one of the lines of a regiment of Foot Guards he heard a

voice calling him by name.

"Rostov!"

"What?" he answered, not recognizing Boris.

"I say, we've been in the front line! Our regiment attacked!" said Boris

with the happy smile seen on the faces of young men who have been under

fire for the first time.

Rostov stopped.

"Have you?" he said. "Well, how did it go?"

"We drove them back!" said Boris with animation, growing talkative. "Can

you imagine it?" and he began describing how the Guards, having taken up

their position and seeing troops before them, thought they were

Austrians, and all at once discovered from the cannon balls discharged

by those troops that they were themselves in the front line and had

unexpectedly to go into action. Rostov without hearing Boris to the end

spurred his horse.

"Where are you off to?" asked Boris.

"With a message to His Majesty."

"There he is!" said Boris, thinking Rostov had said "His Highness," and

pointing to the Grand Duke who with his high shoulders and frowning

brows stood a hundred paces away from them in his helmet and Horse

Guards' jacket, shouting something to a pale, white uniformed Austrian

officer.

"But that's the Grand Duke, and I want the commander-in-chief or the

Emperor," said Rostov, and was about to spur his horse.

"Count! Count!" shouted Berg who ran up from the other side as eager as

Boris. "Count! I am wounded in my right hand" (and he showed his

bleeding hand with a handkerchief tied round it) "and I remained at the

front. I held my sword in my left hand, Count. All our family--the von

Bergs--have been knights!"

He said something more, but Rostov did not wait to hear it and rode

away.

Having passed the Guards and traversed an empty space, Rostov, to avoid

again getting in front of the first line as he had done when the Horse

Guards charged, followed the line of reserves, going far round the place

where the hottest musket fire and cannonade were heard. Suddenly he

heard musket fire quite close in front of him and behind our troops,

where he could never have expected the enemy to be.

"What can it be?" he thought. "The enemy in the rear of our army?

Impossible!" And suddenly he was seized by a panic of fear for himself

and for the issue of the whole battle. "But be that what it may," he

reflected, "there is no riding round it now. I must look for the

commander in chief here, and if all is lost it is for me to perish with

the rest."

The foreboding of evil that had suddenly come over Rostov was more and

more confirmed the farther he rode into the region behind the village of

Pratzen, which was full of troops of all kinds.

"What does it mean? What is it? Whom are they firing at? Who is firing?"

Rostov kept asking as he came up to Russian and Austrian soldiers

running in confused crowds across his path.

"The devil knows! They've killed everybody! It's all up now!" he was

told in Russian, German, and Czech by the crowd of fugitives who

understood what was happening as little as he did.

"Kill the Germans!" shouted one.

"May the devil take them--the traitors!"

"Zum Henker diese Russen!" \* muttered a German.

\* "Hang these Russians!"

Several wounded men passed along the road, and words of abuse, screams,

and groans mingled in a general hubbub, then the firing died down.

Rostov learned later that Russian and Austrian soldiers had been firing

at one another.

"My God! What does it all mean?" thought he. "And here, where at any

moment the Emperor may see them.... But no, these must be only a handful

of scoundrels. It will soon be over, it can't be that, it can't be! Only

to get past them quicker, quicker!"

The idea of defeat and flight could not enter Rostov's head. Though he

saw French cannon and French troops on the Pratzen Heights just where he

had been ordered to look for the commander-in-chief, he could not, did

not wish to, believe that.

CHAPTER XVIII

Rostov had been ordered to look for Kutuzov and the Emperor near the

village of Pratzen. But neither they nor a single commanding officer

were there, only disorganized crowds of troops of various kinds. He

urged on his already weary horse to get quickly past these crowds, but

the farther he went the more disorganized they were. The highroad on

which he had come out was thronged with caleches, carriages of all

sorts, and Russian and Austrian soldiers of all arms, some wounded and

some not. This whole mass droned and jostled in confusion under the

dismal influence of cannon balls flying from the French batteries

stationed on the Pratzen Heights.

"Where is the Emperor? Where is Kutuzov?" Rostov kept asking everyone he

could stop, but got no answer from anyone.

At last seizing a soldier by his collar he forced him to answer.

"Eh, brother! They've all bolted long ago!" said the soldier, laughing

for some reason and shaking himself free.

Having left that soldier who was evidently drunk, Rostov stopped the

horse of a batman or groom of some important personage and began to

question him. The man announced that the Tsar had been driven in a

carriage at full speed about an hour before along that very road and

that he was dangerously wounded.

"It can't be!" said Rostov. "It must have been someone else."

"I saw him myself," replied the man with a self-confident smile of

derision. "I ought to know the Emperor by now, after the times I've seen

him in Petersburg. I saw him just as I see you.... There he sat in the

carriage as pale as anything. How they made the four black horses fly!

Gracious me, they did rattle past! It's time I knew the Imperial horses

and Ilya Ivanych. I don't think Ilya drives anyone except the Tsar!"

Rostov let go of the horse and was about to ride on, when a wounded

officer passing by addressed him:

"Who is it you want?" he asked. "The commander-in-chief? He was killed

by a cannon ball--struck in the breast before our regiment."

"Not killed--wounded!" another officer corrected him.

"Who? Kutuzov?" asked Rostov.

"Not Kutuzov, but what's his name--well, never mind... there are not

many left alive. Go that way, to that village, all the commanders are

there," said the officer, pointing to the village of Hosjeradek, and he

walked on.

Rostov rode on at a footpace not knowing why or to whom he was now

going. The Emperor was wounded, the battle lost. It was impossible to

doubt it now. Rostov rode in the direction pointed out to him, in which

he saw turrets and a church. What need to hurry? What was he now to say

to the Tsar or to Kutuzov, even if they were alive and unwounded?

"Take this road, your honor, that way you will be killed at once!" a

soldier shouted to him. "They'd kill you there!"

"Oh, what are you talking about?" said another. "Where is he to go? That

way is nearer."

Rostov considered, and then went in the direction where they said he

would be killed.

"It's all the same now. If the Emperor is wounded, am I to try to save

myself?" he thought. He rode on to the region where the greatest number

of men had perished in fleeing from Pratzen. The French had not yet

occupied that region, and the Russians--the uninjured and slightly

wounded--had left it long ago. All about the field, like heaps of manure

on well-kept plowland, lay from ten to fifteen dead and wounded to each

couple of acres. The wounded crept together in twos and threes and one

could hear their distressing screams and groans, sometimes feigned--or

so it seemed to Rostov. He put his horse to a trot to avoid seeing all

these suffering men, and he felt afraid--afraid not for his life, but

for the courage he needed and which he knew would not stand the sight of

these unfortunates.

The French, who had ceased firing at this field strewn with dead and

wounded where there was no one left to fire at, on seeing an adjutant

riding over it trained a gun on him and fired several shots. The

sensation of those terrible whistling sounds and of the corpses around

him merged in Rostov's mind into a single feeling of terror and pity for

himself. He remembered his mother's last letter. "What would she feel,"

thought he, "if she saw me here now on this field with the cannon aimed

at me?"

In the village of Hosjeradek there were Russian troops retiring from the

field of battle, who though still in some confusion were less

disordered. The French cannon did not reach there and the musketry fire

sounded far away. Here everyone clearly saw and said that the battle was

lost. No one whom Rostov asked could tell him where the Emperor or

Kutuzov was. Some said the report that the Emperor was wounded was

correct, others that it was not, and explained the false rumor that had

spread by the fact that the Emperor's carriage had really galloped from

the field of battle with the pale and terrified Ober-Hofmarschal Count

Tolstoy, who had ridden out to the battlefield with others in the

Emperor's suite. One officer told Rostov that he had seen someone from

headquarters behind the village to the left, and thither Rostov rode,

not hoping to find anyone but merely to ease his conscience. When he had

ridden about two miles and had passed the last of the Russian troops, he

saw, near a kitchen garden with a ditch round it, two men on horseback

facing the ditch. One with a white plume in his hat seemed familiar to

Rostov; the other on a beautiful chestnut horse (which Rostov fancied he

had seen before) rode up to the ditch, struck his horse with his spurs,

and giving it the rein leaped lightly over. Only a little earth crumbled

from the bank under the horse's hind hoofs. Turning the horse sharply,

he again jumped the ditch, and deferentially addressed the horseman with

the white plumes, evidently suggesting that he should do the same. The

rider, whose figure seemed familiar to Rostov and involuntarily riveted

his attention, made a gesture of refusal with his head and hand and by

that gesture Rostov instantly recognized his lamented and adored

monarch.

"But it can't be he, alone in the midst of this empty field!" thought

Rostov. At that moment Alexander turned his head and Rostov saw the

beloved features that were so deeply engraved on his memory. The Emperor

was pale, his cheeks sunken and his eyes hollow, but the charm, the

mildness of his features, was all the greater. Rostov was happy in the

assurance that the rumors about the Emperor being wounded were false. He

was happy to be seeing him. He knew that he might and even ought to go

straight to him and give the message Dolgorukov had ordered him to

deliver.

But as a youth in love trembles, is unnerved, and dares not utter the

thoughts he has dreamed of for nights, but looks around for help or a

chance of delay and flight when the longed-for moment comes and he is

alone with her, so Rostov, now that he had attained what he had longed

for more than anything else in the world, did not know how to approach

the Emperor, and a thousand reasons occurred to him why it would be

inconvenient, unseemly, and impossible to do so.

"What! It is as if I were glad of a chance to take advantage of his

being alone and despondent! A strange face may seem unpleasant or

painful to him at this moment of sorrow; besides, what can I say to him

now, when my heart fails me and my mouth feels dry at the mere sight of

him?" Not one of the innumerable speeches addressed to the Emperor that

he had composed in his imagination could he now recall. Those speeches

were intended for quite other conditions, they were for the most part to

be spoken at a moment of victory and triumph, generally when he was

dying of wounds and the sovereign had thanked him for heroic deeds, and

while dying he expressed the love his actions had proved.

"Besides how can I ask the Emperor for his instructions for the right

flank now that it is nearly four o'clock and the battle is lost? No,

certainly I must not approach him, I must not intrude on his

reflections. Better die a thousand times than risk receiving an unkind

look or bad opinion from him," Rostov decided; and sorrowfully and with

a heart full despair he rode away, continually looking back at the Tsar,

who still remained in the same attitude of indecision.

While Rostov was thus arguing with himself and riding sadly away,

Captain von Toll chanced to ride to the same spot, and seeing the

Emperor at once rode up to him, offered his services, and assisted him

to cross the ditch on foot. The Emperor, wishing to rest and feeling

unwell, sat down under an apple tree and von Toll remained beside him.

Rostov from a distance saw with envy and remorse how von Toll spoke long

and warmly to the Emperor and how the Emperor, evidently weeping,

covered his eyes with his hand and pressed von Toll's hand.

"And I might have been in his place!" thought Rostov, and hardly

restraining his tears of pity for the Emperor, he rode on in utter

despair, not knowing where to or why he was now riding.

His despair was all the greater from feeling that his own weakness was

the cause of his grief.

He might... not only might but should, have gone up to the sovereign. It

was a unique chance to show his devotion to the Emperor and he had not

made use of it.... "What have I done?" thought he. And he turned round

and galloped back to the place where he had seen the Emperor, but there

was no one beyond the ditch now. Only some carts and carriages were

passing by. From one of the drivers he learned that Kutuzov's staff were

not far off, in the village the vehicles were going to. Rostov followed

them. In front of him walked Kutuzov's groom leading horses in

horsecloths. Then came a cart, and behind that walked an old, bandy-

legged domestic serf in a peaked cap and sheepskin coat.

"Tit! I say, Tit!" said the groom.

"What?" answered the old man absent-mindedly.

"Go, Tit! Thresh a bit!"

"Oh, you fool!" said the old man, spitting angrily. Some time passed in

silence, and then the same joke was repeated.

Before five in the evening the battle had been lost at all points. More

than a hundred cannon were already in the hands of the French.

Przebyszewski and his corps had laid down their arms. Other columns

after losing half their men were retreating in disorderly confused

masses.

The remains of Langeron's and Dokhturov's mingled forces were crowding

around the dams and banks of the ponds near the village of Augesd.

After five o'clock it was only at the Augesd Dam that a hot cannonade

(delivered by the French alone) was still to be heard from numerous

batteries ranged on the slopes of the Pratzen Heights, directed at our

retreating forces.

In the rearguard, Dokhturov and others rallying some battalions kept up

a musketry fire at the French cavalry that was pursuing our troops. It

was growing dusk. On the narrow Augesd Dam where for so many years the

old miller had been accustomed to sit in his tasseled cap peacefully

angling, while his grandson, with shirt sleeves rolled up, handled the

floundering silvery fish in the watering can, on that dam over which for

so many years Moravians in shaggy caps and blue jackets had peacefully

driven their two-horse carts loaded with wheat and had returned dusty

with flour whitening their carts--on that narrow dam amid the wagons and

the cannon, under the horses' hoofs and between the wagon wheels, men

disfigured by fear of death now crowded together, crushing one another,

dying, stepping over the dying and killing one another, only to move on

a few steps and be killed themselves in the same way.

Every ten seconds a cannon ball flew compressing the air around, or a

shell burst in the midst of that dense throng, killing some and

splashing with blood those near them.

Dolokhov--now an officer--wounded in the arm, and on foot, with the

regimental commander on horseback and some ten men of his company,

represented all that was left of that whole regiment. Impelled by the

crowd, they had got wedged in at the approach to the dam and, jammed in

on all sides, had stopped because a horse in front had fallen under a

cannon and the crowd were dragging it out. A cannon ball killed someone

behind them, another fell in front and splashed Dolokhov with blood. The

crowd, pushing forward desperately, squeezed together, moved a few

steps, and again stopped.

"Move on a hundred yards and we are certainly saved, remain here another

two minutes and it is certain death," thought each one.

Dolokhov who was in the midst of the crowd forced his way to the edge of

the dam, throwing two soldiers off their feet, and ran onto the slippery

ice that covered the millpool.

"Turn this way!" he shouted, jumping over the ice which creaked under

him; "turn this way!" he shouted to those with the gun. "It bears!..."

The ice bore him but it swayed and creaked, and it was plain that it

would give way not only under a cannon or a crowd, but very soon even

under his weight alone. The men looked at him and pressed to the bank,

hesitating to step onto the ice. The general on horseback at the

entrance to the dam raised his hand and opened his mouth to address

Dolokhov. Suddenly a cannon ball hissed so low above the crowd that

everyone ducked. It flopped into something moist, and the general fell

from his horse in a pool of blood. Nobody gave him a look or thought of

raising him.

"Get onto the ice, over the ice! Go on! Turn! Don't you hear? Go on!"

innumerable voices suddenly shouted after the ball had struck the

general, the men themselves not knowing what, or why, they were

shouting.

One of the hindmost guns that was going onto the dam turned off onto the

ice. Crowds of soldiers from the dam began running onto the frozen pond.

The ice gave way under one of the foremost soldiers, and one leg slipped

into the water. He tried to right himself but fell in up to his waist.

The nearest soldiers shrank back, the gun driver stopped his horse, but

from behind still came the shouts: "Onto the ice, why do you stop? Go

on! Go on!" And cries of horror were heard in the crowd. The soldiers

near the gun waved their arms and beat the horses to make them turn and

move on. The horses moved off the bank. The ice, that had held under

those on foot, collapsed in a great mass, and some forty men who were on

it dashed, some forward and some back, drowning one another.

Still the cannon balls continued regularly to whistle and flop onto the

ice and into the water and oftenest of all among the crowd that covered

the dam, the pond, and the bank.

CHAPTER XIX

On the Pratzen Heights, where he had fallen with the flagstaff in his

hand, lay Prince Andrew Bolkonski bleeding profusely and unconsciously

uttering a gentle, piteous, and childlike moan.

Toward evening he ceased moaning and became quite still. He did not know

how long his unconsciousness lasted. Suddenly he again felt that he was

alive and suffering from a burning, lacerating pain in his head.

"Where is it, that lofty sky that I did not know till now, but saw

today?" was his first thought. "And I did not know this suffering

either," he thought. "Yes, I did not know anything, anything at all till

now. But where am I?"

He listened and heard the sound of approaching horses, and voices

speaking French. He opened his eyes. Above him again was the same lofty

sky with clouds that had risen and were floating still higher, and

between them gleamed blue infinity. He did not turn his head and did not

see those who, judging by the sound of hoofs and voices, had ridden up

and stopped near him.

It was Napoleon accompanied by two aides-de-camp. Bonaparte riding over

the battlefield had given final orders to strengthen the batteries

firing at the Augesd Dam and was looking at the killed and wounded left

on the field.

"Fine men!" remarked Napoleon, looking at a dead Russian grenadier, who,

with his face buried in the ground and a blackened nape, lay on his

stomach with an already stiffened arm flung wide.

"The ammunition for the guns in position is exhausted, Your Majesty,"

said an adjutant who had come from the batteries that were firing at

Augesd.

"Have some brought from the reserve," said Napoleon, and having gone on

a few steps he stopped before Prince Andrew, who lay on his back with

the flagstaff that had been dropped beside him. (The flag had already

been taken by the French as a trophy.)

"That's a fine death!" said Napoleon as he gazed at Bolkonski.

Prince Andrew understood that this was said of him and that it was

Napoleon who said it. He heard the speaker addressed as Sire. But he

heard the words as he might have heard the buzzing of a fly. Not only

did they not interest him, but he took no notice of them and at once

forgot them. His head was burning, he felt himself bleeding to death,

and he saw above him the remote, lofty, and everlasting sky. He knew it

was Napoleon--his hero--but at that moment Napoleon seemed to him such a

small, insignificant creature compared with what was passing now between

himself and that lofty infinite sky with the clouds flying over it. At

that moment it meant nothing to him who might be standing over him, or

what was said of him; he was only glad that people were standing near

him and only wished that they would help him and bring him back to life,

which seemed to him so beautiful now that he had today learned to

understand it so differently. He collected all his strength, to stir and

utter a sound. He feebly moved his leg and uttered a weak, sickly groan

which aroused his own pity.

"Ah! He is alive," said Napoleon. "Lift this young man up and carry him

to the dressing station."

Having said this, Napoleon rode on to meet Marshal Lannes, who, hat in

hand, rode up smiling to the Emperor to congratulate him on the victory.

Prince Andrew remembered nothing more: he lost consciousness from the

terrible pain of being lifted onto the stretcher, the jolting while

being moved, and the probing of his wound at the dressing station. He

did not regain consciousness till late in the day, when with other

wounded and captured Russian officers he was carried to the hospital.

During this transfer he felt a little stronger and was able to look

about him and even speak.

The first words he heard on coming to his senses were those of a French

convoy officer, who said rapidly: "We must halt here: the Emperor will

pass here immediately; it will please him to see these gentlemen

prisoners."

"There are so many prisoners today, nearly the whole Russian army, that

he is probably tired of them," said another officer.

"All the same! They say this one is the commander of all the Emperor

Alexander's Guards," said the first one, indicating a Russian officer in

the white uniform of the Horse Guards.

Bolkonski recognized Prince Repnin whom he had met in Petersburg

society. Beside him stood a lad of nineteen, also a wounded officer of

the Horse Guards.

Bonaparte, having come up at a gallop, stopped his horse.

"Which is the senior?" he asked, on seeing the prisoners.

They named the colonel, Prince Repnin.

"You are the commander of the Emperor Alexander's regiment of Horse

Guards?" asked Napoleon.

"I commanded a squadron," replied Repnin.

"Your regiment fulfilled its duty honorably," said Napoleon.

"The praise of a great commander is a soldier's highest reward," said

Repnin.

"I bestow it with pleasure," said Napoleon. "And who is that young man

beside you?"

Prince Repnin named Lieutenant Sukhtelen.

After looking at him Napoleon smiled.

"He's very young to come to meddle with us."

"Youth is no hindrance to courage," muttered Sukhtelen in a failing

voice.

"A splendid reply!" said Napoleon. "Young man, you will go far!"

Prince Andrew, who had also been brought forward before the Emperor's

eyes to complete the show of prisoners, could not fail to attract his

attention. Napoleon apparently remembered seeing him on the battlefield

and, addressing him, again used the epithet "young man" that was

connected in his memory with Prince Andrew.

"Well, and you, young man," said he. "How do you feel, mon brave?"

Though five minutes before, Prince Andrew had been able to say a few

words to the soldiers who were carrying him, now with his eyes fixed

straight on Napoleon, he was silent.... So insignificant at that moment

seemed to him all the interests that engrossed Napoleon, so mean did his

hero himself with his paltry vanity and joy in victory appear, compared

to the lofty, equitable, and kindly sky which he had seen and

understood, that he could not answer him.

Everything seemed so futile and insignificant in comparison with the

stern and solemn train of thought that weakness from loss of blood,

suffering, and the nearness of death aroused in him. Looking into

Napoleon's eyes Prince Andrew thought of the insignificance of

greatness, the unimportance of life which no one could understand, and

the still greater unimportance of death, the meaning of which no one

alive could understand or explain.

The Emperor without waiting for an answer turned away and said to one of

the officers as he went: "Have these gentlemen attended to and taken to

my bivouac; let my doctor, Larrey, examine their wounds. Au revoir,

Prince Repnin!" and he spurred his horse and galloped away.

His face shone with self-satisfaction and pleasure.

The soldiers who had carried Prince Andrew had noticed and taken the

little gold icon Princess Mary had hung round her brother's neck, but

seeing the favor the Emperor showed the prisoners, they now hastened to

return the holy image.

Prince Andrew did not see how and by whom it was replaced, but the

little icon with its thin gold chain suddenly appeared upon his chest

outside his uniform.

"It would be good," thought Prince Andrew, glancing at the icon his

sister had hung round his neck with such emotion and reverence, "it

would be good if everything were as clear and simple as it seems to

Mary. How good it would be to know where to seek for help in this life,

and what to expect after it beyond the grave! How happy and calm I

should be if I could now say: 'Lord, have mercy on me!'... But to whom

should I say that? Either to a Power indefinable, incomprehensible,

which I not only cannot address but which I cannot even express in

words--the Great All or Nothing-" said he to himself, "or to that God

who has been sewn into this amulet by Mary! There is nothing certain,

nothing at all except the unimportance of everything I understand, and

the greatness of something incomprehensible but all-important."

The stretchers moved on. At every jolt he again felt unendurable pain;

his feverishness increased and he grew delirious. Visions of his father,

wife, sister, and future son, and the tenderness he had felt the night

before the battle, the figure of the insignificant little Napoleon, and

above all this the lofty sky, formed the chief subjects of his delirious

fancies.

The quiet home life and peaceful happiness of Bald Hills presented

itself to him. He was already enjoying that happiness when that little

Napoleon had suddenly appeared with his unsympathizing look of

shortsighted delight at the misery of others, and doubts and torments

had followed, and only the heavens promised peace. Toward morning all

these dreams melted and merged into the chaos and darkness of

unconciousness and oblivion which in the opinion of Napoleon's doctor,

Larrey, was much more likely to end in death than in convalescence.

"He is a nervous, bilious subject," said Larrey, "and will not recover."

And Prince Andrew, with others fatally wounded, was left to the care of

the inhabitants of the district.

BOOK FOUR: 1806

CHAPTER I

Early in the year 1806 Nicholas Rostov returned home on leave. Denisov

was going home to Voronezh and Rostov persuaded him to travel with him

as far as Moscow and to stay with him there. Meeting a comrade at the

last post station but one before Moscow, Denisov had drunk three bottles

of wine with him and, despite the jolting ruts across the snow-covered

road, did not once wake up on the way to Moscow, but lay at the bottom

of the sleigh beside Rostov, who grew more and more impatient the nearer

they got to Moscow.

"How much longer? How much longer? Oh, these insufferable streets,

shops, bakers' signboards, street lamps, and sleighs!" thought Rostov,

when their leave permits had been passed at the town gate and they had

entered Moscow.

"Denisov! We're here! He's asleep," he added, leaning forward with his

whole body as if in that position he hoped to hasten the speed of the

sleigh.

Denisov gave no answer.

"There's the corner at the crossroads, where the cabman, Zakhar, has his

stand, and there's Zakhar himself and still the same horse! And here's

the little shop where we used to buy gingerbread! Can't you hurry up?

Now then!"

"Which house is it?" asked the driver.

"Why, that one, right at the end, the big one. Don't you see? That's our

house," said Rostov. "Of course, it's our house! Denisov, Denisov! We're

almost there!"

Denisov raised his head, coughed, and made no answer.

"Dmitri," said Rostov to his valet on the box, "those lights are in our

house, aren't they?"

"Yes, sir, and there's a light in your father's study."

"Then they've not gone to bed yet? What do you think? Mind now, don't

forget to put out my new coat," added Rostov, fingering his new

mustache. "Now then, get on," he shouted to the driver. "Do wake up,

Vaska!" he went on, turning to Denisov, whose head was again nodding.

"Come, get on! You shall have three rubles for vodka--get on!" Rostov

shouted, when the sleigh was only three houses from his door. It seemed

to him the horses were not moving at all. At last the sleigh bore to the

right, drew up at an entrance, and Rostov saw overhead the old familiar

cornice with a bit of plaster broken off, the porch, and the post by the

side of the pavement. He sprang out before the sleigh stopped, and ran

into the hall. The house stood cold and silent, as if quite regardless

of who had come to it. There was no one in the hall. "Oh God! Is

everyone all right?" he thought, stopping for a moment with a sinking

heart, and then immediately starting to run along the hall and up the

warped steps of the familiar staircase. The well-known old door handle,

which always angered the countess when it was not properly cleaned,

turned as loosely as ever. A solitary tallow candle burned in the

anteroom.

Old Michael was asleep on the chest. Prokofy, the footman, who was so

strong that he could lift the back of the carriage from behind, sat

plaiting slippers out of cloth selvedges. He looked up at the opening

door and his expression of sleepy indifference suddenly changed to one

of delighted amazement.

"Gracious heavens! The young count!" he cried, recognizing his young

master. "Can it be? My treasure!" and Prokofy, trembling with

excitement, rushed toward the drawing-room door, probably in order to

announce him, but, changing his mind, came back and stooped to kiss the

young man's shoulder.

"All well?" asked Rostov, drawing away his arm.

"Yes, God be thanked! Yes! They've just finished supper. Let me have a

look at you, your excellency."

"Is everything quite all right?"

"The Lord be thanked, yes!"

Rostov, who had completely forgotten Denisov, not wishing anyone to

forestall him, threw off his fur coat and ran on tiptoe through the

large dark ballroom. All was the same: there were the same old card

tables and the same chandelier with a cover over it; but someone had

already seen the young master, and, before he had reached the drawing

room, something flew out from a side door like a tornado and began

hugging and kissing him. Another and yet another creature of the same

kind sprang from a second door and a third; more hugging, more kissing,

more outcries, and tears of joy. He could not distinguish which was

Papa, which Natasha, and which Petya. Everyone shouted, talked, and

kissed him at the same time. Only his mother was not there, he noticed

that.

"And I did not know... Nicholas... My darling!..."

"Here he is... our own... Kolya, \* dear fellow... How he has changed!...

Where are the candles?... Tea!..."

\* Nicholas.

"And me, kiss me!"

"Dearest... and me!"

Sonya, Natasha, Petya, Anna Mikhaylovna, Vera, and the old count were

all hugging him, and the serfs, men and maids, flocked into the room,

exclaiming and oh-ing and ah-ing.

Petya, clinging to his legs, kept shouting, "And me too!"

Natasha, after she had pulled him down toward her and covered his face

with kisses, holding him tight by the skirt of his coat, sprang away and

pranced up and down in one place like a goat and shrieked piercingly.

All around were loving eyes glistening with tears of joy, and all around

were lips seeking a kiss.

Sonya too, all rosy red, clung to his arm and, radiant with bliss,

looked eagerly toward his eyes, waiting for the look for which she

longed. Sonya now was sixteen and she was very pretty, especially at

this moment of happy, rapturous excitement. She gazed at him, not taking

her eyes off him, and smiling and holding her breath. He gave her a

grateful look, but was still expectant and looking for someone. The old

countess had not yet come. But now steps were heard at the door, steps

so rapid that they could hardly be his mother's.

Yet it was she, dressed in a new gown which he did not know, made since

he had left. All the others let him go, and he ran to her. When they

met, she fell on his breast, sobbing. She could not lift her face, but

only pressed it to the cold braiding of his hussar's jacket. Denisov,

who had come into the room unnoticed by anyone, stood there and wiped

his eyes at the sight.

"Vasili Denisov, your son's friend," he said, introducing himself to the

count, who was looking inquiringly at him.

"You are most welcome! I know, I know," said the count, kissing and

embracing Denisov. "Nicholas wrote us... Natasha, Vera, look! Here is

Denisov!"

The same happy, rapturous faces turned to the shaggy figure of Denisov.

"Darling Denisov!" screamed Natasha, beside herself with rapture,

springing to him, putting her arms round him, and kissing him. This

escapade made everybody feel confused. Denisov blushed too, but smiled

and, taking Natasha's hand, kissed it.

Denisov was shown to the room prepared for him, and the Rostovs all

gathered round Nicholas in the sitting room.

The old countess, not letting go of his hand and kissing it every

moment, sat beside him: the rest, crowding round him, watched every

movement, word, or look of his, never taking their blissfully adoring

eyes off him. His brother and sisters struggled for the places nearest

to him and disputed with one another who should bring him his tea,

handkerchief, and pipe.

Rostov was very happy in the love they showed him; but the first moment

of meeting had been so beatific that his present joy seemed

insufficient, and he kept expecting something more, more and yet more.

Next morning, after the fatigues of their journey, the travelers slept

till ten o'clock.

In the room next their bedroom there was a confusion of sabers,

satchels, sabretaches, open portmanteaus, and dirty boots. Two freshly

cleaned pairs with spurs had just been placed by the wall. The servants

were bringing in jugs and basins, hot water for shaving, and their well-

brushed clothes. There was a masculine odor and a smell of tobacco.

"Hallo, Gwiska--my pipe!" came Vasili Denisov's husky voice. "Wostov,

get up!"

Rostov, rubbing his eyes that seemed glued together, raised his

disheveled head from the hot pillow.

"Why, is it late?"

"Late! It's nearly ten o'clock," answered Natasha's voice. A rustle of

starched petticoats and the whispering and laughter of girls' voices

came from the adjoining room. The door was opened a crack and there was

a glimpse of something blue, of ribbons, black hair, and merry faces. It

was Natasha, Sonya, and Petya, who had come to see whether they were

getting up.

"Nicholas! Get up!" Natasha's voice was again heard at the door.

"Directly!"

Meanwhile, Petya, having found and seized the sabers in the outer room,

with the delight boys feel at the sight of a military elder brother, and

forgetting that it was unbecoming for the girls to see men undressed,

opened the bedroom door.

"Is this your saber?" he shouted.

The girls sprang aside. Denisov hid his hairy legs under the blanket,

looking with a scared face at his comrade for help. The door, having let

Petya in, closed again. A sound of laughter came from behind it.

"Nicholas! Come out in your dressing gown!" said Natasha's voice.

"Is this your saber?" asked Petya. "Or is it yours?" he said, addressing

the black-mustached Denisov with servile deference.

Rostov hurriedly put something on his feet, drew on his dressing gown,

and went out. Natasha had put on one spurred boot and was just getting

her foot into the other. Sonya, when he came in, was twirling round and

was about to expand her dresses into a balloon and sit down. They were

dressed alike, in new pale-blue frocks, and were both fresh, rosy, and

bright. Sonya ran away, but Natasha, taking her brother's arm, led him

into the sitting room, where they began talking. They hardly gave one

another time to ask questions and give replies concerning a thousand

little matters which could not interest anyone but themselves. Natasha

laughed at every word he said or that she said herself, not because what

they were saying was amusing, but because she felt happy and was unable

to control her joy which expressed itself by laughter.

"Oh, how nice, how splendid!" she said to everything.

Rostov felt that, under the influence of the warm rays of love, that

childlike smile which had not once appeared on his face since he left

home now for the first time after eighteen months again brightened his

soul and his face.

"No, but listen," she said, "now you are quite a man, aren't you? I'm

awfully glad you're my brother." She touched his mustache. "I want to

know what you men are like. Are you the same as we? No?"

"Why did Sonya run away?" asked Rostov.

"Ah, yes! That's a whole long story! How are you going to speak to her--

thou or you?"

"As may happen," said Rostov.

"No, call her you, please! I'll tell you all about it some other time.

No, I'll tell you now. You know Sonya's my dearest friend. Such a friend

that I burned my arm for her sake. Look here!"

She pulled up her muslin sleeve and showed him a red scar on her long,

slender, delicate arm, high above the elbow on that part that is covered

even by a ball dress.

"I burned this to prove my love for her. I just heated a ruler in the

fire and pressed it there!"

Sitting on the sofa with the little cushions on its arms, in what used

to be his old schoolroom, and looking into Natasha's wildly bright eyes,

Rostov re-entered that world of home and childhood which had no meaning

for anyone else, but gave him some of the best joys of his life; and the

burning of an arm with a ruler as a proof of love did not seem to him

senseless, he understood and was not surprised at it.

"Well, and is that all?" he asked.

"We are such friends, such friends! All that ruler business was just

nonsense, but we are friends forever. She, if she loves anyone, does it

for life, but I don't understand that, I forget quickly."

"Well, what then?"

"Well, she loves me and you like that."

Natasha suddenly flushed.

"Why, you remember before you went away?... Well, she says you are to

forget all that.... She says: 'I shall love him always, but let him be

free.' Isn't that lovely and noble! Yes, very noble? Isn't it?" asked

Natasha, so seriously and excitedly that it was evident that what she

was now saying she had talked of before, with tears.

Rostov became thoughtful.

"I never go back on my word," he said. "Besides, Sonya is so charming

that only a fool would renounce such happiness."

"No, no!" cried Natasha, "she and I have already talked it over. We knew

you'd say so. But it won't do, because you see, if you say that--if you

consider yourself bound by your promise--it will seem as if she had not

meant it seriously. It makes it as if you were marrying her because you

must, and that wouldn't do at all."

Rostov saw that it had been well considered by them. Sonya had already

struck him by her beauty on the preceding day. Today, when he had caught

a glimpse of her, she seemed still more lovely. She was a charming girl

of sixteen, evidently passionately in love with him (he did not doubt

that for an instant). Why should he not love her now, and even marry

her, Rostov thought, but just now there were so many other pleasures and

interests before him! "Yes, they have taken a wise decision," he

thought, "I must remain free."

"Well then, that's excellent," said he. "We'll talk it over later on.

Oh, how glad I am to have you!"

"Well, and are you still true to Boris?" he continued.

"Oh, what nonsense!" cried Natasha, laughing. "I don't think about him

or anyone else, and I don't want anything of the kind."

"Dear me! Then what are you up to now?"

"Now?" repeated Natasha, and a happy smile lit up her face. "Have you

seen Duport?"

"No."

"Not seen Duport--the famous dancer? Well then, you won't understand.

That's what I'm up to."

Curving her arms, Natasha held out her skirts as dancers do, ran back a

few steps, turned, cut a caper, brought her little feet sharply

together, and made some steps on the very tips of her toes.

"See, I'm standing! See!" she said, but could not maintain herself on

her toes any longer. "So that's what I'm up to! I'll never marry anyone,

but will be a dancer. Only don't tell anyone."

Rostov laughed so loud and merrily that Denisov, in his bedroom, felt

envious and Natasha could not help joining in.

"No, but don't you think it's nice?" she kept repeating.

"Nice! And so you no longer wish to marry Boris?"

Natasha flared up. "I don't want to marry anyone. And I'll tell him so

when I see him!"

"Dear me!" said Rostov.

"But that's all rubbish," Natasha chattered on. "And is Denisov nice?"

she asked.

"Yes, indeed!"

"Oh, well then, good-by: go and dress. Is he very terrible, Denisov?"

"Why terrible?" asked Nicholas. "No, Vaska is a splendid fellow."

"You call him Vaska? That's funny! And is he very nice?"

"Very."

"Well then, be quick. We'll all have breakfast together."

And Natasha rose and went out of the room on tiptoe, like a ballet

dancer, but smiling as only happy girls of fifteen can smile. When

Rostov met Sonya in the drawing room, he reddened. He did not know how

to behave with her. The evening before, in the first happy moment of

meeting, they had kissed each other, but today they felt it could not be

done; he felt that everybody, including his mother and sisters, was

looking inquiringly at him and watching to see how he would behave with

her. He kissed her hand and addressed her not as thou but as you--Sonya.

But their eyes met and said thou, and exchanged tender kisses. Her looks

asked him to forgive her for having dared, by Natasha's intermediacy, to

remind him of his promise, and then thanked him for his love. His looks

thanked her for offering him his freedom and told her that one way or

another he would never cease to love her, for that would be impossible.

"How strange it is," said Vera, selecting a moment when all were silent,

"that Sonya and Nicholas now say you to one another and meet like

strangers."

Vera's remark was correct, as her remarks always were, but, like most of

her observations, it made everyone feel uncomfortable, not only Sonya,

Nicholas, and Natasha, but even the old countess, who--dreading this

love affair which might hinder Nicholas from making a brilliant match--

blushed like a girl.

Denisov, to Rostov's surprise, appeared in the drawing room with pomaded

hair, perfumed, and in a new uniform, looking just as smart as he made

himself when going into battle, and he was more amiable to the ladies

and gentlemen than Rostov had ever expected to see him.

CHAPTER II

On his return to Moscow from the army, Nicholas Rostov was welcomed by

his home circle as the best of sons, a hero, and their darling

Nikolenka; by his relations as a charming, attractive, and polite young

man; by his acquaintances as a handsome lieutenant of hussars, a good

dancer, and one of the best matches in the city.

The Rostovs knew everybody in Moscow. The old count had money enough

that year, as all his estates had been remortgaged, and so Nicholas,

acquiring a trotter of his own, very stylish riding breeches of the

latest cut, such as no one else yet had in Moscow, and boots of the

latest fashion, with extremely pointed toes and small silver spurs,

passed his time very gaily. After a short period of adapting himself to

the old conditions of life, Nicholas found it very pleasant to be at

home again. He felt that he had grown up and matured very much. His

despair at failing in a Scripture examination, his borrowing money from

Gavril to pay a sleigh driver, his kissing Sonya on the sly--he now

recalled all this as childishness he had left immeasurably behind. Now

he was a lieutenant of hussars, in a jacket laced with silver, and

wearing the Cross of St. George, awarded to soldiers for bravery in

action, and in the company of well-known, elderly, and respected racing

men was training a trotter of his own for a race. He knew a lady on one

of the boulevards whom he visited of an evening. He led the mazurka at

the Arkharovs' ball, talked about the war with Field Marshal Kamenski,

visited the English Club, and was on intimate terms with a colonel of

forty to whom Denisov had introduced him.

His passion for the Emperor had cooled somewhat in Moscow. But still, as

he did not see him and had no opportunity of seeing him, he often spoke

about him and about his love for him, letting it be understood that he

had not told all and that there was something in his feelings for the

Emperor not everyone could understand, and with his whole soul he shared

the adoration then common in Moscow for the Emperor, who was spoken of

as the "angel incarnate."

During Rostov's short stay in Moscow, before rejoining the army, he did

not draw closer to Sonya, but rather drifted away from her. She was very

pretty and sweet, and evidently deeply in love with him, but he was at

the period of youth when there seems so much to do that there is no time

for that sort of thing and a young man fears to bind himself and prizes

his freedom which he needs for so many other things. When he thought of

Sonya, during this stay in Moscow, he said to himself, "Ah, there will

be, and there are, many more such girls somewhere whom I do not yet

know. There will be time enough to think about love when I want to, but

now I have no time." Besides, it seemed to him that the society of women

was rather derogatory to his manhood. He went to balls and into ladies'

society with an affectation of doing so against his will. The races, the

English Club, sprees with Denisov, and visits to a certain house--that

was another matter and quite the thing for a dashing young hussar!

At the beginning of March, old Count Ilya Rostov was very busy arranging

a dinner in honor of Prince Bagration at the English Club.

The count walked up and down the hall in his dressing gown, giving

orders to the club steward and to the famous Feoktist, the club's head

cook, about asparagus, fresh cucumbers, strawberries, veal, and fish for

this dinner. The count had been a member and on the committee of the

club from the day it was founded. To him the club entrusted the

arrangement of the festival in honor of Bagration, for few men knew so

well how to arrange a feast on an open-handed, hospitable scale, and

still fewer men would be so well able and willing to make up out of

their own resources what might be needed for the success of the fete.

The club cook and the steward listened to the count's orders with

pleased faces, for they knew that under no other management could they

so easily extract a good profit for themselves from a dinner costing

several thousand rubles.

"Well then, mind and have cocks' comb in the turtle soup, you know!"

"Shall we have three cold dishes then?" asked the cook.

The count considered.

"We can't have less--yes, three... the mayonnaise, that's one," said he,

bending down a finger.

"Then am I to order those large sterlets?" asked the steward.

"Yes, it can't be helped if they won't take less. Ah, dear me! I was

forgetting. We must have another entree. Ah, goodness gracious!" he

clutched at his head. "Who is going to get me the flowers? Dmitri! Eh,

Dmitri! Gallop off to our Moscow estate," he said to the factotum who

appeared at his call. "Hurry off and tell Maksim, the gardener, to set

the serfs to work. Say that everything out of the hothouses must be

brought here well wrapped up in felt. I must have two hundred pots here

on Friday."

Having given several more orders, he was about to go to his "little

countess" to have a rest, but remembering something else of importance,

he returned again, called back the cook and the club steward, and again

began giving orders. A light footstep and the clinking of spurs were

heard at the door, and the young count, handsome, rosy, with a dark

little mustache, evidently rested and made sleeker by his easy life in

Moscow, entered the room.

"Ah, my boy, my head's in a whirl!" said the old man with a smile, as if

he felt a little confused before his son. "Now, if you would only help a

bit! I must have singers too. I shall have my own orchestra, but

shouldn't we get the gypsy singers as well? You military men like that

sort of thing."

"Really, Papa, I believe Prince Bagration worried himself less before

the battle of Schon Grabern than you do now," said his son with a smile.

The old count pretended to be angry.

"Yes, you talk, but try it yourself!"

And the count turned to the cook, who, with a shrewd and respectful

expression, looked observantly and sympathetically at the father and

son.

"What have the young people come to nowadays, eh, Feoktist?" said he.

"Laughing at us old fellows!"

"That's so, your excellency, all they have to do is to eat a good

dinner, but providing it and serving it all up, that's not their

business!"

"That's it, that's it!" exclaimed the count, and gaily seizing his son

by both hands, he cried, "Now I've got you, so take the sleigh and pair

at once, and go to Bezukhov's, and tell him 'Count Ilya has sent you to

ask for strawberries and fresh pineapples.' We can't get them from

anyone else. He's not there himself, so you'll have to go in and ask the

princesses; and from there go on to the Rasgulyay--the coachman Ipatka

knows--and look up the gypsy Ilyushka, the one who danced at Count

Orlov's, you remember, in a white Cossack coat, and bring him along to

me."

"And am I to bring the gypsy girls along with him?" asked Nicholas,

laughing. "Dear, dear!..."

At that moment, with noiseless footsteps and with the businesslike,

preoccupied, yet meekly Christian look which never left her face, Anna

Mikhaylovna entered the hall. Though she came upon the count in his

dressing gown every day, he invariably became confused and begged her to

excuse his costume.

"No matter at all, my dear count," she said, meekly closing her eyes.

"But I'll go to Bezukhov's myself. Pierre has arrived, and now we shall

get anything we want from his hothouses. I have to see him in any case.

He has forwarded me a letter from Boris. Thank God, Boris is now on the

staff."

The count was delighted at Anna Mikhaylovna's taking upon herself one of

his commissions and ordered the small closed carriage for her.

"Tell Bezukhov to come. I'll put his name down. Is his wife with him?"

he asked.

Anna Mikhaylovna turned up her eyes, and profound sadness was depicted

on her face.

"Ah, my dear friend, he is very unfortunate," she said. "If what we hear

is true, it is dreadful. How little we dreamed of such a thing when we

were rejoicing at his happiness! And such a lofty angelic soul as young

Bezukhov! Yes, I pity him from my heart, and shall try to give him what

consolation I can."

"Wh-what is the matter?" asked both the young and old Rostov.

Anna Mikhaylovna sighed deeply.

"Dolokhov, Mary Ivanovna's son," she said in a mysterious whisper, "has

compromised her completely, they say. Pierre took him up, invited him to

his house in Petersburg, and now... she has come here and that daredevil

after her!" said Anna Mikhaylovna, wishing to show her sympathy for

Pierre, but by involuntary intonations and a half smile betraying her

sympathy for the "daredevil," as she called Dolokhov. "They say Pierre

is quite broken by his misfortune."

"Dear, dear! But still tell him to come to the club--it will all blow

over. It will be a tremendous banquet."

Next day, the third of March, soon after one o'clock, two hundred and

fifty members of the English Club and fifty guests were awaiting the

guest of honor and hero of the Austrian campaign, Prince Bagration, to

dinner.

On the first arrival of the news of the battle of Austerlitz, Moscow had

been bewildered. At that time, the Russians were so used to victories

that on receiving news of the defeat some would simply not believe it,

while others sought some extraordinary explanation of so strange an

event. In the English Club, where all who were distinguished, important,

and well informed foregathered when the news began to arrive in

December, nothing was said about the war and the last battle, as though

all were in a conspiracy of silence. The men who set the tone in

conversation--Count Rostopchin, Prince Yuri Dolgorukov, Valuev, Count

Markov, and Prince Vyazemski--did not show themselves at the club, but

met in private houses in intimate circles, and the Moscovites who took

their opinions from others--Ilya Rostov among them--remained for a while

without any definite opinion on the subject of the war and without

leaders. The Moscovites felt that something was wrong and that to

discuss the bad news was difficult, and so it was best to be silent. But

after a while, just as a jury comes out of its room, the bigwigs who

guided the club's opinion reappeared, and everybody began speaking

clearly and definitely. Reasons were found for the incredible, unheard-

of, and impossible event of a Russian defeat, everything became clear,

and in all corners of Moscow the same things began to be said. These

reasons were the treachery of the Austrians, a defective commissariat,

the treachery of the Pole Przebyszewski and of the Frenchman Langeron,

Kutuzov's incapacity, and (it was whispered) the youth and inexperience

of the sovereign, who had trusted worthless and insignificant people.

But the army, the Russian army, everyone declared, was extraordinary and

had achieved miracles of valor. The soldiers, officers, and generals

were heroes. But the hero of heroes was Prince Bagration, distinguished

by his Schon Grabern affair and by the retreat from Austerlitz, where he

alone had withdrawn his column unbroken and had all day beaten back an

enemy force twice as numerous as his own. What also conduced to

Bagration's being selected as Moscow's hero was the fact that he had no

connections in the city and was a stranger there. In his person, honor

was shown to a simple fighting Russian soldier without connections and

intrigues, and to one who was associated by memories of the Italian

campaign with the name of Suvorov. Moreover, paying such honor to

Bagration was the best way of expressing disapproval and dislike of

Kutuzov.

"Had there been no Bagration, it would have been necessary to invent

him," said the wit Shinshin, parodying the words of Voltaire. Kutuzov no

one spoke of, except some who abused him in whispers, calling him a

court weathercock and an old satyr.

All Moscow repeated Prince Dolgorukov's saying: "If you go on modeling

and modeling you must get smeared with clay," suggesting consolation for

our defeat by the memory of former victories; and the words of

Rostopchin, that French soldiers have to be incited to battle by

highfalutin words, and Germans by logical arguments to show them that it

is more dangerous to run away than to advance, but that Russian soldiers

only need to be restrained and held back! On all sides, new and fresh

anecdotes were heard of individual examples of heroism shown by our

officers and men at Austerlitz. One had saved a standard, another had

killed five Frenchmen, a third had loaded five cannon singlehanded. Berg

was mentioned, by those who did not know him, as having, when wounded in

the right hand, taken his sword in the left, and gone forward. Of

Bolkonski, nothing was said, and only those who knew him intimately

regretted that he had died so young, leaving a pregnant wife with his

eccentric father.

CHAPTER III

On that third of March, all the rooms in the English Club were filled

with a hum of conversation, like the hum of bees swarming in springtime.

The members and guests of the club wandered hither and thither, sat,

stood, met, and separated, some in uniform and some in evening dress,

and a few here and there with powdered hair and in Russian kaftans.

Powdered footmen, in livery with buckled shoes and smart stockings,

stood at every door anxiously noting visitors' every movement in order

to offer their services. Most of those present were elderly, respected

men with broad, self-confident faces, fat fingers, and resolute gestures

and voices. This class of guests and members sat in certain habitual

places and met in certain habitual groups. A minority of those present

were casual guests--chiefly young men, among whom were Denisov, Rostov,

and Dolokhov--who was now again an officer in the Semenov regiment. The

faces of these young people, especially those who were military men,

bore that expression of condescending respect for their elders which

seems to say to the older generation, "We are prepared to respect and

honor you, but all the same remember that the future belongs to us."

Nesvitski was there as an old member of the club. Pierre, who at his

wife's command had let his hair grow and abandoned his spectacles, went

about the rooms fashionably dressed but looking sad and dull. Here, as

elsewhere, he was surrounded by an atmosphere of subservience to his

wealth, and being in the habit of lording it over these people, he

treated them with absent-minded contempt.

By his age he should have belonged to the younger men, but by his wealth

and connections he belonged to the groups of old and honored guests, and

so he went from one group to another. Some of the most important old men

were the center of groups which even strangers approached respectfully

to hear the voices of well-known men. The largest circles formed round

Count Rostopchin, Valuev, and Naryshkin. Rostopchin was describing how

the Russians had been overwhelmed by flying Austrians and had had to

force their way through them with bayonets.

Valuev was confidentially telling that Uvarov had been sent from

Petersburg to ascertain what Moscow was thinking about Austerlitz.

In the third circle, Naryshkin was speaking of the meeting of the

Austrian Council of War at which Suvorov crowed like a cock in reply to

the nonsense talked by the Austrian generals. Shinshin, standing close

by, tried to make a joke, saying that Kutuzov had evidently failed to

learn from Suvorov even so simple a thing as the art of crowing like a

cock, but the elder members glanced severely at the wit, making him feel

that in that place and on that day, it was improper to speak so of

Kutuzov.

Count Ilya Rostov, hurried and preoccupied, went about in his soft boots

between the dining and drawing rooms, hastily greeting the important and

unimportant, all of whom he knew, as if they were all equals, while his

eyes occasionally sought out his fine well-set-up young son, resting on

him and winking joyfully at him. Young Rostov stood at a window with

Dolokhov, whose acquaintance he had lately made and highly valued. The

old count came up to them and pressed Dolokhov's hand.

"Please come and visit us... you know my brave boy... been together out

there... both playing the hero... Ah, Vasili Ignatovich... How d'ye do,

old fellow?" he said, turning to an old man who was passing, but before

he had finished his greeting there was a general stir, and a footman who

had run in announced, with a frightened face: "He's arrived!"

Bells rang, the stewards rushed forward, and--like rye shaken together

in a shovel--the guests who had been scattered about in different rooms

came together and crowded in the large drawing room by the door of the

ballroom.

Bagration appeared in the doorway of the anteroom without hat or sword,

which, in accord with the club custom, he had given up to the hall

porter. He had no lambskin cap on his head, nor had he a loaded whip

over his shoulder, as when Rostov had seen him on the eve of the battle

of Austerlitz, but wore a tight new uniform with Russian and foreign

Orders, and the Star of St. George on his left breast. Evidently just

before coming to the dinner he had had his hair and whiskers trimmed,

which changed his appearance for the worse. There was something naively

festive in his air, which, in conjunction with his firm and virile

features, gave him a rather comical expression. Bekleshev and Theodore

Uvarov, who had arrived with him, paused at the doorway to allow him, as

the guest of honor, to enter first. Bagration was embarrassed, not

wishing to avail himself of their courtesy, and this caused some delay

at the doors, but after all he did at last enter first. He walked shyly

and awkwardly over the parquet floor of the reception room, not knowing

what to do with his hands; he was more accustomed to walk over a plowed

field under fire, as he had done at the head of the Kursk regiment at

Schon Grabern--and he would have found that easier. The committeemen met

him at the first door and, expressing their delight at seeing such a

highly honored guest, took possession of him as it were, without waiting

for his reply, surrounded him, and led him to the drawing room. It was

at first impossible to enter the drawing-room door for the crowd of

members and guests jostling one another and trying to get a good look at

Bagration over each other's shoulders, as if he were some rare animal.

Count Ilya Rostov, laughing and repeating the words, "Make way, dear

boy! Make way, make way!" pushed through the crowd more energetically

than anyone, led the guests into the drawing room, and seated them on

the center sofa. The bigwigs, the most respected members of the club,

beset the new arrivals. Count Ilya, again thrusting his way through the

crowd, went out of the drawing room and reappeared a minute later with

another committeeman, carrying a large silver salver which he presented

to Prince Bagration. On the salver lay some verses composed and printed

in the hero's honor. Bagration, on seeing the salver, glanced around in

dismay, as though seeking help. But all eyes demanded that he should

submit. Feeling himself in their power, he resolutely took the salver

with both hands and looked sternly and reproachfully at the count who

had presented it to him. Someone obligingly took the dish from Bagration

(or he would, it seemed, have held it till evening and have gone in to

dinner with it) and drew his attention to the verses.

"Well, I will read them, then!" Bagration seemed to say, and, fixing his

weary eyes on the paper, began to read them with a fixed and serious

expression. But the author himself took the verses and began reading

them aloud. Bagration bowed his head and listened:

Bring glory then to Alexander's reign And on the throne our Titus

shield. A dreaded foe be thou, kindhearted as a man, A Rhipheus at home,

a Caesar in the field! E'en fortunate Napoleon Knows by experience, now,

Bagration, And dare not Herculean Russians trouble...

But before he had finished reading, a stentorian major-domo announced

that dinner was ready! The door opened, and from the dining room came

the resounding strains of the polonaise:

Conquest's joyful thunder waken, Triumph, valiant Russians, now!...

and Count Rostov, glancing angrily at the author who went on reading his

verses, bowed to Bagration. Everyone rose, feeling that dinner was more

important than verses, and Bagration, again preceding all the rest, went

in to dinner. He was seated in the place of honor between two

Alexanders--Bekleshev and Naryshkin--which was a significant allusion to

the name of the sovereign. Three hundred persons took their seats in the

dining room, according to their rank and importance: the more important

nearer to the honored guest, as naturally as water flows deepest where

the land lies lowest.

Just before dinner, Count Ilya Rostov presented his son to Bagration,

who recognized him and said a few words to him, disjointed and awkward,

as were all the words he spoke that day, and Count Ilya looked joyfully

and proudly around while Bagration spoke to his son.

Nicholas Rostov, with Denisov and his new acquaintance, Dolokhov, sat

almost at the middle of the table. Facing them sat Pierre, beside Prince

Nesvitski. Count Ilya Rostov with the other members of the committee sat

facing Bagration and, as the very personification of Moscow hospitality,

did the honors to the prince.

His efforts had not been in vain. The dinner, both the Lenten and the

other fare, was splendid, yet he could not feel quite at ease till the

end of the meal. He winked at the butler, whispered directions to the

footmen, and awaited each expected dish with some anxiety. Everything

was excellent. With the second course, a gigantic sterlet (at sight of

which Ilya Rostov blushed with self-conscious pleasure), the footmen

began popping corks and filling the champagne glasses. After the fish,

which made a certain sensation, the count exchanged glances with the

other committeemen. "There will be many toasts, it's time to begin," he

whispered, and taking up his glass, he rose. All were silent, waiting

for what he would say.

"To the health of our Sovereign, the Emperor!" he cried, and at the same

moment his kindly eyes grew moist with tears of joy and enthusiasm. The

band immediately struck up "Conquest's joyful thunder waken..." All rose

and cried "Hurrah!" Bagration also rose and shouted "Hurrah!" in exactly

the same voice in which he had shouted it on the field at Schon Grabern.

Young Rostov's ecstatic voice could be heard above the three hundred

others. He nearly wept. "To the health of our Sovereign, the Emperor!"

he roared, "Hurrah!" and emptying his glass at one gulp he dashed it to

the floor. Many followed his example, and the loud shouting continued

for a long time. When the voices subsided, the footmen cleared away the

broken glass and everybody sat down again, smiling at the noise they had

made and exchanging remarks. The old count rose once more, glanced at a

note lying beside his plate, and proposed a toast, "To the health of the

hero of our last campaign, Prince Peter Ivanovich Bagration!" and again

his blue eyes grew moist. "Hurrah!" cried the three hundred voices

again, but instead of the band a choir began singing a cantata composed

by Paul Ivanovich Kutuzov:

Russians! O'er all barriers on! Courage conquest guarantees; Have we not

Bagration? He brings foe men to their knees,... etc.

As soon as the singing was over, another and another toast was proposed

and Count Ilya Rostov became more and more moved, more glass was

smashed, and the shouting grew louder. They drank to Bekleshev,

Naryshkin, Uvarov, Dolgorukov, Apraksin, Valuev, to the committee, to

all the club members and to all the club guests, and finally to Count

Ilya Rostov separately, as the organizer of the banquet. At that toast,

the count took out his handkerchief and, covering his face, wept

outright.

CHAPTER IV

Pierre sat opposite Dolokhov and Nicholas Rostov. As usual, he ate and

drank much, and eagerly. But those who knew him intimately noticed that

some great change had come over him that day. He was silent all through

dinner and looked about, blinking and scowling, or, with fixed eyes and

a look of complete absent-mindedness, kept rubbing the bridge of his

nose. His face was depressed and gloomy. He seemed to see and hear

nothing of what was going on around him and to be absorbed by some

depressing and unsolved problem.

The unsolved problem that tormented him was caused by hints given by the

princess, his cousin, at Moscow, concerning Dolokhov's intimacy with his

wife, and by an anonymous letter he had received that morning, which in

the mean jocular way common to anonymous letters said that he saw badly

through his spectacles, but that his wife's connection with Dolokhov was

a secret to no one but himself. Pierre absolutely disbelieved both the

princess' hints and the letter, but he feared now to look at Dolokhov,

who was sitting opposite him. Every time he chanced to meet Dolokhov's

handsome insolent eyes, Pierre felt something terrible and monstrous

rising in his soul and turned quickly away. Involuntarily recalling his

wife's past and her relations with Dolokhov, Pierre saw clearly that

what was said in the letter might be true, or might at least seem to be

true had it not referred to his wife. He involuntarily remembered how

Dolokhov, who had fully recovered his former position after the

campaign, had returned to Petersburg and come to him. Availing himself

of his friendly relations with Pierre as a boon companion, Dolokhov had

come straight to his house, and Pierre had put him up and lent him

money. Pierre recalled how Helene had smilingly expressed disapproval of

Dolokhov's living at their house, and how cynically Dolokhov had praised

his wife's beauty to him and from that time till they came to Moscow had

not left them for a day.

"Yes, he is very handsome," thought Pierre, "and I know him. It would be

particularly pleasant to him to dishonor my name and ridicule me, just

because I have exerted myself on his behalf, befriended him, and helped

him. I know and understand what a spice that would add to the pleasure

of deceiving me, if it really were true. Yes, if it were true, but I do

not believe it. I have no right to, and can't, believe it." He

remembered the expression Dolokhov's face assumed in his moments of

cruelty, as when tying the policeman to the bear and dropping them into

the water, or when he challenged a man to a duel without any reason, or

shot a post-boy's horse with a pistol. That expression was often on

Dolokhov's face when looking at him. "Yes, he is a bully," thought

Pierre, "to kill a man means nothing to him. It must seem to him that

everyone is afraid of him, and that must please him. He must think that

I, too, am afraid of him--and in fact I am afraid of him," he thought,

and again he felt something terrible and monstrous rising in his soul.

Dolokhov, Denisov, and Rostov were now sitting opposite Pierre and

seemed very gay. Rostov was talking merrily to his two friends, one of

whom was a dashing hussar and the other a notorious duelist and rake,

and every now and then he glanced ironically at Pierre, whose

preoccupied, absent-minded, and massive figure was a very noticeable one

at the dinner. Rostov looked inimically at Pierre, first because Pierre

appeared to his hussar eyes as a rich civilian, the husband of a beauty,

and in a word--an old woman; and secondly because Pierre in his

preoccupation and absent-mindedness had not recognized Rostov and had

not responded to his greeting. When the Emperor's health was drunk,

Pierre, lost in thought, did not rise or lift his glass.

"What are you about?" shouted Rostov, looking at him in an ecstasy of

exasperation. "Don't you hear it's His Majesty the Emperor's health?"

Pierre sighed, rose submissively, emptied his glass, and, waiting till

all were seated again, turned with his kindly smile to Rostov.

"Why, I didn't recognize you!" he said. But Rostov was otherwise

engaged; he was shouting "Hurrah!"

"Why don't you renew the acquaintance?" said Dolokhov to Rostov.

"Confound him, he's a fool!" said Rostov.

"One should make up to the husbands of pretty women," said Denisov.

Pierre did not catch what they were saying, but knew they were talking

about him. He reddened and turned away.

"Well, now to the health of handsome women!" said Dolokhov, and with a

serious expression, but with a smile lurking at the corners of his

mouth, he turned with his glass to Pierre.

"Here's to the health of lovely women, Peterkin--and their lovers!" he

added.

Pierre, with downcast eyes, drank out of his glass without looking at

Dolokhov or answering him. The footman, who was distributing leaflets

with Kutuzov's cantata, laid one before Pierre as one of the principal

guests. He was just going to take it when Dolokhov, leaning across,

snatched it from his hand and began reading it. Pierre looked at

Dolokhov and his eyes dropped, the something terrible and monstrous that

had tormented him all dinnertime rose and took possession of him. He

leaned his whole massive body across the table.

"How dare you take it?" he shouted.

Hearing that cry and seeing to whom it was addressed, Nesvitski and the

neighbor on his right quickly turned in alarm to Bezukhov.

"Don't! Don't! What are you about?" whispered their frightened voices.

Dolokhov looked at Pierre with clear, mirthful, cruel eyes, and that

smile of his which seemed to say, "Ah! This is what I like!"

"You shan't have it!" he said distinctly.

Pale, with quivering lips, Pierre snatched the copy.

"You...! you... scoundrel! I challenge you!" he ejaculated, and, pushing

back his chair, he rose from the table.

At the very instant he did this and uttered those words, Pierre felt

that the question of his wife's guilt which had been tormenting him the

whole day was finally and indubitably answered in the affirmative. He

hated her and was forever sundered from her. Despite Denisov's request

that he would take no part in the matter, Rostov agreed to be Dolokhov's

second, and after dinner he discussed the arrangements for the duel with

Nesvitski, Bezukhov's second. Pierre went home, but Rostov with Dolokhov

and Denisov stayed on at the club till late, listening to the gypsies

and other singers.

"Well then, till tomorrow at Sokolniki," said Dolokhov, as he took leave

of Rostov in the club porch.

"And do you feel quite calm?" Rostov asked.

Dolokhov paused.

"Well, you see, I'll tell you the whole secret of dueling in two words.

If you are going to fight a duel, and you make a will and write

affectionate letters to your parents, and if you think you may be

killed, you are a fool and are lost for certain. But go with the firm

intention of killing your man as quickly and surely as possible, and

then all will be right, as our bear huntsman at Kostroma used to tell

me. 'Everyone fears a bear,' he says, 'but when you see one your fear's

all gone, and your only thought is not to let him get away!' And that's

how it is with me. A demain, mon cher." \*

\* Till tomorrow, my dear fellow.

Next day, at eight in the morning, Pierre and Nesvitski drove to the

Sokolniki forest and found Dolokhov, Denisov, and Rostov already there.

Pierre had the air of a man preoccupied with considerations which had no

connection with the matter in hand. His haggard face was yellow. He had

evidently not slept that night. He looked about distractedly and screwed

up his eyes as if dazzled by the sun. He was entirely absorbed by two

considerations: his wife's guilt, of which after his sleepless night he

had not the slightest doubt, and the guiltlessness of Dolokhov, who had

no reason to preserve the honor of a man who was nothing to him.... "I

should perhaps have done the same thing in his place," thought Pierre.

"It's even certain that I should have done the same, then why this duel,

this murder? Either I shall kill him, or he will hit me in the head, or

elbow, or knee. Can't I go away from here, run away, bury myself

somewhere?" passed through his mind. But just at moments when such

thoughts occurred to him, he would ask in a particularly calm and

absent-minded way, which inspired the respect of the onlookers, "Will it

be long? Are things ready?"

When all was ready, the sabers stuck in the snow to mark the barriers,

and the pistols loaded, Nesvitski went up to Pierre.

"I should not be doing my duty, Count," he said in timid tones, "and

should not justify your confidence and the honor you have done me in

choosing me for your second, if at this grave, this very grave, moment I

did not tell you the whole truth. I think there is no sufficient ground

for this affair, or for blood to be shed over it.... You were not right,

not quite in the right, you were impetuous..."

"Oh yes, it is horribly stupid," said Pierre.

"Then allow me to express your regrets, and I am sure your opponent will

accept them," said Nesvitski (who like the others concerned in the

affair, and like everyone in similar cases, did not yet believe that the

affair had come to an actual duel). "You know, Count, it is much more

honorable to admit one's mistake than to let matters become irreparable.

There was no insult on either side. Allow me to convey...."

"No! What is there to talk about?" said Pierre. "It's all the same....

Is everything ready?" he added. "Only tell me where to go and where to

shoot," he said with an unnaturally gentle smile.

He took the pistol in his hand and began asking about the working of the

trigger, as he had not before held a pistol in his hand--a fact that he

did not wish to confess.

"Oh yes, like that, I know, I only forgot," said he.

"No apologies, none whatever," said Dolokhov to Denisov (who on his side

had been attempting a reconciliation), and he also went up to the

appointed place.

The spot chosen for the duel was some eighty paces from the road, where

the sleighs had been left, in a small clearing in the pine forest

covered with melting snow, the frost having begun to break up during the

last few days. The antagonists stood forty paces apart at the farther

edge of the clearing. The seconds, measuring the paces, left tracks in

the deep wet snow between the place where they had been standing and

Nesvitski's and Dolokhov's sabers, which were stuck into the ground ten

paces apart to mark the barrier. It was thawing and misty; at forty

paces' distance nothing could be seen. For three minutes all had been

ready, but they still delayed and all were silent.

CHAPTER V

"Well begin!" said Dolokhov.

"All right," said Pierre, still smiling in the same way. A feeling of

dread was in the air. It was evident that the affair so lightly begun

could no longer be averted but was taking its course independently of

men's will.

Denisov first went to the barrier and announced: "As the adve'sawies

have wefused a weconciliation, please pwoceed. Take your pistols, and at

the word thwee begin to advance.

"O-ne! T-wo! Thwee!" he shouted angrily and stepped aside.

The combatants advanced along the trodden tracks, nearer and nearer to

one another, beginning to see one another through the mist. They had the

right to fire when they liked as they approached the barrier. Dolokhov

walked slowly without raising his pistol, looking intently with his

bright, sparkling blue eyes into his antagonist's face. His mouth wore

its usual semblance of a smile.

"So I can fire when I like!" said Pierre, and at the word "three," he

went quickly forward, missing the trodden path and stepping into the

deep snow. He held the pistol in his right hand at arm's length,

apparently afraid of shooting himself with it. His left hand he held

carefully back, because he wished to support his right hand with it and

knew he must not do so. Having advanced six paces and strayed off the

track into the snow, Pierre looked down at his feet, then quickly

glanced at Dolokhov and, bending his finger as he had been shown, fired.

Not at all expecting so loud a report, Pierre shuddered at the sound and

then, smiling at his own sensations, stood still. The smoke, rendered

denser by the mist, prevented him from seeing anything for an instant,

but there was no second report as he had expected. He only heard

Dolokhov's hurried steps, and his figure came in view through the smoke.

He was pressing one hand to his left side, while the other clutched his

drooping pistol. His face was pale. Rostov ran toward him and said

something.

"No-o-o!" muttered Dolokhov through his teeth, "no, it's not over." And

after stumbling a few staggering steps right up to the saber, he sank on

the snow beside it. His left hand was bloody; he wiped it on his coat

and supported himself with it. His frowning face was pallid and

quivered.

"Plea..." began Dolokhov, but could not at first pronounce the word.

"Please," he uttered with an effort.

Pierre, hardly restraining his sobs, began running toward Dolokhov and

was about to cross the space between the barriers, when Dolokhov cried:

"To your barrier!" and Pierre, grasping what was meant, stopped by his

saber. Only ten paces divided them. Dolokhov lowered his head to the

snow, greedily bit at it, again raised his head, adjusted himself, drew

in his legs and sat up, seeking a firm center of gravity. He sucked and

swallowed the cold snow, his lips quivered but his eyes, still smiling,

glittered with effort and exasperation as he mustered his remaining

strength. He raised his pistol and aimed.

"Sideways! Cover yourself with your pistol!" ejaculated Nesvitski.

"Cover yourself!" even Denisov cried to his adversary.

Pierre, with a gentle smile of pity and remorse, his arms and legs

helplessly spread out, stood with his broad chest directly facing

Dolokhov looked sorrowfully at him. Denisov, Rostov, and Nesvitski

closed their eyes. At the same instant they heard a report and

Dolokhov's angry cry.

"Missed!" shouted Dolokhov, and he lay helplessly, face downwards on the

snow.

Pierre clutched his temples, and turning round went into the forest,

trampling through the deep snow, and muttering incoherent words:

"Folly... folly! Death... lies..." he repeated, puckering his face.

Nesvitski stopped him and took him home.

Rostov and Denisov drove away with the wounded Dolokhov.

The latter lay silent in the sleigh with closed eyes and did not answer

a word to the questions addressed to him. But on entering Moscow he

suddenly came to and, lifting his head with an effort, took Rostov, who

was sitting beside him, by the hand. Rostov was struck by the totally

altered and unexpectedly rapturous and tender expression on Dolokhov's

face.

"Well? How do you feel?" he asked.

"Bad! But it's not that, my friend-" said Dolokhov with a gasping voice.

"Where are we? In Moscow, I know. I don't matter, but I have killed her,

killed... She won't get over it! She won't survive...."

"Who?" asked Rostov.

"My mother! My mother, my angel, my adored angel mother," and Dolokhov

pressed Rostov's hand and burst into tears.

When he had become a little quieter, he explained to Rostov that he was

living with his mother, who, if she saw him dying, would not survive it.

He implored Rostov to go on and prepare her.

Rostov went on ahead to do what was asked, and to his great surprise

learned that Dolokhov the brawler, Dolokhov the bully, lived in Moscow

with an old mother and a hunchback sister, and was the most affectionate

of sons and brothers.

CHAPTER VI

Pierre had of late rarely seen his wife alone. Both in Petersburg and in

Moscow their house was always full of visitors. The night after the duel

he did not go to his bedroom but, as he often did, remained in his

father's room, that huge room in which Count Bezukhov had died.

He lay down on the sofa meaning to fall asleep and forget all that had

happened to him, but could not do so. Such a storm of feelings,

thoughts, and memories suddenly arose within him that he could not fall

asleep, nor even remain in one place, but had to jump up and pace the

room with rapid steps. Now he seemed to see her in the early days of

their marriage, with bare shoulders and a languid, passionate look on

her face, and then immediately he saw beside her Dolokhov's handsome,

insolent, hard, and mocking face as he had seen it at the banquet, and

then that same face pale, quivering, and suffering, as it had been when

he reeled and sank on the snow.

"What has happened?" he asked himself. "I have killed her lover, yes,

killed my wife's lover. Yes, that was it! And why? How did I come to do

it?"--"Because you married her," answered an inner voice.

"But in what was I to blame?" he asked. "In marrying her without loving

her; in deceiving yourself and her." And he vividly recalled that moment

after supper at Prince Vasili's, when he spoke those words he had found

so difficult to utter: "I love you." "It all comes from that! Even then

I felt it," he thought. "I felt then that it was not so, that I had no

right to do it. And so it turns out."

He remembered his honeymoon and blushed at the recollection.

Particularly vivid, humiliating, and shameful was the recollection of

how one day soon after his marriage he came out of the bedroom into his

study a little before noon in his silk dressing gown and found his head

steward there, who, bowing respectfully, looked into his face and at his

dressing gown and smiled slightly, as if expressing respectful

understanding of his employer's happiness.

"But how often I have felt proud of her, proud of her majestic beauty

and social tact," thought he; "been proud of my house, in which she

received all Petersburg, proud of her unapproachability and beauty. So

this is what I was proud of! I then thought that I did not understand

her. How often when considering her character I have told myself that I

was to blame for not understanding her, for not understanding that

constant composure and complacency and lack of all interests or desires,

and the whole secret lies in the terrible truth that she is a depraved

woman. Now I have spoken that terrible word to myself all has become

clear.

"Anatole used to come to borrow money from her and used to kiss her

naked shoulders. She did not give him the money, but let herself be

kissed. Her father in jest tried to rouse her jealousy, and she replied

with a calm smile that she was not so stupid as to be jealous: 'Let him

do what he pleases,' she used to say of me. One day I asked her if she

felt any symptoms of pregnancy. She laughed contemptuously and said she

was not a fool to want to have children, and that she was not going to

have any children by me."

Then he recalled the coarseness and bluntness of her thoughts and the

vulgarity of the expressions that were natural to her, though she had

been brought up in the most aristocratic circles.

"I'm not such a fool.... Just you try it on.... Allez-vous promener," \*

she used to say. Often seeing the success she had with young and old men

and women Pierre could not understand why he did not love her.

\* "You clear out of this."

"Yes, I never loved her," said he to himself; "I knew she was a depraved

woman," he repeated, "but dared not admit it to myself. And now there's

Dolokhov sitting in the snow with a forced smile and perhaps dying,

while meeting my remorse with some forced bravado!"

Pierre was one of those people who, in spite of an appearance of what is

called weak character, do not seek a confidant in their troubles. He

digested his sufferings alone.

"It is all, all her fault," he said to himself; "but what of that? Why

did I bind myself to her? Why did I say 'Je vous aime' \* to her, which

was a lie, and worse than a lie? I am guilty and must endure... what? A

slur on my name? A misfortune for life? Oh, that's nonsense," he

thought. "The slur on my name and honor--that's all apart from myself."

\* I love you.

"Louis XVI was executed because they said he was dishonorable and a

criminal," came into Pierre's head, "and from their point of view they

were right, as were those too who canonized him and died a martyr's

death for his sake. Then Robespierre was beheaded for being a despot.

Who is right and who is wrong? No one! But if you are alive--live:

tomorrow you'll die as I might have died an hour ago. And is it worth

tormenting oneself, when one has only a moment of life in comparison

with eternity?"

But at the moment when he imagined himself calmed by such reflections,

she suddenly came into his mind as she was at the moments when he had

most strongly expressed his insincere love for her, and he felt the

blood rush to his heart and had again to get up and move about and break

and tear whatever came to his hand. "Why did I tell her that 'Je vous

aime'?" he kept repeating to himself. And when he had said it for the

tenth time, Moliere's words: "Mais que diable allait-il faire dans cette

galere?"\* occurred to him, and he began to laugh at himself.

\* "But what the devil was he doing in that galley?"

In the night he called his valet and told him to pack up to go to

Petersburg. He could not imagine how he could speak to her now. He

resolved to go away next day and leave a letter informing her of his

intention to part from her forever.

Next morning when the valet came into the room with his coffee, Pierre

was lying asleep on the ottoman with an open book in his hand.

He woke up and looked round for a while with a startled expression,

unable to realize where he was.

"The countess told me to inquire whether your excellency was at home,"

said the valet.

But before Pierre could decide what answer he would send, the countess

herself in a white satin dressing gown embroidered with silver and with

simply dressed hair (two immense plaits twice round her lovely head like

a coronet) entered the room, calm and majestic, except that there was a

wrathful wrinkle on her rather prominent marble brow. With her

imperturbable calm she did not begin to speak in front of the valet. She

knew of the duel and had come to speak about it. She waited till the

valet had set down the coffee things and left the room. Pierre looked at

her timidly over his spectacles, and like a hare surrounded by hounds

who lays back her ears and continues to crouch motionless before her

enemies, he tried to continue reading. But feeling this to be senseless

and impossible, he again glanced timidly at her. She did not sit down

but looked at him with a contemptuous smile, waiting for the valet to

go.

"Well, what's this now? What have you been up to now, I should like to

know?" she asked sternly.

"I? What have I...?" stammered Pierre.

"So it seems you're a hero, eh? Come now, what was this duel about? What

is it meant to prove? What? I ask you."

Pierre turned over heavily on the ottoman and opened his mouth, but

could not reply.

"If you won't answer, I'll tell you..." Helene went on. "You believe

everything you're told. You were told..." Helene laughed, "that Dolokhov

was my lover," she said in French with her coarse plainness of speech,

uttering the word amant as casually as any other word, "and you believed

it! Well, what have you proved? What does this duel prove? That you're a

fool, que vous etes un sot, but everybody knew that. What will be the

result? That I shall be the laughingstock of all Moscow, that everyone

will say that you, drunk and not knowing what you were about, challenged

a man you are jealous of without cause." Helene raised her voice and

became more and more excited, "A man who's a better man than you in

every way..."

"Hm... Hm...!" growled Pierre, frowning without looking at her, and not

moving a muscle.

"And how could you believe he was my lover? Why? Because I like his

company? If you were cleverer and more agreeable, I should prefer

yours."

"Don't speak to me... I beg you," muttered Pierre hoarsely.

"Why shouldn't I speak? I can speak as I like, and I tell you plainly

that there are not many wives with husbands such as you who would not

have taken lovers (des amants), but I have not done so," said she.

Pierre wished to say something, looked at her with eyes whose strange

expression she did not understand, and lay down again. He was suffering

physically at that moment, there was a weight on his chest and he could

not breathe. He knew that he must do something to put an end to this

suffering, but what he wanted to do was too terrible.

"We had better separate," he muttered in a broken voice.

"Separate? Very well, but only if you give me a fortune," said Helene.

"Separate! That's a thing to frighten me with!"

Pierre leaped up from the sofa and rushed staggering toward her.

"I'll kill you!" he shouted, and seizing the marble top of a table with

a strength he had never before felt, he made a step toward her

brandishing the slab.

Helene's face became terrible, she shrieked and sprang aside. His

father's nature showed itself in Pierre. He felt the fascination and

delight of frenzy. He flung down the slab, broke it, and swooping down

on her with outstretched hands shouted, "Get out!" in such a terrible

voice that the whole house heard it with horror. God knows what he would

have done at that moment had Helene not fled from the room.

A week later Pierre gave his wife full power to control all his estates

in Great Russia, which formed the larger part of his property, and left

for Petersburg alone.

CHAPTER VII

Two months had elapsed since the news of the battle of Austerlitz and

the loss of Prince Andrew had reached Bald Hills, and in spite of the

letters sent through the embassy and all the searches made, his body had

not been found nor was he on the list of prisoners. What was worst of

all for his relations was the fact that there was still a possibility of

his having been picked up on the battlefield by the people of the place

and that he might now be lying, recovering or dying, alone among

strangers and unable to send news of himself. The gazettes from which

the old prince first heard of the defeat at Austerlitz stated, as usual

very briefly and vaguely, that after brilliant engagements the Russians

had had to retreat and had made their withdrawal in perfect order. The

old prince understood from this official report that our army had been

defeated. A week after the gazette report of the battle of Austerlitz

came a letter from Kutuzov informing the prince of the fate that had

befallen his son.

"Your son," wrote Kutuzov, "fell before my eyes, a standard in his hand

and at the head of a regiment--he fell as a hero, worthy of his father

and his fatherland. To the great regret of myself and of the whole army

it is still uncertain whether he is alive or not. I comfort myself and

you with the hope that your son is alive, for otherwise he would have

been mentioned among the officers found on the field of battle, a list

of whom has been sent me under flag of truce."

After receiving this news late in the evening, when he was alone in his

study, the old prince went for his walk as usual next morning, but he

was silent with his steward, the gardener, and the architect, and though

he looked very grim he said nothing to anyone.

When Princess Mary went to him at the usual hour he was working at his

lathe and, as usual, did not look round at her.

"Ah, Princess Mary!" he said suddenly in an unnatural voice, throwing

down his chisel. (The wheel continued to revolve by its own impetus, and

Princess Mary long remembered the dying creak of that wheel, which

merged in her memory with what followed.)

She approached him, saw his face, and something gave way within her. Her

eyes grew dim. By the expression of her father's face, not sad, not

crushed, but angry and working unnaturally, she saw that hanging over

her and about to crush her was some terrible misfortune, the worst in

life, one she had not yet experienced, irreparable and incomprehensible-

-the death of one she loved.

"Father! Andrew!"--said the ungraceful, awkward princess with such an

indescribable charm of sorrow and self-forgetfulness that her father

could not bear her look but turned away with a sob.

"Bad news! He's not among the prisoners nor among the killed! Kutuzov

writes..." and he screamed as piercingly as if he wished to drive the

princess away by that scream... "Killed!"

The princess did not fall down or faint. She was already pale, but on

hearing these words her face changed and something brightened in her

beautiful, radiant eyes. It was as if joy--a supreme joy apart from the

joys and sorrows of this world--overflowed the great grief within her.

She forgot all fear of her father, went up to him, took his hand, and

drawing him down put her arm round his thin, scraggy neck.

"Father," she said, "do not turn away from me, let us weep together."

"Scoundrels! Blackguards!" shrieked the old man, turning his face away

from her. "Destroying the army, destroying the men! And why? Go, go and

tell Lise."

The princess sank helplessly into an armchair beside her father and

wept. She saw her brother now as he had been at the moment when he took

leave of her and of Lise, his look tender yet proud. She saw him tender

and amused as he was when he put on the little icon. "Did he believe?

Had he repented of his unbelief? Was he now there? There in the realms

of eternal peace and blessedness?" she thought.

"Father, tell me how it happened," she asked through her tears.

"Go! Go! Killed in battle, where the best of Russian men and Russia's

glory were led to destruction. Go, Princess Mary. Go and tell Lise. I

will follow."

When Princess Mary returned from her father, the little princess sat

working and looked up with that curious expression of inner, happy calm

peculiar to pregnant women. It was evident that her eyes did not see

Princess Mary but were looking within... into herself... at something

joyful and mysterious taking place within her.

"Mary," she said, moving away from the embroidery frame and lying back,

"give me your hand." She took her sister-in-law's hand and held it below

her waist.

Her eyes were smiling expectantly, her downy lip rose and remained

lifted in childlike happiness.

Princess Mary knelt down before her and hid her face in the folds of her

sister-in-law's dress.

"There, there! Do you feel it? I feel so strange. And do you know, Mary,

I am going to love him very much," said Lise, looking with bright and

happy eyes at her sister-in-law.

Princess Mary could not lift her head, she was weeping.

"What is the matter, Mary?"

"Nothing... only I feel sad... sad about Andrew," she said, wiping away

her tears on her sister-in-law's knee.

Several times in the course of the morning Princess Mary began trying to

prepare her sister-in-law, and every time began to cry. Unobservant as

was the little princess, these tears, the cause of which she did not

understand, agitated her. She said nothing but looked about uneasily as

if in search of something. Before dinner the old prince, of whom she was

always afraid, came into her room with a peculiarly restless and malign

expression and went out again without saying a word. She looked at

Princess Mary, then sat thinking for a while with that expression of

attention to something within her that is only seen in pregnant women,

and suddenly began to cry.

"Has anything come from Andrew?" she asked.

"No, you know it's too soon for news. But my father is anxious and I

feel afraid."

"So there's nothing?"

"Nothing," answered Princess Mary, looking firmly with her radiant eyes

at her sister-in-law.

She had determined not to tell her and persuaded her father to hide the

terrible news from her till after her confinement, which was expected

within a few days. Princess Mary and the old prince each bore and hid

their grief in their own way. The old prince would not cherish any hope:

he made up his mind that Prince Andrew had been killed, and though he

sent an official to Austria to seek for traces of his son, he ordered a

monument from Moscow which he intended to erect in his own garden to his

memory, and he told everybody that his son had been killed. He tried not

to change his former way of life, but his strength failed him. He walked

less, ate less, slept less, and became weaker every day. Princess Mary

hoped. She prayed for her brother as living and was always awaiting news

of his return.

CHAPTER VIII

"Dearest," said the little princess after breakfast on the morning of

the nineteenth March, and her downy little lip rose from old habit, but

as sorrow was manifest in every smile, the sound of every word, and even

every footstep in that house since the terrible news had come, so now

the smile of the little princess--influenced by the general mood though

without knowing its cause--was such as to remind one still more of the

general sorrow.

"Dearest, I'm afraid this morning's fruschtique \*--as Foka the cook

calls it--has disagreed with me."

\* Fruhstuck: breakfast.

"What is the matter with you, my darling? You look pale. Oh, you are

very pale!" said Princess Mary in alarm, running with her soft,

ponderous steps up to her sister-in-law.

"Your excellency, should not Mary Bogdanovna be sent for?" said one of

the maids who was present. (Mary Bogdanovna was a midwife from the

neighboring town, who had been at Bald Hills for the last fortnight.)

"Oh yes," assented Princess Mary, "perhaps that's it. I'll go. Courage,

my angel." She kissed Lise and was about to leave the room.

"Oh, no, no!" And besides the pallor and the physical suffering on the

little princess' face, an expression of childish fear of inevitable pain

showed itself.

"No, it's only indigestion?... Say it's only indigestion, say so, Mary!

Say..." And the little princess began to cry capriciously like a

suffering child and to wring her little hands even with some

affectation. Princess Mary ran out of the room to fetch Mary Bogdanovna.

"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! Oh!" she heard as she left the room.

The midwife was already on her way to meet her, rubbing her small, plump

white hands with an air of calm importance.

"Mary Bogdanovna, I think it's beginning!" said Princess Mary looking at

the midwife with wide-open eyes of alarm.

"Well, the Lord be thanked, Princess," said Mary Bogdanovna, not

hastening her steps. "You young ladies should not know anything about

it."

"But how is it the doctor from Moscow is not here yet?" said the

princess. (In accordance with Lise's and Prince Andrew's wishes they had

sent in good time to Moscow for a doctor and were expecting him at any

moment.)

"No matter, Princess, don't be alarmed," said Mary Bogdanovna. "We'll

manage very well without a doctor."

Five minutes later Princess Mary from her room heard something heavy

being carried by. She looked out. The men servants were carrying the

large leather sofa from Prince Andrew's study into the bedroom. On their

faces was a quiet and solemn look.

Princess Mary sat alone in her room listening to the sounds in the

house, now and then opening her door when someone passed and watching

what was going on in the passage. Some women passing with quiet steps in

and out of the bedroom glanced at the princess and turned away. She did

not venture to ask any questions, and shut the door again, now sitting

down in her easy chair, now taking her prayer book, now kneeling before

the icon stand. To her surprise and distress she found that her prayers

did not calm her excitement. Suddenly her door opened softly and her old

nurse, Praskovya Savishna, who hardly ever came to that room as the old

prince had forbidden it, appeared on the threshold with a shawl round

her head.

"I've come to sit with you a bit, Masha," said the nurse, "and here I've

brought the prince's wedding candles to light before his saint, my

angel," she said with a sigh.

"Oh, nurse, I'm so glad!"

"God is merciful, birdie."

The nurse lit the gilt candles before the icons and sat down by the door

with her knitting. Princess Mary took a book and began reading. Only

when footsteps or voices were heard did they look at one another, the

princess anxious and inquiring, the nurse encouraging. Everyone in the

house was dominated by the same feeling that Princess Mary experienced

as she sat in her room. But owing to the superstition that the fewer the

people who know of it the less a woman in travail suffers, everyone

tried to pretend not to know; no one spoke of it, but apart from the

ordinary staid and respectful good manners habitual in the prince's

household, a common anxiety, a softening of the heart, and a

consciousness that something great and mysterious was being accomplished

at that moment made itself felt.

There was no laughter in the maids' large hall. In the men servants'

hall all sat waiting, silently and alert. In the outlying serfs'

quarters torches and candles were burning and no one slept. The old

prince, stepping on his heels, paced up and down his study and sent

Tikhon to ask Mary Bogdanovna what news.--"Say only that 'the prince

told me to ask,' and come and tell me her answer."

"Inform the prince that labor has begun," said Mary Bogdanovna, giving

the messenger a significant look.

Tikhon went and told the prince.

"Very good!" said the prince closing the door behind him, and Tikhon did

not hear the slightest sound from the study after that.

After a while he re-entered it as if to snuff the candles, and, seeing

the prince was lying on the sofa, looked at him, noticed his perturbed

face, shook his head, and going up to him silently kissed him on the

shoulder and left the room without snuffing the candles or saying why he

had entered. The most solemn mystery in the world continued its course.

Evening passed, night came, and the feeling of suspense and softening of

heart in the presence of the unfathomable did not lessen but increased.

No one slept.

It was one of those March nights when winter seems to wish to resume its

sway and scatters its last snows and storms with desperate fury. A relay

of horses had been sent up the highroad to meet the German doctor from

Moscow who was expected every moment, and men on horseback with lanterns

were sent to the crossroads to guide him over the country road with its

hollows and snow-covered pools of water.

Princess Mary had long since put aside her book: she sat silent, her

luminous eyes fixed on her nurse's wrinkled face (every line of which

she knew so well), on the lock of gray hair that escaped from under the

kerchief, and the loose skin that hung under her chin.

Nurse Savishna, knitting in hand, was telling in low tones, scarcely

hearing or understanding her own words, what she had told hundreds of

times before: how the late princess had given birth to Princess Mary in

Kishenev with only a Moldavian peasant woman to help instead of a

midwife.

"God is merciful, doctors are never needed," she said.

Suddenly a gust of wind beat violently against the casement of the

window, from which the double frame had been removed (by order of the

prince, one window frame was removed in each room as soon as the larks

returned), and, forcing open a loosely closed latch, set the damask

curtain flapping and blew out the candle with its chill, snowy draft.

Princess Mary shuddered; her nurse, putting down the stocking she was

knitting, went to the window and leaning out tried to catch the open

casement. The cold wind flapped the ends of her kerchief and her loose

locks of gray hair.

"Princess, my dear, there's someone driving up the avenue!" she said,

holding the casement and not closing it. "With lanterns. Most likely the

doctor."

"Oh, my God! thank God!" said Princess Mary. "I must go and meet him, he

does not know Russian."

Princess Mary threw a shawl over her head and ran to meet the newcomer.

As she was crossing the anteroom she saw through the window a carriage

with lanterns, standing at the entrance. She went out on the stairs. On

a banister post stood a tallow candle which guttered in the draft. On

the landing below, Philip, the footman, stood looking scared and holding

another candle. Still lower, beyond the turn of the staircase, one could

hear the footstep of someone in thick felt boots, and a voice that

seemed familiar to Princess Mary was saying something.

"Thank God!" said the voice. "And Father?"

"Gone to bed," replied the voice of Demyan the house steward, who was

downstairs.

Then the voice said something more, Demyan replied, and the steps in the

felt boots approached the unseen bend of the staircase more rapidly.

"It's Andrew!" thought Princess Mary. "No it can't be, that would be too

extraordinary," and at the very moment she thought this, the face and

figure of Prince Andrew, in a fur cloak the deep collar of which covered

with snow, appeared on the landing where the footman stood with the

candle. Yes, it was he, pale, thin, with a changed and strangely

softened but agitated expression on his face. He came up the stairs and

embraced his sister.

"You did not get my letter?" he asked, and not waiting for a reply--

which he would not have received, for the princess was unable to speak--

he turned back, rapidly mounted the stairs again with the doctor who had

entered the hall after him (they had met at the last post station), and

again embraced his sister.

"What a strange fate, Masha darling!" And having taken off his cloak and

felt boots, he went to the little princess' apartment.

CHAPTER IX

The little princess lay supported by pillows, with a white cap on her

head (the pains had just left her). Strands of her black hair lay round

her inflamed and perspiring cheeks, her charming rosy mouth with its

downy lip was open and she was smiling joyfully. Prince Andrew entered

and paused facing her at the foot of the sofa on which she was lying.

Her glittering eyes, filled with childlike fear and excitement, rested

on him without changing their expression. "I love you all and have done

no harm to anyone; why must I suffer so? Help me!" her look seemed to

say. She saw her husband, but did not realize the significance of his

appearance before her now. Prince Andrew went round the sofa and kissed

her forehead.

"My darling!" he said--a word he had never used to her before. "God is

merciful...."

She looked at him inquiringly and with childlike reproach.

"I expected help from you and I get none, none from you either!" said

her eyes. She was not surprised at his having come; she did not realize

that he had come. His coming had nothing to do with her sufferings or

with their relief. The pangs began again and Mary Bogdanovna advised

Prince Andrew to leave the room.

The doctor entered. Prince Andrew went out and, meeting Princess Mary,

again joined her. They began talking in whispers, but their talk broke

off at every moment. They waited and listened.

"Go, dear," said Princess Mary.

Prince Andrew went again to his wife and sat waiting in the room next to

hers. A woman came from the bedroom with a frightened face and became

confused when she saw Prince Andrew. He covered his face with his hands

and remained so for some minutes. Piteous, helpless, animal moans came

through the door. Prince Andrew got up, went to the door, and tried to

open it. Someone was holding it shut.

"You can't come in! You can't!" said a terrified voice from within.

He began pacing the room. The screaming ceased, and a few more seconds

went by. Then suddenly a terrible shriek--it could not be hers, she

could not scream like that--came from the bedroom. Prince Andrew ran to

the door; the scream ceased and he heard the wail of an infant.

"What have they taken a baby in there for?" thought Prince Andrew in the

first second. "A baby? What baby...? Why is there a baby there? Or is

the baby born?"

Then suddenly he realized the joyful significance of that wail; tears

choked him, and leaning his elbows on the window sill be began to cry,

sobbing like a child. The door opened. The doctor with his shirt sleeves

tucked up, without a coat, pale and with a trembling jaw, came out of

the room. Prince Andrew turned to him, but the doctor gave him a

bewildered look and passed by without a word. A woman rushed out and

seeing Prince Andrew stopped, hesitating on the threshold. He went into

his wife's room. She was lying dead, in the same position he had seen

her in five minutes before and, despite the fixed eyes and the pallor of

the cheeks, the same expression was on her charming childlike face with

its upper lip covered with tiny black hair.

"I love you all, and have done no harm to anyone; and what have you done

to me?"--said her charming, pathetic, dead face.

In a corner of the room something red and tiny gave a grunt and squealed

in Mary Bogdanovna's trembling white hands.

Two hours later Prince Andrew, stepping softly, went into his father's

room. The old man already knew everything. He was standing close to the

door and as soon as it opened his rough old arms closed like a vise

round his son's neck, and without a word he began to sob like a child.

Three days later the little princess was buried, and Prince Andrew went

up the steps to where the coffin stood, to give her the farewell kiss.

And there in the coffin was the same face, though with closed eyes. "Ah,

what have you done to me?" it still seemed to say, and Prince Andrew

felt that something gave way in his soul and that he was guilty of a sin

he could neither remedy nor forget. He could not weep. The old man too

came up and kissed the waxen little hands that lay quietly crossed one

on the other on her breast, and to him, too, her face seemed to say:

"Ah, what have you done to me, and why?" And at the sight the old man

turned angrily away.

Another five days passed, and then the young Prince Nicholas Andreevich

was baptized. The wet nurse supported the coverlet with her chin, while

the priest with a goose feather anointed the boy's little red and

wrinkled soles and palms.

His grandfather, who was his godfather, trembling and afraid of dropping

him, carried the infant round the battered tin font and handed him over

to the godmother, Princess Mary. Prince Andrew sat in another room,

faint with fear lest the baby should be drowned in the font, and awaited

the termination of the ceremony. He looked up joyfully at the baby when

the nurse brought it to him and nodded approval when she told him that

the wax with the baby's hair had not sunk in the font but had floated.

CHAPTER X

Rostov's share in Dolokhov's duel with Bezukhov was hushed up by the

efforts of the old count, and instead of being degraded to the ranks as

he expected he was appointed an adjutant to the governor general of

Moscow. As a result he could not go to the country with the rest of the

family, but was kept all summer in Moscow by his new duties. Dolokhov

recovered, and Rostov became very friendly with him during his

convalescence. Dolokhov lay ill at his mother's who loved him

passionately and tenderly, and old Mary Ivanovna, who had grown fond of

Rostov for his friendship to her Fedya, often talked to him about her

son.

"Yes, Count," she would say, "he is too noble and pure-souled for our

present, depraved world. No one now loves virtue; it seems like a

reproach to everyone. Now tell me, Count, was it right, was it

honorable, of Bezukhov? And Fedya, with his noble spirit, loved him and

even now never says a word against him. Those pranks in Petersburg when

they played some tricks on a policeman, didn't they do it together? And

there! Bezukhov got off scotfree, while Fedya had to bear the whole

burden on his shoulders. Fancy what he had to go through! It's true he

has been reinstated, but how could they fail to do that? I think there

were not many such gallant sons of the fatherland out there as he. And

now--this duel! Have these people no feeling, or honor? Knowing him to

be an only son, to challenge him and shoot so straight! It's well God

had mercy on us. And what was it for? Who doesn't have intrigues

nowadays? Why, if he was so jealous, as I see things he should have

shown it sooner, but he lets it go on for months. And then to call him

out, reckoning on Fedya not fighting because he owed him money! What

baseness! What meanness! I know you understand Fedya, my dear count;

that, believe me, is why I am so fond of you. Few people do understand

him. He is such a lofty, heavenly soul!"

Dolokhov himself during his convalescence spoke to Rostov in a way no

one would have expected of him.

"I know people consider me a bad man!" he said. "Let them! I don't care

a straw about anyone but those I love; but those I love, I love so that

I would give my life for them, and the others I'd throttle if they stood

in my way. I have an adored, a priceless mother, and two or three

friends--you among them--and as for the rest I only care about them in

so far as they are harmful or useful. And most of them are harmful,

especially the women. Yes, dear boy," he continued, "I have met loving,

noble, high-minded men, but I have not yet met any women--countesses or

cooks--who were not venal. I have not yet met that divine purity and

devotion I look for in women. If I found such a one I'd give my life for

her! But those!..." and he made a gesture of contempt. "And believe me,

if I still value my life it is only because I still hope to meet such a

divine creature, who will regenerate, purify, and elevate me. But you

don't understand it."

"Oh, yes, I quite understand," answered Rostov, who was under his new

friend's influence.

In the autumn the Rostovs returned to Moscow. Early in the winter

Denisov also came back and stayed with them. The first half of the

winter of 1806, which Nicholas Rostov spent in Moscow, was one of the

happiest, merriest times for him and the whole family. Nicholas brought

many young men to his parents' house. Vera was a handsome girl of

twenty; Sonya a girl of sixteen with all the charm of an opening flower;

Natasha, half grown up and half child, was now childishly amusing, now

girlishly enchanting.

At that time in the Rostovs' house there prevailed an amorous atmosphere

characteristic of homes where there are very young and very charming

girls. Every young man who came to the house--seeing those

impressionable, smiling young faces (smiling probably at their own

happiness), feeling the eager bustle around him, and hearing the fitful

bursts of song and music and the inconsequent but friendly prattle of

young girls ready for anything and full of hope--experienced the same

feeling; sharing with the young folk of the Rostovs' household a

readiness to fall in love and an expectation of happiness.

Among the young men introduced by Rostov one of the first was Dolokhov,

whom everyone in the house liked except Natasha. She almost quarreled

with her brother about him. She insisted that he was a bad man, and that

in the duel with Bezukhov, Pierre was right and Dolokhov wrong, and

further that he was disagreeable and unnatural.

"There's nothing for me to understand," she cried out with resolute

self-will, "he is wicked and heartless. There now, I like your Denisov

though he is a rake and all that, still I like him; so you see I do

understand. I don't know how to put it... with this one everything is

calculated, and I don't like that. But Denisov..."

"Oh, Denisov is quite different," replied Nicholas, implying that even

Denisov was nothing compared to Dolokhov--"you must understand what a

soul there is in Dolokhov, you should see him with his mother. What a

heart!"

"Well, I don't know about that, but I am uncomfortable with him. And do

you know he has fallen in love with Sonya?"

"What nonsense..."

"I'm certain of it; you'll see."

Natasha's prediction proved true. Dolokhov, who did not usually care for

the society of ladies, began to come often to the house, and the

question for whose sake he came (though no one spoke of it) was soon

settled. He came because of Sonya. And Sonya, though she would never

have dared to say so, knew it and blushed scarlet every time Dolokhov

appeared.

Dolokhov often dined at the Rostovs', never missed a performance at

which they were present, and went to Iogel's balls for young people

which the Rostovs always attended. He was pointedly attentive to Sonya

and looked at her in such a way that not only could she not bear his

glances without coloring, but even the old countess and Natasha blushed

when they saw his looks.

It was evident that this strange, strong man was under the irresistible

influence of the dark, graceful girl who loved another.

Rostov noticed something new in Dolokhov's relations with Sonya, but he

did not explain to himself what these new relations were. "They're

always in love with someone," he thought of Sonya and Natasha. But he

was not as much at ease with Sonya and Dolokhov as before and was less

frequently at home.

In the autumn of 1806 everybody had again begun talking of the war with

Napoleon with even greater warmth than the year before. Orders were

given to raise recruits, ten men in every thousand for the regular army,

and besides this, nine men in every thousand for the militia. Everywhere

Bonaparte was anathematized and in Moscow nothing but the coming war was

talked of. For the Rostov family the whole interest of these

preparations for war lay in the fact that Nicholas would not hear of

remaining in Moscow, and only awaited the termination of Denisov's

furlough after Christmas to return with him to their regiment. His

approaching departure did not prevent his amusing himself, but rather

gave zest to his pleasures. He spent the greater part of his time away

from home, at dinners, parties, and balls.

CHAPTER XI

On the third day after Christmas Nicholas dined at home, a thing he had

rarely done of late. It was a grand farewell dinner, as he and Denisov

were leaving to join their regiment after Epiphany. About twenty people

were present, including Dolokhov and Denisov.

Never had love been so much in the air, and never had the amorous

atmosphere made itself so strongly felt in the Rostovs' house as at this

holiday time. "Seize the moments of happiness, love and be loved! That

is the only reality in the world, all else is folly. It is the one thing

we are interested in here," said the spirit of the place.

Nicholas, having as usual exhausted two pairs of horses, without

visiting all the places he meant to go to and where he had been invited,

returned home just before dinner. As soon as he entered he noticed and

felt the tension of the amorous air in the house, and also noticed a

curious embarrassment among some of those present. Sonya, Dolokhov, and

the old countess were especially disturbed, and to a lesser degree

Natasha. Nicholas understood that something must have happened between

Sonya and Dolokhov before dinner, and with the kindly sensitiveness

natural to him was very gentle and wary with them both at dinner. On

that same evening there was to be one of the balls that Iogel (the

dancing master) gave for his pupils during the holidays.

"Nicholas, will you come to Iogel's? Please do!" said Natasha. "He asked

you, and Vasili Dmitrich \* is also going."

\* Denisov.

"Where would I not go at the countess' command!" said Denisov, who at

the Rostovs' had jocularly assumed the role of Natasha's knight. "I'm

even weady to dance the pas de chale."

"If I have time," answered Nicholas. "But I promised the Arkharovs; they

have a party."

"And you?" he asked Dolokhov, but as soon as he had asked the question

he noticed that it should not have been put.

"Perhaps," coldly and angrily replied Dolokhov, glancing at Sonya, and,

scowling, he gave Nicholas just such a look as he had given Pierre at

the club dinner.

"There is something up," thought Nicholas, and he was further confirmed

in this conclusion by the fact that Dolokhov left immediately after

dinner. He called Natasha and asked her what was the matter.

"And I was looking for you," said Natasha running out to him. "I told

you, but you would not believe it," she said triumphantly. "He has

proposed to Sonya!"

Little as Nicholas had occupied himself with Sonya of late, something

seemed to give way within him at this news. Dolokhov was a suitable and

in some respects a brilliant match for the dowerless, orphan girl. From

the point of view of the old countess and of society it was out of the

question for her to refuse him. And therefore Nicholas' first feeling on

hearing the news was one of anger with Sonya.... He tried to say,

"That's capital; of course she'll forget her childish promises and

accept the offer," but before he had time to say it Natasha began again.

"And fancy! she refused him quite definitely!" adding, after a pause,

"she told him she loved another."

"Yes, my Sonya could not have done otherwise!" thought Nicholas.

"Much as Mamma pressed her, she refused, and I know she won't change

once she has said..."

"And Mamma pressed her!" said Nicholas reproachfully.

"Yes," said Natasha. "Do you know, Nicholas--don't be angry--but I know

you will not marry her. I know, heaven knows how, but I know for certain

that you won't marry her."

"Now you don't know that at all!" said Nicholas. "But I must talk to

her. What a darling Sonya is!" he added with a smile.

"Ah, she is indeed a darling! I'll send her to you."

And Natasha kissed her brother and ran away.

A minute later Sonya came in with a frightened, guilty, and scared look.

Nicholas went up to her and kissed her hand. This was the first time

since his return that they had talked alone and about their love.

"Sophie," he began, timidly at first and then more and more boldly, "if

you wish to refuse one who is not only a brilliant and advantageous

match but a splendid, noble fellow... he is my friend..."

Sonya interrupted him.

"I have already refused," she said hurriedly.

"If you are refusing for my sake, I am afraid that I..."

Sonya again interrupted. She gave him an imploring, frightened look.

"Nicholas, don't tell me that!" she said.

"No, but I must. It may be arrogant of me, but still it is best to say

it. If you refuse him on my account, I must tell you the whole truth. I

love you, and I think I love you more than anyone else...."

"That is enough for me," said Sonya, blushing.

"No, but I have been in love a thousand times and shall fall in love

again, though for no one have I such a feeling of friendship,

confidence, and love as I have for you. Then I am young. Mamma does not

wish it. In a word, I make no promise. And I beg you to consider

Dolokhov's offer," he said, articulating his friend's name with

difficulty.

"Don't say that to me! I want nothing. I love you as a brother and

always shall, and I want nothing more."

"You are an angel: I am not worthy of you, but I am afraid of misleading

you."

And Nicholas again kissed her hand.

CHAPTER XII

Iogel's were the most enjoyable balls in Moscow. So said the mothers as

they watched their young people executing their newly learned steps, and

so said the youths and maidens themselves as they danced till they were

ready to drop, and so said the grown-up young men and women who came to

these balls with an air of condescension and found them most enjoyable.

That year two marriages had come of these balls. The two pretty young

Princesses Gorchakov met suitors there and were married and so further

increased the fame of these dances. What distinguished them from others

was the absence of host or hostess and the presence of the good-natured

Iogel, flying about like a feather and bowing according to the rules of

his art, as he collected the tickets from all his visitors. There was

the fact that only those came who wished to dance and amuse themselves

as girls of thirteen and fourteen do who are wearing long dresses for

the first time. With scarcely any exceptions they all were, or seemed to

be, pretty--so rapturous were their smiles and so sparkling their eyes.

Sometimes the best of the pupils, of whom Natasha, who was exceptionally

graceful, was first, even danced the pas de chale, but at this last ball

only the ecossaise, the anglaise, and the mazurka, which was just coming

into fashion, were danced. Iogel had taken a ballroom in Bezukhov's

house, and the ball, as everyone said, was a great success. There were

many pretty girls and the Rostov girls were among the prettiest. They

were both particularly happy and gay. That evening, proud of Dolokhov's

proposal, her refusal, and her explanation with Nicholas, Sonya twirled

about before she left home so that the maid could hardly get her hair

plaited, and she was transparently radiant with impulsive joy.

Natasha no less proud of her first long dress and of being at a real

ball was even happier. They were both dressed in white muslin with pink

ribbons.

Natasha fell in love the very moment she entered the ballroom. She was

not in love with anyone in particular, but with everyone. Whatever

person she happened to look at she was in love with for that moment.

"Oh, how delightful it is!" she kept saying, running up to Sonya.

Nicholas and Denisov were walking up and down, looking with kindly

patronage at the dancers.

"How sweet she is--she will be a weal beauty!" said Denisov.

"Who?"

"Countess Natasha," answered Denisov.

"And how she dances! What gwace!" he said again after a pause.

"Who are you talking about?"

"About your sister," ejaculated Denisov testily.

Rostov smiled.

"My dear count, you were one of my best pupils--you must dance," said

little Iogel coming up to Nicholas. "Look how many charming young

ladies-" He turned with the same request to Denisov who was also a

former pupil of his.

"No, my dear fellow, I'll be a wallflower," said Denisov. "Don't you

wecollect what bad use I made of your lessons?"

"Oh no!" said Iogel, hastening to reassure him. "You were only

inattentive, but you had talent--oh yes, you had talent!"

The band struck up the newly introduced mazurka. Nicholas could not

refuse Iogel and asked Sonya to dance. Denisov sat down by the old

ladies and, leaning on his saber and beating time with his foot, told

them something funny and kept them amused, while he watched the young

people dancing, Iogel with Natasha, his pride and his best pupil, were

the first couple. Noiselessly, skillfully stepping with his little feet

in low shoes, Iogel flew first across the hall with Natasha, who, though

shy, went on carefully executing her steps. Denisov did not take his

eyes off her and beat time with his saber in a way that clearly

indicated that if he was not dancing it was because he would not and not

because he could not. In the middle of a figure he beckoned to Rostov

who was passing:

"This is not at all the thing," he said. "What sort of Polish mazuwka is

this? But she does dance splendidly."

Knowing that Denisov had a reputation even in Poland for the masterly

way in which he danced the mazurka, Nicholas ran up to Natasha:

"Go and choose Denisov. He is a real dancer, a wonder!" he said.

When it came to Natasha's turn to choose a partner, she rose and,

tripping rapidly across in her little shoes trimmed with bows, ran

timidly to the corner where Denisov sat. She saw that everybody was

looking at her and waiting. Nicholas saw that Denisov was refusing

though he smiled delightedly. He ran up to them.

"Please, Vasili Dmitrich," Natasha was saying, "do come!"

"Oh no, let me off, Countess," Denisov replied.

"Now then, Vaska," said Nicholas.

"They coax me as if I were Vaska the cat!" said Denisov jokingly.

"I'll sing for you a whole evening," said Natasha.

"Oh, the faiwy! She can do anything with me!" said Denisov, and he

unhooked his saber. He came out from behind the chairs, clasped his

partner's hand firmly, threw back his head, and advanced his foot,

waiting for the beat. Only on horse back and in the mazurka was

Denisov's short stature not noticeable and he looked the fine fellow he

felt himself to be. At the right beat of the music he looked sideways at

his partner with a merry and triumphant air, suddenly stamped with one

foot, bounded from the floor like a ball, and flew round the room taking

his partner with him. He glided silently on one foot half across the

room, and seeming not to notice the chairs was dashing straight at them,

when suddenly, clinking his spurs and spreading out his legs, he stopped

short on his heels, stood so a second, stamped on the spot clanking his

spurs, whirled rapidly round, and, striking his left heel against his

right, flew round again in a circle. Natasha guessed what he meant to

do, and abandoning herself to him followed his lead hardly knowing how.

First he spun her round, holding her now with his left, now with his

right hand, then falling on one knee he twirled her round him, and again

jumping up, dashed so impetuously forward that it seemed as if he would

rush through the whole suite of rooms without drawing breath, and then

he suddenly stopped and performed some new and unexpected steps. When at

last, smartly whirling his partner round in front of her chair, he drew

up with a click of his spurs and bowed to her, Natasha did not even make

him a curtsy. She fixed her eyes on him in amazement, smiling as if she

did not recognize him.

"What does this mean?" she brought out.

Although Iogel did not acknowledge this to be the real mazurka, everyone

was delighted with Denisov's skill, he was asked again and again as a

partner, and the old men began smilingly to talk about Poland and the

good old days. Denisov, flushed after the mazurka and mopping himself

with his handkerchief, sat down by Natasha and did not leave her for the

rest of the evening.

CHAPTER XIII

For two days after that Rostov did not see Dolokhov at his own or at

Dolokhov's home: on the third day he received a note from him:

As I do not intend to be at your house again for reasons you know of,

and am going to rejoin my regiment, I am giving a farewell supper

tonight to my friends--come to the English Hotel.

About ten o'clock Rostov went to the English Hotel straight from the

theater, where he had been with his family and Denisov. He was at once

shown to the best room, which Dolokhov had taken for that evening. Some

twenty men were gathered round a table at which Dolokhov sat between two

candles. On the table was a pile of gold and paper money, and he was

keeping the bank. Rostov had not seen him since his proposal and Sonya's

refusal and felt uncomfortable at the thought of how they would meet.

Dolokhov's clear, cold glance met Rostov as soon as he entered the door,

as though he had long expected him.

"It's a long time since we met," he said. "Thanks for coming. I'll just

finish dealing, and then Ilyushka will come with his chorus."

"I called once or twice at your house," said Rostov, reddening.

Dolokhov made no reply.

"You may punt," he said.

Rostov recalled at that moment a strange conversation he had once had

with Dolokhov. "None but fools trust to luck in play," Dolokhov had then

said.

"Or are you afraid to play with me?" Dolokhov now asked as if guessing

Rostov's thought.

Beneath his smile Rostov saw in him the mood he had shown at the club

dinner and at other times, when as if tired of everyday life he had felt

a need to escape from it by some strange, and usually cruel, action.

Rostov felt ill at ease. He tried, but failed, to find some joke with

which to reply to Dolokhov's words. But before he had thought of

anything, Dolokhov, looking straight in his face, said slowly and

deliberately so that everyone could hear:

"Do you remember we had a talk about cards... 'He's a fool who trusts to

luck, one should make certain,' and I want to try."

"To try his luck or the certainty?" Rostov asked himself.

"Well, you'd better not play," Dolokhov added, and springing a new pack

of cards said: "Bank, gentlemen!"

Moving the money forward he prepared to deal. Rostov sat down by his

side and at first did not play. Dolokhov kept glancing at him.

"Why don't you play?" he asked.

And strange to say Nicholas felt that he could not help taking up a

card, putting a small stake on it, and beginning to play.

"I have no money with me," he said.

"I'll trust you."

Rostov staked five rubles on a card and lost, staked again, and again

lost. Dolokhov "killed," that is, beat, ten cards of Rostov's running.

"Gentlemen," said Dolokhov after he had dealt for some time. "Please

place your money on the cards or I may get muddled in the reckoning."

One of the players said he hoped he might be trusted.

"Yes, you might, but I am afraid of getting the accounts mixed. So I ask

you to put the money on your cards," replied Dolokhov. "Don't stint

yourself, we'll settle afterwards," he added, turning to Rostov.

The game continued; a waiter kept handing round champagne.

All Rostov's cards were beaten and he had eight hundred rubles scored up

against him. He wrote "800 rubles" on a card, but while the waiter

filled his glass he changed his mind and altered it to his usual stake

of twenty rubles.

"Leave it," said Dolokhov, though he did not seem to be even looking at

Rostov, "you'll win it back all the sooner. I lose to the others but win

from you. Or are you afraid of me?" he asked again.

Rostov submitted. He let the eight hundred remain and laid down a seven

of hearts with a torn corner, which he had picked up from the floor. He

well remembered that seven afterwards. He laid down the seven of hearts,

on which with a broken bit of chalk he had written "800 rubles" in clear

upright figures; he emptied the glass of warm champagne that was handed

him, smiled at Dolokhov's words, and with a sinking heart, waiting for a

seven to turn up, gazed at Dolokhov's hands which held the pack. Much

depended on Rostov's winning or losing on that seven of hearts. On the

previous Sunday the old count had given his son two thousand rubles, and

though he always disliked speaking of money difficulties had told

Nicholas that this was all he could let him have till May, and asked him

to be more economical this time. Nicholas had replied that it would be

more than enough for him and that he gave his word of honor not to take

anything more till the spring. Now only twelve hundred rubles was left

of that money, so that this seven of hearts meant for him not only the

loss of sixteen hundred rubles, but the necessity of going back on his

word. With a sinking heart he watched Dolokhov's hands and thought, "Now

then, make haste and let me have this card and I'll take my cap and

drive home to supper with Denisov, Natasha, and Sonya, and will

certainly never touch a card again." At that moment his home life, jokes

with Petya, talks with Sonya, duets with Natasha, piquet with his

father, and even his comfortable bed in the house on the Povarskaya rose

before him with such vividness, clearness, and charm that it seemed as

if it were all a lost and unappreciated bliss, long past. He could not

conceive that a stupid chance, letting the seven be dealt to the right

rather than to the left, might deprive him of all this happiness, newly

appreciated and newly illumined, and plunge him into the depths of

unknown and undefined misery. That could not be, yet he awaited with a

sinking heart the movement of Dolokhov's hands. Those broad, reddish

hands, with hairy wrists visible from under the shirt cuffs, laid down

the pack and took up a glass and a pipe that were handed him.

"So you are not afraid to play with me?" repeated Dolokhov, and as if

about to tell a good story he put down the cards, leaned back in his

chair, and began deliberately with a smile:

"Yes, gentlemen, I've been told there's a rumor going about Moscow that

I'm a sharper, so I advise you to be careful."

"Come now, deal!" exclaimed Rostov.

"Oh, those Moscow gossips!" said Dolokhov, and he took up the cards with

a smile.

"Aah!" Rostov almost screamed lifting both hands to his head. The seven

he needed was lying uppermost, the first card in the pack. He had lost

more than he could pay.

"Still, don't ruin yourself!" said Dolokhov with a side glance at Rostov

as he continued to deal.

CHAPTER XIV

An hour and a half later most of the players were but little interested

in their own play.

The whole interest was concentrated on Rostov. Instead of sixteen

hundred rubles he had a long column of figures scored against him, which

he had reckoned up to ten thousand, but that now, as he vaguely

supposed, must have risen to fifteen thousand. In reality it already

exceeded twenty thousand rubles. Dolokhov was no longer listening to

stories or telling them, but followed every movement of Rostov's hands

and occasionally ran his eyes over the score against him. He had decided

to play until that score reached forty-three thousand. He had fixed on

that number because forty-three was the sum of his and Sonya's joint

ages. Rostov, leaning his head on both hands, sat at the table which was

scrawled over with figures, wet with spilled wine, and littered with

cards. One tormenting impression did not leave him: that those broad-

boned reddish hands with hairy wrists visible from under the shirt

sleeves, those hands which he loved and hated, held him in their power.

"Six hundred rubles, ace, a corner, a nine... winning it back's

impossible... Oh, how pleasant it was at home!... The knave, double or

quits... it can't be!... And why is he doing this to me?" Rostov

pondered. Sometimes he staked a large sum, but Dolokhov refused to

accept it and fixed the stake himself. Nicholas submitted to him, and at

one moment prayed to God as he had done on the battlefield at the bridge

over the Enns, and then guessed that the card that came first to hand

from the crumpled heap under the table would save him, now counted the

cords on his coat and took a card with that number and tried staking the

total of his losses on it, then he looked round for aid from the other

players, or peered at the now cold face of Dolokhov and tried to read

what was passing in his mind.

"He knows of course what this loss means to me. He can't want my ruin.

Wasn't he my friend? Wasn't I fond of him? But it's not his fault.

What's he to do if he has such luck?... And it's not my fault either,"

he thought to himself, "I have done nothing wrong. Have I killed anyone,

or insulted or wished harm to anyone? Why such a terrible misfortune?

And when did it begin? Such a little while ago I came to this table with

the thought of winning a hundred rubles to buy that casket for Mamma's

name day and then going home. I was so happy, so free, so lighthearted!

And I did not realize how happy I was! When did that end and when did

this new, terrible state of things begin? What marked the change? I sat

all the time in this same place at this table, chose and placed cards,

and watched those broad-boned agile hands in the same way. When did it

happen and what has happened? I am well and strong and still the same

and in the same place. No, it can't be! Surely it will all end in

nothing!"

He was flushed and bathed in perspiration, though the room was not hot.

His face was terrible and piteous to see, especially from its helpless

efforts to seem calm.

The score against him reached the fateful sum of forty-three thousand.

Rostov had just prepared a card, by bending the corner of which he meant

to double the three thousand just put down to his score, when Dolokhov,

slamming down the pack of cards, put it aside and began rapidly adding

up the total of Rostov's debt, breaking the chalk as he marked the

figures in his clear, bold hand.

"Supper, it's time for supper! And here are the gypsies!"

Some swarthy men and women were really entering from the cold outside

and saying something in their gypsy accents. Nicholas understood that it

was all over; but he said in an indifferent tone:

"Well, won't you go on? I had a splendid card all ready," as if it were

the fun of the game which interested him most.

"It's all up! I'm lost!" thought he. "Now a bullet through my brain--

that's all that's left me!" And at the same time he said in a cheerful

voice:

"Come now, just this one more little card!"

"All right!" said Dolokhov, having finished the addition. "All right!

Twenty-one rubles," he said, pointing to the figure twenty-one by which

the total exceeded the round sum of forty-three thousand; and taking up

a pack he prepared to deal. Rostov submissively unbent the corner of his

card and, instead of the six thousand he had intended, carefully wrote

twenty-one.

"It's all the same to me," he said. "I only want to see whether you will

let me win this ten, or beat it."

Dolokhov began to deal seriously. Oh, how Rostov detested at that moment

those hands with their short reddish fingers and hairy wrists, which

held him in their power.... The ten fell to him.

"You owe forty-three thousand, Count," said Dolokhov, and stretching

himself he rose from the table. "One does get tired sitting so long," he

added.

"Yes, I'm tired too," said Rostov.

Dolokhov cut him short, as if to remind him that it was not for him to

jest.

"When am I to receive the money, Count?"

Rostov, flushing, drew Dolokhov into the next room.

"I cannot pay it all immediately. Will you take an I.O.U.?" he said.

"I say, Rostov," said Dolokhov clearly, smiling and looking Nicholas

straight in the eyes, "you know the saying, 'Lucky in love, unlucky at

cards.' Your cousin is in love with you, I know."

"Oh, it's terrible to feel oneself so in this man's power," thought

Rostov. He knew what a shock he would inflict on his father and mother

by the news of this loss, he knew what a relief it would be to escape it

all, and felt that Dolokhov knew that he could save him from all this

shame and sorrow, but wanted now to play with him as a cat does with a

mouse.

"Your cousin..." Dolokhov started to say, but Nicholas interrupted him.

"My cousin has nothing to do with this and it's not necessary to mention

her!" he exclaimed fiercely.

"Then when am I to have it?"

"Tomorrow," replied Rostov and left the room.

CHAPTER XV

To say "tomorrow" and keep up a dignified tone was not difficult, but to

go home alone, see his sisters, brother, mother, and father, confess and

ask for money he had no right to after giving his word of honor, was

terrible.

At home, they had not yet gone to bed. The young people, after returning

from the theater, had had supper and were grouped round the clavichord.

As soon as Nicholas entered, he was enfolded in that poetic atmosphere

of love which pervaded the Rostov household that winter and, now after

Dolokhov's proposal and Iogel's ball, seemed to have grown thicker round

Sonya and Natasha as the air does before a thunderstorm. Sonya and

Natasha, in the light-blue dresses they had worn at the theater, looking

pretty and conscious of it, were standing by the clavichord, happy and

smiling. Vera was playing chess with Shinshin in the drawing room. The

old countess, waiting for the return of her husband and son, sat playing

patience with the old gentlewoman who lived in their house. Denisov,

with sparkling eyes and ruffled hair, sat at the clavichord striking

chords with his short fingers, his legs thrown back and his eyes rolling

as he sang, with his small, husky, but true voice, some verses called

"Enchantress," which he had composed, and to which he was trying to fit

music:

Enchantress, say, to my forsaken lyre What magic power is this recalls

me still? What spark has set my inmost soul on fire, What is this bliss

that makes my fingers thrill?

He was singing in passionate tones, gazing with his sparkling black-

agate eyes at the frightened and happy Natasha.

"Splendid! Excellent!" exclaimed Natasha. "Another verse," she said,

without noticing Nicholas.

"Everything's still the same with them," thought Nicholas, glancing into

the drawing room, where he saw Vera and his mother with the old lady.

"Ah, and here's Nicholas!" cried Natasha, running up to him.

"Is Papa at home?" he asked.

"I am so glad you've come!" said Natasha, without answering him. "We are

enjoying ourselves! Vasili Dmitrich is staying a day longer for my sake!

Did you know?"

"No, Papa is not back yet," said Sonya.

"Nicholas, have you come? Come here, dear!" called the old countess from

the drawing room.

Nicholas went to her, kissed her hand, and sitting down silently at her

table began to watch her hands arranging the cards. From the dancing

room, they still heard the laughter and merry voices trying to persuade

Natasha to sing.

"All wight! All wight!" shouted Denisov. "It's no good making excuses

now! It's your turn to sing the ba'cawolla--I entweat you!"

The countess glanced at her silent son.

"What is the matter?" she asked.

"Oh, nothing," said he, as if weary of being continually asked the same

question. "Will Papa be back soon?"

"I expect so."

"Everything's the same with them. They know nothing about it! Where am I

to go?" thought Nicholas, and went again into the dancing room where the

clavichord stood.

Sonya was sitting at the clavichord, playing the prelude to Denisov's

favorite barcarolle. Natasha was preparing to sing. Denisov was looking

at her with enraptured eyes.

Nicholas began pacing up and down the room.

"Why do they want to make her sing? How can she sing? There's nothing to

be happy about!" thought he.

Sonya struck the first chord of the prelude.

"My God, I'm a ruined and dishonored man! A bullet through my brain is

the only thing left me--not singing!" his thoughts ran on. "Go away? But

where to? It's one--let them sing!"

He continued to pace the room, looking gloomily at Denisov and the girls

and avoiding their eyes.

"Nikolenka, what is the matter?" Sonya's eyes fixed on him seemed to

ask. She noticed at once that something had happened to him.

Nicholas turned away from her. Natasha too, with her quick instinct, had

instantly noticed her brother's condition. But, though she noticed it,

she was herself in such high spirits at that moment, so far from sorrow,

sadness, or self-reproach, that she purposely deceived herself as young

people often do. "No, I am too happy now to spoil my enjoyment by

sympathy with anyone's sorrow," she felt, and she said to herself: "No,

I must be mistaken, he must be feeling happy, just as I am."

"Now, Sonya!" she said, going to the very middle of the room, where she

considered the resonance was best.

Having lifted her head and let her arms droop lifelessly, as ballet

dancers do, Natasha, rising energetically from her heels to her toes,

stepped to the middle of the room and stood still.

"Yes, that's me!" she seemed to say, answering the rapt gaze with which

Denisov followed her.

"And what is she so pleased about?" thought Nicholas, looking at his

sister. "Why isn't she dull and ashamed?"

Natasha took the first note, her throat swelled, her chest rose, her

eyes became serious. At that moment she was oblivious of her

surroundings, and from her smiling lips flowed sounds which anyone may

produce at the same intervals and hold for the same time, but which

leave you cold a thousand times and the thousand and first time thrill

you and make you weep.

Natasha, that winter, had for the first time begun to sing seriously,

mainly because Denisov so delighted in her singing. She no longer sang

as a child, there was no longer in her singing that comical, childish,

painstaking effect that had been in it before; but she did not yet sing

well, as all the connoisseurs who heard her said: "It is not trained,

but it is a beautiful voice that must be trained." Only they generally

said this some time after she had finished singing. While that untrained

voice, with its incorrect breathing and labored transitions, was

sounding, even the connoisseurs said nothing, but only delighted in it

and wished to hear it again. In her voice there was a virginal

freshness, an unconsciousness of her own powers, and an as yet untrained

velvety softness, which so mingled with her lack of art in singing that

it seemed as if nothing in that voice could be altered without spoiling

it.

"What is this?" thought Nicholas, listening to her with widely opened

eyes. "What has happened to her? How she is singing today!" And suddenly

the whole world centered for him on anticipation of the next note, the

next phrase, and everything in the world was divided into three beats:

"Oh mio crudele affetto."... One, two, three... one, two, three...

One... "Oh mio crudele affetto."... One, two, three... One. "Oh, this

senseless life of ours!" thought Nicholas. "All this misery, and money,

and Dolokhov, and anger, and honor--it's all nonsense... but this is

real.... Now then, Natasha, now then, dearest! Now then, darling! How

will she take that si? She's taken it! Thank God!" And without noticing

that he was singing, to strengthen the si he sung a second, a third

below the high note. "Ah, God! How fine! Did I really take it? How

fortunate!" he thought.

Oh, how that chord vibrated, and how moved was something that was finest

in Rostov's soul! And this something was apart from everything else in

the world and above everything in the world. "What were losses, and

Dolokhov, and words of honor?... All nonsense! One might kill and rob

and yet be happy..."

CHAPTER XVI

It was long since Rostov had felt such enjoyment from music as he did

that day. But no sooner had Natasha finished her barcarolle than reality

again presented itself. He got up without saying a word and went

downstairs to his own room. A quarter of an hour later the old count

came in from his club, cheerful and contented. Nicholas, hearing him

drive up, went to meet him.

"Well--had a good time?" said the old count, smiling gaily and proudly

at his son.

Nicholas tried to say "Yes," but could not: and he nearly burst into

sobs. The count was lighting his pipe and did not notice his son's

condition.

"Ah, it can't be avoided!" thought Nicholas, for the first and last

time. And suddenly, in the most casual tone, which made him feel ashamed

of himself, he said, as if merely asking his father to let him have the

carriage to drive to town:

"Papa, I have come on a matter of business. I was nearly forgetting. I

need some money."

"Dear me!" said his father, who was in a specially good humor. "I told

you it would not be enough. How much?"

"Very much," said Nicholas flushing, and with a stupid careless smile,

for which he was long unable to forgive himself, "I have lost a little,

I mean a good deal, a great deal--forty three thousand."

"What! To whom?... Nonsense!" cried the count, suddenly reddening with

an apoplectic flush over neck and nape as old people do.

"I promised to pay tomorrow," said Nicholas.

"Well!..." said the old count, spreading out his arms and sinking

helplessly on the sofa.

"It can't be helped It happens to everyone!" said the son, with a bold,

free, and easy tone, while in his soul he regarded himself as a

worthless scoundrel whose whole life could not atone for his crime. He

longed to kiss his father's hands and kneel to beg his forgiveness, but

said, in a careless and even rude voice, that it happens to everyone!

The old count cast down his eyes on hearing his son's words and began

bustlingly searching for something.

"Yes, yes," he muttered, "it will be difficult, I fear, difficult to

raise... happens to everybody! Yes, who has not done it?"

And with a furtive glance at his son's face, the count went out of the

room.... Nicholas had been prepared for resistance, but had not at all

expected this.

"Papa! Pa-pa!" he called after him, sobbing, "forgive me!" And seizing

his father's hand, he pressed it to his lips and burst into tears.

While father and son were having their explanation, the mother and

daughter were having one not less important. Natasha came running to her

mother, quite excited.

"Mamma!... Mamma!... He has made me..."

"Made what?"

"Made, made me an offer, Mamma! Mamma!" she exclaimed.

The countess did not believe her ears. Denisov had proposed. To whom? To

this chit of a girl, Natasha, who not so long ago was playing with dolls

and who was still having lessons.

"Don't, Natasha! What nonsense!" she said, hoping it was a joke.

"Nonsense, indeed! I am telling you the fact," said Natasha indignantly.

"I come to ask you what to do, and you call it 'nonsense!'"

The countess shrugged her shoulders.

"If it is true that Monsieur Denisov has made you a proposal, tell him

he is a fool, that's all!"

"No, he's not a fool!" replied Natasha indignantly and seriously.

"Well then, what do you want? You're all in love nowadays. Well, if you

are in love, marry him!" said the countess, with a laugh of annoyance.

"Good luck to you!"

"No, Mamma, I'm not in love with him, I suppose I'm not in love with

him."

"Well then, tell him so."

"Mamma, are you cross? Don't be cross, dear! Is it my fault?"

"No, but what is it, my dear? Do you want me to go and tell him?" said

the countess smiling.

"No, I will do it myself, only tell me what to say. It's all very well

for you," said Natasha, with a responsive smile. "You should have seen

how he said it! I know he did not mean to say it, but it came out

accidently."

"Well, all the same, you must refuse him."

"No, I mustn't. I am so sorry for him! He's so nice."

"Well then, accept his offer. It's high time for you to be married,"

answered the countess sharply and sarcastically.

"No, Mamma, but I'm so sorry for him. I don't know how I'm to say it."

"And there's nothing for you to say. I shall speak to him myself," said

the countess, indignant that they should have dared to treat this little

Natasha as grown up.

"No, not on any account! I will tell him myself, and you'll listen at

the door," and Natasha ran across the drawing room to the dancing hall,

where Denisov was sitting on the same chair by the clavichord with his

face in his hands.

He jumped up at the sound of her light step.

"Nataly," he said, moving with rapid steps toward her, "decide my fate.

It is in your hands."

"Vasili Dmitrich, I'm so sorry for you!... No, but you are so nice...

but it won't do...not that... but as a friend, I shall always love you."

Denisov bent over her hand and she heard strange sounds she did not

understand. She kissed his rough curly black head. At this instant, they

heard the quick rustle of the countess' dress. She came up to them.

"Vasili Dmitrich, I thank you for the honor," she said, with an

embarrassed voice, though it sounded severe to Denisov--"but my daughter

is so young, and I thought that, as my son's friend, you would have

addressed yourself first to me. In that case you would not have obliged

me to give this refusal."

"Countess..." said Denisov, with downcast eyes and a guilty face. He

tried to say more, but faltered.

Natasha could not remain calm, seeing him in such a plight. She began to

sob aloud.

"Countess, I have done w'ong," Denisov went on in an unsteady voice,

"but believe me, I so adore your daughter and all your family that I

would give my life twice over..." He looked at the countess, and seeing

her severe face said: "Well, good-by, Countess," and kissing her hand,

he left the room with quick resolute strides, without looking at

Natasha.

Next day Rostov saw Denisov off. He did not wish to stay another day in

Moscow. All Denisov's Moscow friends gave him a farewell entertainment

at the gypsies', with the result that he had no recollection of how he

was put in the sleigh or of the first three stages of his journey.

After Denisov's departure, Rostov spent another fortnight in Moscow,

without going out of the house, waiting for the money his father could

not at once raise, and he spent most of his time in the girls' room.

Sonya was more tender and devoted to him than ever. It was as if she

wanted to show him that his losses were an achievement that made her

love him all the more, but Nicholas now considered himself unworthy of

her.

He filled the girls' albums with verses and music, and having at last

sent Dolokhov the whole forty-three thousand rubles and received his

receipt, he left at the end of November, without taking leave of any of

his acquaintances, to overtake his regiment which was already in Poland.

BOOK FIVE: 1806 - 07

CHAPTER I

After his interview with his wife Pierre left for Petersburg. At the

Torzhok post station, either there were no horses or the postmaster

would not supply them. Pierre was obliged to wait. Without undressing,

he lay down on the leather sofa in front of a round table, put his big

feet in their overboots on the table, and began to reflect.

"Will you have the portmanteaus brought in? And a bed got ready, and

tea?" asked his valet.

Pierre gave no answer, for he neither heard nor saw anything. He had

begun to think of the last station and was still pondering on the same

question--one so important that he took no notice of what went on around

him. Not only was he indifferent as to whether he got to Petersburg

earlier or later, or whether he secured accommodation at this station,

but compared to the thoughts that now occupied him it was a matter of

indifference whether he remained there for a few hours or for the rest

of his life.

The postmaster, his wife, the valet, and a peasant woman selling Torzhok

embroidery came into the room offering their services. Without changing

his careless attitude, Pierre looked at them over his spectacles unable

to understand what they wanted or how they could go on living without

having solved the problems that so absorbed him. He had been engrossed

by the same thoughts ever since the day he returned from Sokolniki after

the duel and had spent that first agonizing, sleepless night. But now,

in the solitude of the journey, they seized him with special force. No

matter what he thought about, he always returned to these same questions

which he could not solve and yet could not cease to ask himself. It was

as if the thread of the chief screw which held his life together were

stripped, so that the screw could not get in or out, but went on turning

uselessly in the same place.

The postmaster came in and began obsequiously to beg his excellency to

wait only two hours, when, come what might, he would let his excellency

have the courier horses. It was plain that he was lying and only wanted

to get more money from the traveler.

"Is this good or bad?" Pierre asked himself. "It is good for me, bad for

another traveler, and for himself it's unavoidable, because he needs

money for food; the man said an officer had once given him a thrashing

for letting a private traveler have the courier horses. But the officer

thrashed him because he had to get on as quickly as possible. And I,"

continued Pierre, "shot Dolokhov because I considered myself injured,

and Louis XVI was executed because they considered him a criminal, and a

year later they executed those who executed him--also for some reason.

What is bad? What is good? What should one love and what hate? What does

one live for? And what am I? What is life, and what is death? What power

governs all?"

There was no answer to any of these questions, except one, and that not

a logical answer and not at all a reply to them. The answer was: "You'll

die and all will end. You'll die and know all, or cease asking." But

dying was also dreadful.

The Torzhok peddler woman, in a whining voice, went on offering her

wares, especially a pair of goatskin slippers. "I have hundreds of

rubles I don't know what to do with, and she stands in her tattered

cloak looking timidly at me," he thought. "And what does she want the

money for? As if that money could add a hair's breadth to happiness or

peace of mind. Can anything in the world make her or me less a prey to

evil and death?--death which ends all and must come today or tomorrow--

at any rate, in an instant as compared with eternity." And again he

twisted the screw with the stripped thread, and again it turned

uselessly in the same place.

His servant handed him a half-cut novel, in the form of letters, by

Madame de Souza. He began reading about the sufferings and virtuous

struggles of a certain Emilie de Mansfeld. "And why did she resist her

seducer when she loved him?" he thought. "God could not have put into

her heart an impulse that was against His will. My wife--as she once

was--did not struggle, and perhaps she was right. Nothing has been found

out, nothing discovered," Pierre again said to himself. "All we can know

is that we know nothing. And that's the height of human wisdom."

Everything within and around him seemed confused, senseless, and

repellent. Yet in this very repugnance to all his circumstances Pierre

found a kind of tantalizing satisfaction.

"I make bold to ask your excellency to move a little for this

gentleman," said the postmaster, entering the room followed by another

traveler, also detained for lack of horses.

The newcomer was a short, large-boned, yellow-faced, wrinkled old man,

with gray bushy eyebrows overhanging bright eyes of an indefinite

grayish color.

Pierre took his feet off the table, stood up, and lay down on a bed that

had been got ready for him, glancing now and then at the newcomer, who,

with a gloomy and tired face, was wearily taking off his wraps with the

aid of his servant, and not looking at Pierre. With a pair of felt boots

on his thin bony legs, and keeping on a worn, nankeen-covered, sheepskin

coat, the traveler sat down on the sofa, leaned back his big head with

its broad temples and close-cropped hair, and looked at Bezukhov. The

stern, shrewd, and penetrating expression of that look struck Pierre. He

felt a wish to speak to the stranger, but by the time he had made up his

mind to ask him a question about the roads, the traveler had closed his

eyes. His shriveled old hands were folded and on the finger of one of

them Pierre noticed a large cast iron ring with a seal representing a

death's head. The stranger sat without stirring, either resting or, as

it seemed to Pierre, sunk in profound and calm meditation. His servant

was also a yellow, wrinkled old man, without beard or mustache,

evidently not because he was shaven but because they had never grown.

This active old servant was unpacking the traveler's canteen and

preparing tea. He brought in a boiling samovar. When everything was

ready, the stranger opened his eyes, moved to the table, filled a

tumbler with tea for himself and one for the beardless old man to whom

he passed it. Pierre began to feel a sense of uneasiness, and the need,

even the inevitability, of entering into conversation with this

stranger.

The servant brought back his tumbler turned upside down, \* with an

unfinished bit of nibbled sugar, and asked if anything more would be

wanted.

\* To indicate he did not want more tea.

"No. Give me the book," said the stranger.

The servant handed him a book which Pierre took to be a devotional work,

and the traveler became absorbed in it. Pierre looked at him. All at

once the stranger closed the book, putting in a marker, and again,

leaning with his arms on the back of the sofa, sat in his former

position with his eyes shut. Pierre looked at him and had not time to

turn away when the old man, opening his eyes, fixed his steady and

severe gaze straight on Pierre's face.

Pierre felt confused and wished to avoid that look, but the bright old

eyes attracted him irresistibly.

CHAPTER II

"I have the pleasure of addressing Count Bezukhov, if I am not

mistaken," said the stranger in a deliberate and loud voice.

Pierre looked silently and inquiringly at him over his spectacles.

"I have heard of you, my dear sir," continued the stranger, "and of your

misfortune." He seemed to emphasize the last word, as if to say--"Yes,

misfortune! Call it what you please, I know that what happened to you in

Moscow was a misfortune."--"I regret it very much, my dear sir."

Pierre flushed and, hurriedly putting his legs down from the bed, bent

forward toward the old man with a forced and timid smile.

"I have not referred to this out of curiosity, my dear sir, but for

greater reasons."

He paused, his gaze still on Pierre, and moved aside on the sofa by way

of inviting the other to take a seat beside him. Pierre felt reluctant

to enter into conversation with this old man, but, submitting to him

involuntarily, came up and sat down beside him.

"You are unhappy, my dear sir," the stranger continued. "You are young

and I am old. I should like to help you as far as lies in my power."

"Oh, yes!" said Pierre, with a forced smile. "I am very grateful to you.

Where are you traveling from?"

The stranger's face was not genial, it was even cold and severe, but in

spite of this, both the face and words of his new acquaintance were

irresistibly attractive to Pierre.

"But if for reason you don't feel inclined to talk to me," said the old

man, "say so, my dear sir." And he suddenly smiled, in an unexpected and

tenderly paternal way.

"Oh no, not at all! On the contrary, I am very glad to make your

acquaintance," said Pierre. And again, glancing at the stranger's hands,

he looked more closely at the ring, with its skull--a masonic sign.

"Allow me to ask," he said, "are you a Mason?"

"Yes, I belong to the Brotherhood of the Freemasons," said the stranger,

looking deeper and deeper into Pierre's eyes. "And in their name and my

own I hold out a brotherly hand to you."

"I am afraid," said Pierre, smiling, and wavering between the confidence

the personality of the Freemason inspired in him and his own habit of

ridiculing the masonic beliefs--"I am afraid I am very far from

understanding--how am I to put it?--I am afraid my way of looking at the

world is so opposed to yours that we shall not understand one another."

"I know your outlook," said the Mason, "and the view of life you

mention, and which you think is the result of your own mental efforts,

is the one held by the majority of people, and is the invariable fruit

of pride, indolence, and ignorance. Forgive me, my dear sir, but if I

had not known it I should not have addressed you. Your view of life is a

regrettable delusion."

"Just as I may suppose you to be deluded," said Pierre, with a faint

smile.

"I should never dare to say that I know the truth," said the Mason,

whose words struck Pierre more and more by their precision and firmness.

"No one can attain to truth by himself. Only by laying stone on stone

with the cooperation of all, by the millions of generations from our

forefather Adam to our own times, is that temple reared which is to be a

worthy dwelling place of the Great God," he added, and closed his eyes.

"I ought to tell you that I do not believe... do not believe in God,"

said Pierre, regretfully and with an effort, feeling it essential to

speak the whole truth.

The Mason looked intently at Pierre and smiled as a rich man with

millions in hand might smile at a poor fellow who told him that he, poor

man, had not the five rubles that would make him happy.

"Yes, you do not know Him, my dear sir," said the Mason. "You cannot

know Him. You do not know Him and that is why you are unhappy."

"Yes, yes, I am unhappy," assented Pierre. "But what am I to do?"

"You know Him not, my dear sir, and so you are very unhappy. You do not

know Him, but He is here, He is in me, He is in my words, He is in thee,

and even in those blasphemous words thou hast just uttered!" pronounced

the Mason in a stern and tremulous voice.

He paused and sighed, evidently trying to calm himself.

"If He were not," he said quietly, "you and I would not be speaking of

Him, my dear sir. Of what, of whom, are we speaking? Whom hast thou

denied?" he suddenly asked with exulting austerity and authority in his

voice. "Who invented Him, if He did not exist? Whence came thy

conception of the existence of such an incomprehensible Being? didst

thou, and why did the whole world, conceive the idea of the existence of

such an incomprehensible Being, a Being all-powerful, eternal, and

infinite in all His attributes?..."

He stopped and remained silent for a long time.

Pierre could not and did not wish to break this silence.

"He exists, but to understand Him is hard," the Mason began again,

looking not at Pierre but straight before him, and turning the leaves of

his book with his old hands which from excitement he could not keep

still. "If it were a man whose existence thou didst doubt I could bring

him to thee, could take him by the hand and show him to thee. But how

can I, an insignificant mortal, show His omnipotence, His infinity, and

all His mercy to one who is blind, or who shuts his eyes that he may not

see or understand Him and may not see or understand his own vileness and

sinfulness?" He paused again. "Who art thou? Thou dreamest that thou art

wise because thou couldst utter those blasphemous words," he went on,

with a somber and scornful smile. "And thou art more foolish and

unreasonable than a little child, who, playing with the parts of a

skillfully made watch, dares to say that, as he does not understand its

use, he does not believe in the master who made it. To know Him is

hard.... For ages, from our forefather Adam to our own day, we labor to

attain that knowledge and are still infinitely far from our aim; but in

our lack of understanding we see only our weakness and His

greatness...."

Pierre listened with swelling heart, gazing into the Mason's face with

shining eyes, not interrupting or questioning him, but believing with

his whole soul what the stranger said. Whether he accepted the wise

reasoning contained in the Mason's words, or believed as a child

believes, in the speaker's tone of conviction and earnestness, or the

tremor of the speaker's voice--which sometimes almost broke--or those

brilliant aged eyes grown old in this conviction, or the calm firmness

and certainty of his vocation, which radiated from his whole being (and

which struck Pierre especially by contrast with his own dejection and

hopelessness)--at any rate, Pierre longed with his whole soul to believe

and he did believe, and felt a joyful sense of comfort, regeneration,

and return to life.

"He is not to be apprehended by reason, but by life," said the Mason.

"I do not understand," said Pierre, feeling with dismay doubts

reawakening. He was afraid of any want of clearness, any weakness, in

the Mason's arguments; he dreaded not to be able to believe in him. "I

don't understand," he said, "how it is that the mind of man cannot

attain the knowledge of which you speak."

The Mason smiled with his gentle fatherly smile.

"The highest wisdom and truth are like the purest liquid we may wish to

imbibe," he said. "Can I receive that pure liquid into an impure vessel

and judge of its purity? Only by the inner purification of myself can I

retain in some degree of purity the liquid I receive."

"Yes, yes, that is so," said Pierre joyfully.

"The highest wisdom is not founded on reason alone, not on those worldly

sciences of physics, history, chemistry, and the like, into which

intellectual knowledge is divided. The highest wisdom is one. The

highest wisdom has but one science--the science of the whole--the

science explaining the whole creation and man's place in it. To receive

that science it is necessary to purify and renew one's inner self, and

so before one can know, it is necessary to believe and to perfect one's

self. And to attain this end, we have the light called conscience that

God has implanted in our souls."

"Yes, yes," assented Pierre.

"Look then at thy inner self with the eyes of the spirit, and ask

thyself whether thou art content with thyself. What hast thou attained

relying on reason only? What art thou? You are young, you are rich, you

are clever, you are well educated. And what have you done with all these

good gifts? Are you content with yourself and with your life?"

"No, I hate my life," Pierre muttered, wincing.

"Thou hatest it. Then change it, purify thyself; and as thou art

purified, thou wilt gain wisdom. Look at your life, my dear sir. How

have you spent it? In riotous orgies and debauchery, receiving

everything from society and giving nothing in return. You have become

the possessor of wealth. How have you used it? What have you done for

your neighbor? Have you ever thought of your tens of thousands of

slaves? Have you helped them physically and morally? No! You have

profited by their toil to lead a profligate life. That is what you have

done. Have you chosen a post in which you might be of service to your

neighbor? No! You have spent your life in idleness. Then you married, my

dear sir--took on yourself responsibility for the guidance of a young

woman; and what have you done? You have not helped her to find the way

of truth, my dear sir, but have thrust her into an abyss of deceit and

misery. A man offended you and you shot him, and you say you do not know

God and hate your life. There is nothing strange in that, my dear sir!"

After these words, the Mason, as if tired by his long discourse, again

leaned his arms on the back of the sofa and closed his eyes. Pierre

looked at that aged, stern, motionless, almost lifeless face and moved

his lips without uttering a sound. He wished to say, "Yes, a vile, idle,

vicious life!" but dared not break the silence.

The Mason cleared his throat huskily, as old men do, and called his

servant.

"How about the horses?" he asked, without looking at Pierre.

"The exchange horses have just come," answered the servant. "Will you

not rest here?"

"No, tell them to harness."

"Can he really be going away leaving me alone without having told me

all, and without promising to help me?" thought Pierre, rising with

downcast head; and he began to pace the room, glancing occasionally at

the Mason. "Yes, I never thought of it, but I have led a contemptible

and profligate life, though I did not like it and did not want to,"

thought Pierre. "But this man knows the truth and, if he wished to,

could disclose it to me."

Pierre wished to say this to the Mason, but did not dare to. The

traveler, having packed his things with his practiced hands, began

fastening his coat. When he had finished, he turned to Bezukhov, and

said in a tone of indifferent politeness:

"Where are you going to now, my dear sir?"

"I?... I'm going to Petersburg," answered Pierre, in a childlike,

hesitating voice. "I thank you. I agree with all you have said. But do

not suppose me to be so bad. With my whole soul I wish to be what you

would have me be, but I have never had help from anyone.... But it is I,

above all, who am to blame for everything. Help me, teach me, and

perhaps I may..."

Pierre could not go on. He gulped and turned away.

The Mason remained silent for a long time, evidently considering.

"Help comes from God alone," he said, "but such measure of help as our

Order can bestow it will render you, my dear sir. You are going to

Petersburg. Hand this to Count Willarski" (he took out his notebook and

wrote a few words on a large sheet of paper folded in four). "Allow me

to give you a piece of advice. When you reach the capital, first of all

devote some time to solitude and self-examination and do not resume your

former way of life. And now I wish you a good journey, my dear sir," he

added, seeing that his servant had entered... "and success."

The traveler was Joseph Alexeevich Bazdeev, as Pierre saw from the

postmaster's book. Bazdeev had been one of the best-known Freemasons and

Martinists, even in Novikov's time. For a long while after he had gone,

Pierre did not go to bed or order horses but paced up and down the room,

pondering over his vicious past, and with a rapturous sense of beginning

anew pictured to himself the blissful, irreproachable, virtuous future

that seemed to him so easy. It seemed to him that he had been vicious

only because he had somehow forgotten how good it is to be virtuous. Not

a trace of his former doubts remained in his soul. He firmly believed in

the possibility of the brotherhood of men united in the aim of

supporting one another in the path of virtue, and that is how

Freemasonry presented itself to him.

CHAPTER III

On reaching Petersburg Pierre did not let anyone know of his arrival, he

went nowhere and spent whole days in reading Thomas a Kempis, whose book

had been sent him by someone unknown. One thing he continually realized

as he read that book: the joy, hitherto unknown to him, of believing in

the possibility of attaining perfection, and in the possibility of

active brotherly love among men, which Joseph Alexeevich had revealed to

him. A week after his arrival, the young Polish count, Willarski, whom

Pierre had known slightly in Petersburg society, came into his room one

evening in the official and ceremonious manner in which Dolokhov's

second had called on him, and, having closed the door behind him and

satisfied himself that there was nobody else in the room, addressed

Pierre.

"I have come to you with a message and an offer, Count," he said without

sitting down. "A person of very high standing in our Brotherhood has

made application for you to be received into our Order before the usual

term and has proposed to me to be your sponsor. I consider it a sacred

duty to fulfill that person's wishes. Do you wish to enter the

Brotherhood of Freemasons under my sponsorship?"

The cold, austere tone of this man, whom he had almost always before met

at balls, amiably smiling in the society of the most brilliant women,

surprised Pierre.

"Yes, I do wish it," said he.

Willarski bowed his head.

"One more question, Count," he said, "which I beg you to answer in all

sincerity--not as a future Mason but as an honest man: have you

renounced your former convictions--do you believe in God?"

Pierre considered.

"Yes... yes, I believe in God," he said.

"In that case..." began Willarski, but Pierre interrupted him.

"Yes, I do believe in God," he repeated.

"In that case we can go," said Willarski. "My carriage is at your

service."

Willarski was silent throughout the drive. To Pierre's inquiries as to

what he must do and how he should answer, Willarski only replied that

brothers more worthy than he would test him and that Pierre had only to

tell the truth.

Having entered the courtyard of a large house where the Lodge had its

headquarters, and having ascended a dark staircase, they entered a small

well-lit anteroom where they took off their cloaks without the aid of a

servant. From there they passed into another room. A man in strange

attire appeared at the door. Willarski, stepping toward him, said

something to him in French in an undertone and then went up to a small

wardrobe in which Pierre noticed garments such as he had never seen

before. Having taken a kerchief from the cupboard, Willarski bound

Pierre's eyes with it and tied it in a knot behind, catching some hairs

painfully in the knot. Then he drew his face down, kissed him, and

taking him by the hand led him forward. The hairs tied in the knot hurt

Pierre and there were lines of pain on his face and a shamefaced smile.

His huge figure, with arms hanging down and with a puckered, though

smiling face, moved after Willarski with uncertain, timid steps.

Having led him about ten paces, Willarski stopped.

"Whatever happens to you," he said, "you must bear it all manfully if

you have firmly resolved to join our Brotherhood." (Pierre nodded

affirmatively.) "When you hear a knock at the door, you will uncover

your eyes," added Willarski. "I wish you courage and success," and,

pressing Pierre's hand, he went out.

Left alone, Pierre went on smiling in the same way. Once or twice he

shrugged his shoulders and raised his hand to the kerchief, as if

wishing to take it off, but let it drop again. The five minutes spent

with his eyes bandaged seemed to him an hour. His arms felt numb, his

legs almost gave way, it seemed to him that he was tired out. He

experienced a variety of most complex sensations. He felt afraid of what

would happen to him and still more afraid of showing his fear. He felt

curious to know what was going to happen and what would be revealed to

him; but most of all, he felt joyful that the moment had come when he

would at last start on that path of regeneration and on the actively

virtuous life of which he had been dreaming since he met Joseph

Alexeevich. Loud knocks were heard at the door. Pierre took the bandage

off his eyes and glanced around him. The room was in black darkness,

only a small lamp was burning inside something white. Pierre went nearer

and saw that the lamp stood on a black table on which lay an open book.

The book was the Gospel, and the white thing with the lamp inside was a

human skull with its cavities and teeth. After reading the first words

of the Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with

God," Pierre went round the table and saw a large open box filled with

something. It was a coffin with bones inside. He was not at all

surprised by what he saw. Hoping to enter on an entirely new life quite

unlike the old one, he expected everything to be unusual, even more

unusual than what he was seeing. A skull, a coffin, the Gospel--it

seemed to him that he had expected all this and even more. Trying to

stimulate his emotions he looked around. "God, death, love, the

brotherhood of man," he kept saying to himself, associating these words

with vague yet joyful ideas. The door opened and someone came in.

By the dim light, to which Pierre had already become accustomed, he saw

a rather short man. Having evidently come from the light into the

darkness, the man paused, then moved with cautious steps toward the

table and placed on it his small leather-gloved hands.

This short man had on a white leather apron which covered his chest and

part of his legs; he had on a kind of necklace above which rose a high

white ruffle, outlining his rather long face which was lit up from

below.

"For what have you come hither?" asked the newcomer, turning in Pierre's

direction at a slight rustle made by the latter. "Why have you, who do

not believe in the truth of the light and who have not seen the light,

come here? What do you seek from us? Wisdom, virtue, enlightenment?"

At the moment the door opened and the stranger came in, Pierre felt a

sense of awe and veneration such as he had experienced in his boyhood at

confession; he felt himself in the presence of one socially a complete

stranger, yet nearer to him through the brotherhood of man. With bated

breath and beating heart he moved toward the Rhetor (by which name the

brother who prepared a seeker for entrance into the Brotherhood was

known). Drawing nearer, he recognized in the Rhetor a man he knew,

Smolyaninov, and it mortified him to think that the newcomer was an

acquaintance--he wished him simply a brother and a virtuous instructor.

For a long time he could not utter a word, so that the Rhetor had to

repeat his question.

"Yes... I... I... desire regeneration," Pierre uttered with difficulty.

"Very well," said Smolyaninov, and went on at once: "Have you any idea

of the means by which our holy Order will help you to reach your aim?"

said he quietly and quickly.

"I... hope... for guidance... help... in regeneration," said Pierre,

with a trembling voice and some difficulty in utterance due to his

excitement and to being unaccustomed to speak of abstract matters in

Russian.

"What is your conception of Freemasonry?"

"I imagine that Freemasonry is the fraternity and equality of men who

have virtuous aims," said Pierre, feeling ashamed of the inadequacy of

his words for the solemnity of the moment, as he spoke. "I imagine..."

"Good!" said the Rhetor quickly, apparently satisfied with this answer.

"Have you sought for means of attaining your aim in religion?"

"No, I considered it erroneous and did not follow it," said Pierre, so

softly that the Rhetor did not hear him and asked him what he was

saying. "I have been an atheist," answered Pierre.

"You are seeking for truth in order to follow its laws in your life,

therefore you seek wisdom and virtue. Is that not so?" said the Rhetor,

after a moment's pause.

"Yes, yes," assented Pierre.

The Rhetor cleared his throat, crossed his gloved hands on his breast,

and began to speak.

"Now I must disclose to you the chief aim of our Order," he said, "and

if this aim coincides with yours, you may enter our Brotherhood with

profit. The first and chief object of our Order, the foundation on which

it rests and which no human power can destroy, is the preservation and

handing on to posterity of a certain important mystery... which has come

down to us from the remotest ages, even from the first man--a mystery on

which perhaps the fate of mankind depends. But since this mystery is of

such a nature that nobody can know or use it unless he be prepared by

long and diligent self-purification, not everyone can hope to attain it

quickly. Hence we have a secondary aim, that of preparing our members as

much as possible to reform their hearts, to purify and enlighten their

minds, by means handed on to us by tradition from those who have striven

to attain this mystery, and thereby to render them capable of receiving

it.

"By purifying and regenerating our members we try, thirdly, to improve

the whole human race, offering it in our members an example of piety and

virtue, and thereby try with all our might to combat the evil which

sways the world. Think this over and I will come to you again."

"To combat the evil which sways the world..." Pierre repeated, and a

mental image of his future activity in this direction rose in his mind.

He imagined men such as he had himself been a fortnight ago, and he

addressed an edifying exhortation to them. He imagined to himself

vicious and unfortunate people whom he would assist by word and deed,

imagined oppressors whose victims he would rescue. Of the three objects

mentioned by the Rhetor, this last, that of improving mankind,

especially appealed to Pierre. The important mystery mentioned by the

Rhetor, though it aroused his curiosity, did not seem to him essential,

and the second aim, that of purifying and regenerating himself, did not

much interest him because at that moment he felt with delight that he

was already perfectly cured of his former faults and was ready for all

that was good.

Half an hour later, the Rhetor returned to inform the seeker of the

seven virtues, corresponding to the seven steps of Solomon's temple,

which every Freemason should cultivate in himself. These virtues were:

1. Discretion, the keeping of the secrets of the Order. 2. Obedience to

those of higher ranks in the Order. 3. Morality. 4. Love of mankind. 5.

Courage. 6. Generosity. 7. The love of death.

"In the seventh place, try, by the frequent thought of death," the

Rhetor said, "to bring yourself to regard it not as a dreaded foe, but

as a friend that frees the soul grown weary in the labors of virtue from

this distressful life, and leads it to its place of recompense and

peace."

"Yes, that must be so," thought Pierre, when after these words the

Rhetor went away, leaving him to solitary meditation. "It must be so,

but I am still so weak that I love my life, the meaning of which is only

now gradually opening before me." But five of the other virtues which

Pierre recalled, counting them on his fingers, he felt already in his

soul: courage, generosity, morality, love of mankind, and especially

obedience--which did not even seem to him a virtue, but a joy. (He now

felt so glad to be free from his own lawlessness and to submit his will

to those who knew the indubitable truth.) He forgot what the seventh

virtue was and could not recall it.

The third time the Rhetor came back more quickly and asked Pierre

whether he was still firm in his intention and determined to submit to

all that would be required of him.

"I am ready for everything," said Pierre.

"I must also inform you," said the Rhetor, "that our Order delivers its

teaching not in words only but also by other means, which may perhaps

have a stronger effect on the sincere seeker after wisdom and virtue

than mere words. This chamber with what you see therein should already

have suggested to your heart, if it is sincere, more than words could

do. You will perhaps also see in your further initiation a like method

of enlightenment. Our Order imitates the ancient societies that

explained their teaching by hieroglyphics. A hieroglyph," said the

Rhetor, "is an emblem of something not cognizable by the senses but

which possesses qualities resembling those of the symbol."

Pierre knew very well what a hieroglyph was, but dared not speak. He

listened to the Rhetor in silence, feeling from all he said that his

ordeal was about to begin.

"If you are resolved, I must begin your initiation," said the Rhetor

coming closer to Pierre. "In token of generosity I ask you to give me

all your valuables."

"But I have nothing here," replied Pierre, supposing that he was asked

to give up all he possessed.

"What you have with you: watch, money, rings...."

Pierre quickly took out his purse and watch, but could not manage for

some time to get the wedding ring off his fat finger. When that had been

done, the Rhetor said:

"In token of obedience, I ask you to undress."

Pierre took off his coat, waistcoat, and left boot according to the

Rhetor's instructions. The Mason drew the shirt back from Pierre's left

breast, and stooping down pulled up the left leg of his trousers to

above the knee. Pierre hurriedly began taking off his right boot also

and was going to tuck up the other trouser leg to save this stranger the

trouble, but the Mason told him that was not necessary and gave him a

slipper for his left foot. With a childlike smile of embarrassment,

doubt, and self-derision, which appeared on his face against his will,

Pierre stood with his arms hanging down and legs apart, before his

brother Rhetor, and awaited his further commands.

"And now, in token of candor, I ask you to reveal to me your chief

passion," said the latter.

"My passion! I have had so many," replied Pierre.

"That passion which more than all others caused you to waver on the path

of virtue," said the Mason.

Pierre paused, seeking a reply.

"Wine? Gluttony? Idleness? Laziness? Irritability? Anger? Women?" He

went over his vices in his mind, not knowing to which of them to give

the pre-eminence.

"Women," he said in a low, scarcely audible voice.

The Mason did not move and for a long time said nothing after this

answer. At last he moved up to Pierre and, taking the kerchief that lay

on the table, again bound his eyes.

"For the last time I say to you--turn all your attention upon yourself,

put a bridle on your senses, and seek blessedness, not in passion but in

your own heart. The source of blessedness is not without us but

within...."

Pierre had already long been feeling in himself that refreshing source

of blessedness which now flooded his heart with glad emotion.

CHAPTER IV

Soon after this there came into the dark chamber to fetch Pierre, not

the Rhetor but Pierre's sponsor, Willarski, whom he recognized by his

voice. To fresh questions as to the firmness of his resolution Pierre

replied: "Yes, yes, I agree," and with a beaming, childlike smile, his

fat chest uncovered, stepping unevenly and timidly in one slippered and

one booted foot, he advanced, while Willarski held a sword to his bare

chest. He was conducted from that room along passages that turned

backwards and forwards and was at last brought to the doors of the

Lodge. Willarski coughed, he was answered by the masonic knock with

mallets, the doors opened before them. A bass voice (Pierre was still

blindfolded) questioned him as to who he was, when and where he was

born, and so on. Then he was again led somewhere still blindfolded, and

as they went along he was told allegories of the toils of his

pilgrimage, of holy friendship, of the Eternal Architect of the

universe, and of the courage with which he should endure toils and

dangers. During these wanderings, Pierre noticed that he was spoken of

now as the "Seeker," now as the "Sufferer," and now as the "Postulant,"

to the accompaniment of various knockings with mallets and swords. As he

was being led up to some object he noticed a hesitation and uncertainty

among his conductors. He heard those around him disputing in whispers

and one of them insisting that he should be led along a certain carpet.

After that they took his right hand, placed it on something, and told

him to hold a pair of compasses to his left breast with the other hand

and to repeat after someone who read aloud an oath of fidelity to the

laws of the Order. The candles were then extinguished and some spirit

lighted, as Pierre knew by the smell, and he was told that he would now

see the lesser light. The bandage was taken off his eyes and, by the

faint light of the burning spirit, Pierre, as in a dream, saw several

men standing before him, wearing aprons like the Rhetor's and holding

swords in their hands pointed at his breast. Among them stood a man

whose white shirt was stained with blood. On seeing this, Pierre moved

forward with his breast toward the swords, meaning them to pierce it.

But the swords were drawn back from him and he was at once blindfolded

again.

"Now thou hast seen the lesser light," uttered a voice. Then the candles

were relit and he was told that he would see the full light; the bandage

was again removed and more than ten voices said together: "Sic transit

gloria mundi."

Pierre gradually began to recover himself and looked about at the room

and at the people in it. Round a long table covered with black sat some

twelve men in garments like those he had already seen. Some of them

Pierre had met in Petersburg society. In the President's chair sat a

young man he did not know, with a peculiar cross hanging from his neck.

On his right sat the Italian abbe whom Pierre had met at Anna Pavlovna's

two years before. There were also present a very distinguished dignitary

and a Swiss who had formerly been tutor at the Kuragins'. All maintained

a solemn silence, listening to the words of the President, who held a

mallet in his hand. Let into the wall was a star-shaped light. At one

side of the table was a small carpet with various figures worked upon

it, at the other was something resembling an altar on which lay a

Testament and a skull. Round it stood seven large candlesticks like

those used in churches. Two of the brothers led Pierre up to the altar,

placed his feet at right angles, and bade him lie down, saying that he

must prostrate himself at the Gates of the Temple.

"He must first receive the trowel," whispered one of the brothers.

"Oh, hush, please!" said another.

Pierre, perplexed, looked round with his shortsighted eyes without

obeying, and suddenly doubts arose in his mind. "Where am I? What am I

doing? Aren't they laughing at me? Shan't I be ashamed to remember

this?" But these doubts only lasted a moment. Pierre glanced at the

serious faces of those around, remembered all he had already gone

through, and realized that he could not stop halfway. He was aghast at

his hesitation and, trying to arouse his former devotional feeling,

prostrated himself before the Gates of the Temple. And really, the

feeling of devotion returned to him even more strongly than before. When

he had lain there some time, he was told to get up, and a white leather

apron, such as the others wore, was put on him: he was given a trowel

and three pairs of gloves, and then the Grand Master addressed him. He

told him that he should try to do nothing to stain the whiteness of that

apron, which symbolized strength and purity; then of the unexplained

trowel, he told him to toil with it to cleanse his own heart from vice,

and indulgently to smooth with it the heart of his neighbor. As to the

first pair of gloves, a man's, he said that Pierre could not know their

meaning but must keep them. The second pair of man's gloves he was to

wear at the meetings, and finally of the third, a pair of women's

gloves, he said: "Dear brother, these woman's gloves are intended for

you too. Give them to the woman whom you shall honor most of all. This

gift will be a pledge of your purity of heart to her whom you select to

be your worthy helpmeet in Masonry." And after a pause, he added: "But

beware, dear brother, that these gloves do not deck hands that are

unclean." While the Grand Master said these last words it seemed to

Pierre that he grew embarrassed. Pierre himself grew still more

confused, blushed like a child till tears came to his eyes, began

looking about him uneasily, and an awkward pause followed.

This silence was broken by one of the brethren, who led Pierre up to the

rug and began reading to him from a manuscript book an explanation of

all the figures on it: the sun, the moon, a hammer, a plumb line, a

trowel, a rough stone and a squared stone, a pillar, three windows, and

so on. Then a place was assigned to Pierre, he was shown the signs of

the Lodge, told the password, and at last was permitted to sit down. The

Grand Master began reading the statutes. They were very long, and

Pierre, from joy, agitation, and embarrassment, was not in a state to

understand what was being read. He managed to follow only the last words

of the statutes and these remained in his mind.

"In our temples we recognize no other distinctions," read the Grand

Master, "but those between virtue and vice. Beware of making any

distinctions which may infringe equality. Fly to a brother's aid whoever

he may be, exhort him who goeth astray, raise him that falleth, never

bear malice or enmity toward thy brother. Be kindly and courteous.

Kindle in all hearts the flame of virtue. Share thy happiness with thy

neighbor, and may envy never dim the purity of that bliss. Forgive thy

enemy, do not avenge thyself except by doing him good. Thus fulfilling

the highest law thou shalt regain traces of the ancient dignity which

thou hast lost."

He finished and, getting up, embraced and kissed Pierre, who, with tears

of joy in his eyes, looked round him, not knowing how to answer the

congratulations and greetings from acquaintances that met him on all

sides. He acknowledged no acquaintances but saw in all these men only

brothers, and burned with impatience to set to work with them.

The Grand Master rapped with his mallet. All the Masons sat down in

their places, and one of them read an exhortation on the necessity of

humility.

The Grand Master proposed that the last duty should be performed, and

the distinguished dignitary who bore the title of "Collector of Alms"

went round to all the brothers. Pierre would have liked to subscribe all

he had, but fearing that it might look like pride subscribed the same

amount as the others.

The meeting was at an end, and on reaching home Pierre felt as if he had

returned from a long journey on which he had spent dozens of years, had

become completely changed, and had quite left behind his former habits

and way of life.

CHAPTER V

The day after he had been received into the Lodge, Pierre was sitting at

home reading a book and trying to fathom the significance of the Square,

one side of which symbolized God, another moral things, a third physical

things, and the fourth a combination of these. Now and then his

attention wandered from the book and the Square and he formed in

imagination a new plan of life. On the previous evening at the Lodge, he

had heard that a rumor of his duel had reached the Emperor and that it

would be wiser for him to leave Petersburg. Pierre proposed going to his

estates in the south and there attending to the welfare of his serfs. He

was joyfully planning this new life, when Prince Vasili suddenly entered

the room.

"My dear fellow, what have you been up to in Moscow? Why have you

quarreled with Helene, mon cher? You are under a delusion," said Prince

Vasili, as he entered. "I know all about it, and I can tell you

positively that Helene is as innocent before you as Christ was before

the Jews."

Pierre was about to reply, but Prince Vasili interrupted him.

"And why didn't you simply come straight to me as to a friend? I know

all about it and understand it all," he said. "You behaved as becomes a

man who values his honor, perhaps too hastily, but we won't go into

that. But consider the position in which you are placing her and me in

the eyes of society, and even of the court," he added, lowering his

voice. "She is living in Moscow and you are here. Remember, dear boy,"

and he drew Pierre's arm downwards, "it is simply a misunderstanding. I

expect you feel it so yourself. Let us write her a letter at once, and

she'll come here and all will be explained, or else, my dear boy, let me

tell you it's quite likely you'll have to suffer for it."

Prince Vasili gave Pierre a significant look.

"I know from reliable sources that the Dowager Empress is taking a keen

interest in the whole affair. You know she is very gracious to Helene."

Pierre tried several times to speak, but, on one hand, Prince Vasili did

not let him and, on the other, Pierre himself feared to begin to speak

in the tone of decided refusal and disagreement in which he had firmly

resolved to answer his father-in-law. Moreover, the words of the masonic

statutes, "be kindly and courteous," recurred to him. He blinked, went

red, got up and sat down again, struggling with himself to do what was

for him the most difficult thing in life--to say an unpleasant thing to

a man's face, to say what the other, whoever he might be, did not

expect. He was so used to submitting to Prince Vasili's tone of careless

self-assurance that he felt he would be unable to withstand it now, but

he also felt that on what he said now his future depended--whether he

would follow the same old road, or that new path so attractively shown

him by the Masons, on which he firmly believed he would be reborn to a

new life.

"Now, dear boy," said Prince Vasili playfully, "say 'yes,' and I'll

write to her myself, and we will kill the fatted calf."

But before Prince Vasili had finished his playful speech, Pierre,

without looking at him, and with a kind of fury that made him like his

father, muttered in a whisper:

"Prince, I did not ask you here. Go, please go!" And he jumped up and

opened the door for him.

"Go!" he repeated, amazed at himself and glad to see the look of

confusion and fear that showed itself on Prince Vasili's face.

"What's the matter with you? Are you ill?"

"Go!" the quivering voice repeated. And Prince Vasili had to go without

receiving any explanation.

A week later, Pierre, having taken leave of his new friends, the Masons,

and leaving large sums of money with them for alms, went away to his

estates. His new brethren gave him letters to the Kiev and Odessa Masons

and promised to write to him and guide him in his new activity.

CHAPTER VI

The duel between Pierre and Dolokhov was hushed up and, in spite of the

Emperor's severity regarding duels at that time, neither the principals

nor their seconds suffered for it. But the story of the duel, confirmed

by Pierre's rupture with his wife, was the talk of society. Pierre who

had been regarded with patronizing condescension when he was an

illegitimate son, and petted and extolled when he was the best match in

Russia, had sunk greatly in the esteem of society after his marriage--

when the marriageable daughters and their mothers had nothing to hope

from him--especially as he did not know how, and did not wish, to court

society's favor. Now he alone was blamed for what had happened, he was

said to be insanely jealous and subject like his father to fits of

bloodthirsty rage. And when after Pierre's departure Helene returned to

Petersburg, she was received by all her acquaintances not only

cordially, but even with a shade of deference due to her misfortune.

When conversation turned on her husband Helene assumed a dignified

expression, which with characteristic tact she had acquired though she

did not understand its significance. This expression suggested that she

had resolved to endure her troubles uncomplainingly and that her husband

was a cross laid upon her by God. Prince Vasili expressed his opinion

more openly. He shrugged his shoulders when Pierre was mentioned and,

pointing to his forehead, remarked:

"A bit touched--I always said so."

"I said from the first," declared Anna Pavlovna referring to Pierre, "I

said at the time and before anyone else" (she insisted on her priority)

"that that senseless young man was spoiled by the depraved ideas of

these days. I said so even at the time when everybody was in raptures

about him, when he had just returned from abroad, and when, if you

remember, he posed as a sort of Marat at one of my soirees. And how has

it ended? I was against this marriage even then and foretold all that

has happened."

Anna Pavlovna continued to give on free evenings the same kind of

soirees as before--such as she alone had the gift of arranging--at which

was to be found "the cream of really good society, the bloom of the

intellectual essence of Petersburg," as she herself put it. Besides this

refined selection of society Anna Pavlovna's receptions were also

distinguished by the fact that she always presented some new and

interesting person to the visitors and that nowhere else was the state

of the political thermometer of legitimate Petersburg court society so

dearly and distinctly indicated.

Toward the end of 1806, when all the sad details of Napoleon's

destruction of the Prussian army at Jena and Auerstadt and the surrender

of most of the Prussian fortresses had been received, when our troops

had already entered Prussia and our second war with Napoleon was

beginning, Anna Pavlovna gave one of her soirees. The "cream of really

good society" consisted of the fascinating Helene, forsaken by her

husband, Mortemart, the delightful Prince Hippolyte who had just

returned from Vienna, two diplomatists, the old aunt, a young man

referred to in that drawing room as "a man of great merit" (un homme de

beaucoup de merite), a newly appointed maid of honor and her mother, and

several other less noteworthy persons.

The novelty Anna Pavlovna was setting before her guests that evening was

Boris Drubetskoy, who had just arrived as a special messenger from the

Prussian army and was aide-de-camp to a very important personage.

The temperature shown by the political thermometer to the company that

evening was this:

"Whatever the European sovereigns and commanders may do to countenance

Bonaparte, and to cause me, and us in general, annoyance and

mortification, our opinion of Bonaparte cannot alter. We shall not cease

to express our sincere views on that subject, and can only say to the

King of Prussia and others: 'So much the worse for you. Tu l'as voulu,

George Dandin,' that's all we have to say about it!"

When Boris, who was to be served up to the guests, entered the drawing

room, almost all the company had assembled, and the conversation, guided

by Anna Pavlovna, was about our diplomatic relations with Austria and

the hope of an alliance with her.

Boris, grown more manly and looking fresh, rosy and self-possessed,

entered the drawing room elegantly dressed in the uniform of an aide-de-

camp and was duly conducted to pay his respects to the aunt and then

brought back to the general circle.

Anna Pavlovna gave him her shriveled hand to kiss and introduced him to

several persons whom he did not know, giving him a whispered description

of each.

"Prince Hippolyte Kuragin, M. Krug, the charge d'affaires from

Copenhagen--a profound intellect," and simply, "Mr. Shitov--a man of

great merit"--this of the man usually so described.

Thanks to Anna Mikhaylovna's efforts, his own tastes, and the

peculiarities of his reserved nature, Boris had managed during his

service to place himself very advantageously. He was aide-de-camp to a

very important personage, had been sent on a very important mission to

Prussia, and had just returned from there as a special messenger. He had

become thoroughly conversant with that unwritten code with which he had

been so pleased at Olmutz and according to which an ensign might rank

incomparably higher than a general, and according to which what was

needed for success in the service was not effort or work, or courage, or

perseverance, but only the knowledge of how to get on with those who can

grant rewards, and he was himself often surprised at the rapidity of his

success and at the inability of others to understand these things. In

consequence of this discovery his whole manner of life, all his

relations with old friends, all his plans for his future, were

completely altered. He was not rich, but would spend his last groat to

be better dressed than others, and would rather deprive himself of many

pleasures than allow himself to be seen in a shabby equipage or appear

in the streets of Petersburg in an old uniform. He made friends with and

sought the acquaintance of only those above him in position and who

could therefore be of use to him. He liked Petersburg and despised

Moscow. The remembrance of the Rostovs' house and of his childish love

for Natasha was unpleasant to him and he had not once been to see the

Rostovs since the day of his departure for the army. To be in Anna

Pavlovna's drawing room he considered an important step up in the

service, and he at once understood his role, letting his hostess make

use of whatever interest he had to offer. He himself carefully scanned

each face, appraising the possibilities of establishing intimacy with

each of those present, and the advantages that might accrue. He took the

seat indicated to him beside the fair Helene and listened to the general

conversation.

"Vienna considers the bases of the proposed treaty so unattainable that

not even a continuity of most brilliant successes would secure them, and

she doubts the means we have of gaining them. That is the actual phrase

used by the Vienna cabinet," said the Danish charge d'affaires.

"The doubt is flattering," said "the man of profound intellect," with a

subtle smile.

"We must distinguish between the Vienna cabinet and the Emperor of

Austria," said Mortemart. "The Emperor of Austria can never have thought

of such a thing, it is only the cabinet that says it."

"Ah, my dear vicomte," put in Anna Pavlovna, "L'Urope" (for some reason

she called it Urope as if that were a specially refined French

pronunciation which she could allow herself when conversing with a

Frenchman), "L'Urope ne sera jamais notre alliee sincere." \*

\* "Europe will never be our sincere ally."

After that Anna Pavlovna led up to the courage and firmness of the King

of Prussia, in order to draw Boris into the conversation.

Boris listened attentively to each of the speakers, awaiting his turn,

but managed meanwhile to look round repeatedly at his neighbor, the

beautiful Helene, whose eyes several times met those of the handsome

young aide-de-camp with a smile.

Speaking of the position of Prussia, Anna Pavlovna very naturally asked

Boris to tell them about his journey to Glogau and in what state he

found the Prussian army. Boris, speaking with deliberation, told them in

pure, correct French many interesting details about the armies and the

court, carefully abstaining from expressing an opinion of his own about

the facts he was recounting. For some time he engrossed the general

attention, and Anna Pavlovna felt that the novelty she had served up was

received with pleasure by all her visitors. The greatest attention of

all to Boris' narrative was shown by Helene. She asked him several

questions about his journey and seemed greatly interested in the state

of the Prussian army. As soon as he had finished she turned to him with

her usual smile.

"You absolutely must come and see me," she said in a tone that implied

that, for certain considerations he could not know of, this was

absolutely necessary.

"On Tuesday between eight and nine. It will give me great pleasure."

Boris promised to fulfill her wish and was about to begin a conversation

with her, when Anna Pavlovna called him away on the pretext that her

aunt wished to hear him.

"You know her husband, of course?" said Anna Pavlovna, closing her eyes

and indicating Helene with a sorrowful gesture. "Ah, she is such an

unfortunate and charming woman! Don't mention him before her--please

don't! It is too painful for her!"

CHAPTER VII

When Boris and Anna Pavlovna returned to the others Prince Hippolyte had

the ear of the company.

Bending forward in his armchair he said: "Le Roi de Prusse!" and having

said this laughed. Everyone turned toward him.

"Le Roi de Prusse?" Hippolyte said interrogatively, again laughing, and

then calmly and seriously sat back in his chair. Anna Pavlovna waited

for him to go on, but as he seemed quite decided to say no more she

began to tell of how at Potsdam the impious Bonaparte had stolen the

sword of Frederick the Great.

"It is the sword of Frederick the Great which I..." she began, but

Hippolyte interrupted her with the words: "Le Roi de Prusse..." and

again, as soon as all turned toward him, excused himself and said no

more.

Anna Pavlovna frowned. Mortemart, Hippolyte's friend, addressed him

firmly.

"Come now, what about your Roi de Prusse?"

Hippolyte laughed as if ashamed of laughing.

"Oh, it's nothing. I only wished to say..." (he wanted to repeat a joke

he had heard in Vienna and which he had been trying all that evening to

get in) "I only wished to say that we are wrong to fight pour le Roi de

Prusse!"

Boris smiled circumspectly, so that it might be taken as ironical or

appreciative according to the way the joke was received. Everybody

laughed.

"Your joke is too bad, it's witty but unjust," said Anna Pavlovna,

shaking her little shriveled finger at him.

"We are not fighting pour le Roi de Prusse, but for right principles.

Oh, that wicked Prince Hippolyte!" she said.

The conversation did not flag all evening and turned chiefly on the

political news. It became particularly animated toward the end of the

evening when the rewards bestowed by the Emperor were mentioned.

"You know N-- N-- received a snuffbox with the portrait last year?" said

"the man of profound intellect." "Why shouldn't S-- S-- get the same

distinction?"

"Pardon me! A snuffbox with the Emperor's portrait is a reward but not a

distinction," said the diplomatist--"a gift, rather."

"There are precedents, I may mention Schwarzenberg."

"It's impossible," replied another.

"Will you bet? The ribbon of the order is a different matter...."

When everybody rose to go, Helene who had spoken very little all the

evening again turned to Boris, asking him in a tone of caressing

significant command to come to her on Tuesday.

"It is of great importance to me," she said, turning with a smile toward

Anna Pavlovna, and Anna Pavlovna, with the same sad smile with which she

spoke of her exalted patroness, supported Helene's wish.

It seemed as if from some words Boris had spoken that evening about the

Prussian army, Helene had suddenly found it necessary to see him. She

seemed to promise to explain that necessity to him when he came on

Tuesday.

But on Tuesday evening, having come to Helene's splendid salon, Boris

received no clear explanation of why it had been necessary for him to

come. There were other guests and the countess talked little to him, and

only as he kissed her hand on taking leave said unexpectedly and in a

whisper, with a strangely unsmiling face: "Come to dinner tomorrow... in

the evening. You must come.... Come!"

During that stay in Petersburg, Boris became an intimate in the

countess' house.

CHAPTER VIII

The war was flaming up and nearing the Russian frontier. Everywhere one

heard curses on Bonaparte, "the enemy of mankind." Militiamen and

recruits were being enrolled in the villages, and from the seat of war

came contradictory news, false as usual and therefore variously

interpreted. The life of old Prince Bolkonski, Prince Andrew, and

Princess Mary had greatly changed since 1805.

In 1806 the old prince was made one of the eight commanders in chief

then appointed to supervise the enrollment decreed throughout Russia.

Despite the weakness of age, which had become particularly noticeable

since the time when he thought his son had been killed, he did not think

it right to refuse a duty to which he had been appointed by the Emperor

himself, and this fresh opportunity for action gave him new energy and

strength. He was continually traveling through the three provinces

entrusted to him, was pedantic in the fulfillment of his duties, severe

to cruel with his subordinates, and went into everything down to the

minutest details himself. Princess Mary had ceased taking lessons in

mathematics from her father, and when the old prince was at home went to

his study with the wet nurse and little Prince Nicholas (as his

grandfather called him). The baby Prince Nicholas lived with his wet

nurse and nurse Savishna in the late princess' rooms and Princess Mary

spent most of the day in the nursery, taking a mother's place to her

little nephew as best she could. Mademoiselle Bourienne, too, seemed

passionately fond of the boy, and Princess Mary often deprived herself

to give her friend the pleasure of dandling the little angel--as she

called her nephew--and playing with him.

Near the altar of the church at Bald Hills there was a chapel over the

tomb of the little princess, and in this chapel was a marble monument

brought from Italy, representing an angel with outspread wings ready to

fly upwards. The angel's upper lip was slightly raised as though about

to smile, and once on coming out of the chapel Prince Andrew and

Princess Mary admitted to one another that the angel's face reminded

them strangely of the little princess. But what was still stranger,

though of this Prince Andrew said nothing to his sister, was that in the

expression the sculptor had happened to give the angel's face, Prince

Andrew read the same mild reproach he had read on the face of his dead

wife: "Ah, why have you done this to me?"

Soon after Prince Andrew's return the old prince made over to him a

large estate, Bogucharovo, about twenty-five miles from Bald Hills.

Partly because of the depressing memories associated with Bald Hills,

partly because Prince Andrew did not always feel equal to bearing with

his father's peculiarities, and partly because he needed solitude,

Prince Andrew made use of Bogucharovo, began building and spent most of

his time there.

After the Austerlitz campaign Prince Andrew had firmly resolved not to

continue his military service, and when the war recommenced and

everybody had to serve, he took a post under his father in the

recruitment so as to avoid active service. The old prince and his son

seemed to have changed roles since the campaign of 1805. The old man,

roused by activity, expected the best results from the new campaign,

while Prince Andrew on the contrary, taking no part in the war and

secretly regretting this, saw only the dark side.

On February 26, 1807, the old prince set off on one of his circuits.

Prince Andrew remained at Bald Hills as usual during his father's

absence. Little Nicholas had been unwell for four days. The coachman who

had driven the old prince to town returned bringing papers and letters

for Prince Andrew.

Not finding the young prince in his study the valet went with the

letters to Princess Mary's apartments, but did not find him there. He

was told that the prince had gone to the nursery.

"If you please, your excellency, Petrusha has brought some papers," said

one of the nursemaids to Prince Andrew who was sitting on a child's

little chair while, frowning and with trembling hands, he poured drops

from a medicine bottle into a wineglass half full of water.

"What is it?" he said crossly, and, his hand shaking unintentionally, he

poured too many drops into the glass. He threw the mixture onto the

floor and asked for some more water. The maid brought it.

There were in the room a child's cot, two boxes, two armchairs, a table,

a child's table, and the little chair on which Prince Andrew was

sitting. The curtains were drawn, and a single candle was burning on the

table, screened by a bound music book so that the light did not fall on

the cot.

"My dear," said Princess Mary, addressing her brother from beside the

cot where she was standing, "better wait a bit... later..."

"Oh, leave off, you always talk nonsense and keep putting things off--

and this is what comes of it!" said Prince Andrew in an exasperated

whisper, evidently meaning to wound his sister.

"My dear, really... it's better not to wake him... he's asleep," said

the princess in a tone of entreaty.

Prince Andrew got up and went on tiptoe up to the little bed, wineglass

in hand.

"Perhaps we'd really better not wake him," he said hesitating.

"As you please... really... I think so... but as you please," said

Princess Mary, evidently intimidated and confused that her opinion had

prevailed. She drew her brother's attention to the maid who was calling

him in a whisper.

It was the second night that neither of them had slept, watching the boy

who was in a high fever. These last days, mistrusting their household

doctor and expecting another for whom they had sent to town, they had

been trying first one remedy and then another. Worn out by sleeplessness

and anxiety they threw their burden of sorrow on one another and

reproached and disputed with each other.

"Petrusha has come with papers from your father," whispered the maid.

Prince Andrew went out.

"Devil take them!" he muttered, and after listening to the verbal

instructions his father had sent and taking the correspondence and his

father's letter, he returned to the nursery.

"Well?" he asked.

"Still the same. Wait, for heaven's sake. Karl Ivanich always says that

sleep is more important than anything," whispered Princess Mary with a

sigh.

Prince Andrew went up to the child and felt him. He was burning hot.

"Confound you and your Karl Ivanich!" He took the glass with the drops

and again went up to the cot.

"Andrew, don't!" said Princess Mary.

But he scowled at her angrily though also with suffering in his eyes,

and stooped glass in hand over the infant.

"But I wish it," he said. "I beg you--give it him!"

Princess Mary shrugged her shoulders but took the glass submissively and

calling the nurse began giving the medicine. The child screamed

hoarsely. Prince Andrew winced and, clutching his head, went out and sat

down on a sofa in the next room.

He still had all the letters in his hand. Opening them mechanically he

began reading. The old prince, now and then using abbreviations, wrote

in his large elongated hand on blue paper as follows:

Have just this moment received by special messenger very joyful news--if

it's not false. Bennigsen seems to have obtained a complete victory over

Buonaparte at Eylau. In Petersburg everyone is rejoicing, and the

rewards sent to the army are innumerable. Though he is a German--I

congratulate him! I can't make out what the commander at Korchevo--a

certain Khandrikov--is up to; till now the additional men and provisions

have not arrived. Gallop off to him at once and say I'll have his head

off if everything is not here in a week. Have received another letter

about the Preussisch-Eylau battle from Petenka--he took part in it--and

it's all true. When mischief-makers don't meddle even a German beats

Buonaparte. He is said to be fleeing in great disorder. Mind you gallop

off to Korchevo without delay and carry out instructions!

Prince Andrew sighed and broke the seal of another envelope. It was a

closely written letter of two sheets from Bilibin. He folded it up

without reading it and reread his father's letter, ending with the

words: "Gallop off to Korchevo and carry out instructions!"

"No, pardon me, I won't go now till the child is better," thought he,

going to the door and looking into the nursery.

Princess Mary was still standing by the cot, gently rocking the baby.

"Ah yes, and what else did he say that's unpleasant?" thought Prince

Andrew, recalling his father's letter. "Yes, we have gained a victory

over Bonaparte, just when I'm not serving. Yes, yes, he's always poking

fun at me.... Ah, well! Let him!" And he began reading Bilibin's letter

which was written in French. He read without understanding half of it,

read only to forget, if but for a moment, what he had too long been

thinking of so painfully to the exclusion of all else.

CHAPTER IX

Bilibin was now at army headquarters in a diplomatic capacity, and

though he wrote in French and used French jests and French idioms, he

described the whole campaign with a fearless self-censure and self-

derision genuinely Russian. Bilibin wrote that the obligation of

diplomatic discretion tormented him, and he was happy to have in Prince

Andrew a reliable correspondent to whom he could pour out the bile he

had accumulated at the sight of all that was being done in the army. The

letter was old, having been written before the battle at Preussisch-

Eylau.

"Since the day of our brilliant success at Austerlitz," wrote Bilibin,

"as you know, my dear prince, I never leave headquarters. I have

certainly acquired a taste for war, and it is just as well for me; what

I have seen during these last three months is incredible.

"I begin ab ovo. 'The enemy of the human race,' as you know, attacks the

Prussians. The Prussians are our faithful allies who have only betrayed

us three times in three years. We take up their cause, but it turns out

that 'the enemy of the human race' pays no heed to our fine speeches and

in his rude and savage way throws himself on the Prussians without

giving them time to finish the parade they had begun, and in two twists

of the hand he breaks them to smithereens and installs himself in the

palace at Potsdam.

"'I most ardently desire,' writes the King of Prussia to Bonaparte,

'that Your Majesty should be received and treated in my palace in a

manner agreeable to yourself, and in so far as circumstances allowed, I

have hastened to take all steps to that end. May I have succeeded!' The

Prussian generals pride themselves on being polite to the French and lay

down their arms at the first demand.

"The head of the garrison at Glogau, with ten thousand men, asks the

King of Prussia what he is to do if he is summoned to surrender.... All

this is absolutely true.

"In short, hoping to settle matters by taking up a warlike attitude, it

turns out that we have landed ourselves in war, and what is more, in war

on our own frontiers, with and for the King of Prussia. We have

everything in perfect order, only one little thing is lacking, namely, a

commander in chief. As it was considered that the Austerlitz success

might have been more decisive had the commander-in-chief not been so

young, all our octogenarians were reviewed, and of Prozorovski and

Kamenski the latter was preferred. The general comes to us, Suvorov-

like, in a kibitka, and is received with acclamations of joy and

triumph.

"On the 4th, the first courier arrives from Petersburg. The mails are

taken to the field marshal's room, for he likes to do everything

himself. I am called in to help sort the letters and take those meant

for us. The field marshal looks on and waits for letters addressed to

him. We search, but none are to be found. The field marshal grows

impatient and sets to work himself and finds letters from the Emperor to

Count T., Prince V., and others. Then he bursts into one of his wild

furies and rages at everyone and everything, seizes the letters, opens

them, and reads those from the Emperor addressed to others. 'Ah! So

that's the way they treat me! No confidence in me! Ah, ordered to keep

an eye on me! Very well then! Get along with you!' So he writes the

famous order of the day to General Bennigsen:

'I am wounded and cannot ride and consequently cannot command the army.

You have brought your army corps to Pultusk, routed: here it is exposed,

and without fuel or forage, so something must be done, and, as you

yourself reported to Count Buxhowden yesterday, you must think of

retreating to our frontier--which do today.'

"'From all my riding,' he writes to the Emperor, 'I have got a saddle

sore which, coming after all my previous journeys, quite prevents my

riding and commanding so vast an army, so I have passed on the command

to the general next in seniority, Count Buxhowden, having sent him my

whole staff and all that belongs to it, advising him if there is a lack

of bread, to move farther into the interior of Prussia, for only one

day's ration of bread remains, and in some regiments none at all, as

reported by the division commanders, Ostermann and Sedmoretzki, and all

that the peasants had has been eaten up. I myself will remain in

hospital at Ostrolenka till I recover. In regard to which I humbly

submit my report, with the information that if the army remains in its

present bivouac another fortnight there will not be a healthy man left

in it by spring.

"'Grant leave to retire to his country seat to an old man who is already

in any case dishonored by being unable to fulfill the great and glorious

task for which he was chosen. I shall await your most gracious

permission here in hospital, that I may not have to play the part of a

secretary rather than commander in the army. My removal from the army

does not produce the slightest stir--a blind man has left it. There are

thousands such as I in Russia.'

"The field marshal is angry with the Emperor and he punishes us all,

isn't it logical?

"This is the first act. Those that follow are naturally increasingly

interesting and entertaining. After the field marshal's departure it

appears that we are within sight of the enemy and must give battle.

Buxhowden is commander-in-chief by seniority, but General Bennigsen does

not quite see it; more particularly as it is he and his corps who are

within sight of the enemy and he wishes to profit by the opportunity to

fight a battle 'on his own hand' as the Germans say. He does so. This is

the battle of Pultusk, which is considered a great victory but in my

opinion was nothing of the kind. We civilians, as you know, have a very

bad way of deciding whether a battle was won or lost. Those who retreat

after a battle have lost it is what we say; and according to that it is

we who lost the battle of Pultusk. In short, we retreat after the battle

but send a courier to Petersburg with news of a victory, and General

Bennigsen, hoping to receive from Petersburg the post of commander in

chief as a reward for his victory, does not give up the command of the

army to General Buxhowden. During this interregnum we begin a very

original and interesting series of maneuvers. Our aim is no longer, as

it should be, to avoid or attack the enemy, but solely to avoid General

Buxhowden who by right of seniority should be our chief. So

energetically do we pursue this aim that after crossing an unfordable

river we burn the bridges to separate ourselves from our enemy, who at

the moment is not Bonaparte but Buxhowden. General Buxhowden was all but

attacked and captured by a superior enemy force as a result of one of

these maneuvers that enabled us to escape him. Buxhowden pursues us--we

scuttle. He hardly crosses the river to our side before we recross to

the other. At last our enemy, Buxhowden, catches us and attacks. Both

generals are angry, and the result is a challenge on Buxhowden's part

and an epileptic fit on Bennigsen's. But at the critical moment the

courier who carried the news of our victory at Pultusk to Petersburg

returns bringing our appointment as commander-in-chief, and our first

foe, Buxhowden, is vanquished; we can now turn our thoughts to the

second, Bonaparte. But as it turns out, just at that moment a third

enemy rises before us--namely the Orthodox Russian soldiers, loudly

demanding bread, meat, biscuits, fodder, and whatnot! The stores are

empty, the roads impassable. The Orthodox begin looting, and in a way of

which our last campaign can give you no idea. Half the regiments form

bands and scour the countryside and put everything to fire and sword.

The inhabitants are totally ruined, the hospitals overflow with sick,

and famine is everywhere. Twice the marauders even attack our

headquarters, and the commander-in-chief has to ask for a battalion to

disperse them. During one of these attacks they carried off my empty

portmanteau and my dressing gown. The Emperor proposes to give all

commanders of divisions the right to shoot marauders, but I much fear

this will oblige one half the army to shoot the other."

At first Prince Andrew read with his eyes only, but after a while, in

spite of himself (although he knew how far it was safe to trust

Bilibin), what he had read began to interest him more and more. When he

had read thus far, he crumpled the letter up and threw it away. It was

not what he had read that vexed him, but the fact that the life out

there in which he had now no part could perturb him. He shut his eyes,

rubbed his forehead as if to rid himself of all interest in what he had

read, and listened to what was passing in the nursery. Suddenly he

thought he heard a strange noise through the door. He was seized with

alarm lest something should have happened to the child while he was

reading the letter. He went on tiptoe to the nursery door and opened it.

Just as he went in he saw that the nurse was hiding something from him

with a scared look and that Princess Mary was no longer by the cot.

"My dear," he heard what seemed to him her despairing whisper behind

him.

As often happens after long sleeplessness and long anxiety, he was

seized by an unreasoning panic--it occurred to him that the child was

dead. All that he saw and heard seemed to confirm this terror.

"All is over," he thought, and a cold sweat broke out on his forehead.

He went to the cot in confusion, sure that he would find it empty and

that the nurse had been hiding the dead baby. He drew the curtain aside

and for some time his frightened, restless eyes could not find the baby.

At last he saw him: the rosy boy had tossed about till he lay across the

bed with his head lower than the pillow, and was smacking his lips in

his sleep and breathing evenly.

Prince Andrew was as glad to find the boy like that, as if he had

already lost him. He bent over him and, as his sister had taught him,

tried with his lips whether the child was still feverish. The soft

forehead was moist. Prince Andrew touched the head with his hand; even

the hair was wet, so profusely had the child perspired. He was not dead,

but evidently the crisis was over and he was convalescent. Prince Andrew

longed to snatch up, to squeeze, to hold to his heart, this helpless

little creature, but dared not do so. He stood over him, gazing at his

head and at the little arms and legs which showed under the blanket. He

heard a rustle behind him and a shadow appeared under the curtain of the

cot. He did not look round, but still gazing at the infant's face

listened to his regular breathing. The dark shadow was Princess Mary,

who had come up to the cot with noiseless steps, lifted the curtain, and

dropped it again behind her. Prince Andrew recognized her without

looking and held out his hand to her. She pressed it.

"He has perspired," said Prince Andrew.

"I was coming to tell you so."

The child moved slightly in his sleep, smiled, and rubbed his forehead

against the pillow.

Prince Andrew looked at his sister. In the dim shadow of the curtain her

luminous eyes shone more brightly than usual from the tears of joy that

were in them. She leaned over to her brother and kissed him, slightly

catching the curtain of the cot. Each made the other a warning gesture

and stood still in the dim light beneath the curtain as if not wishing

to leave that seclusion where they three were shut off from all the

world. Prince Andrew was the first to move away, ruffling his hair

against the muslin of the curtain.

"Yes, this is the one thing left me now," he said with a sigh.

CHAPTER X

Soon after his admission to the masonic Brotherhood, Pierre went to the

Kiev province, where he had the greatest number of serfs, taking with

him full directions which he had written down for his own guidance as to

what he should do on his estates.

When he reached Kiev he sent for all his stewards to the head office and

explained to them his intentions and wishes. He told them that steps

would be taken immediately to free his serfs--and that till then they

were not to be overburdened with labor, women while nursing their babies

were not to be sent to work, assistance was to be given to the serfs,

punishments were to be admonitory and not corporal, and hospitals,

asylums, and schools were to be established on all the estates. Some of

the stewards (there were semiliterate foremen among them) listened with

alarm, supposing these words to mean that the young count was displeased

with their management and embezzlement of money, some after their first

fright were amused by Pierre's lisp and the new words they had not heard

before, others simply enjoyed hearing how the master talked, while the

cleverest among them, including the chief steward, understood from this

speech how they could best handle the master for their own ends.

The chief steward expressed great sympathy with Pierre's intentions, but

remarked that besides these changes it would be necessary to go into the

general state of affairs which was far from satisfactory.

Despite Count Bezukhov's enormous wealth, since he had come into an

income which was said to amount to five hundred thousand rubles a year,

Pierre felt himself far poorer than when his father had made him an

allowance of ten thousand rubles. He had a dim perception of the

following budget:

About 80,000 went in payments on all the estates to the Land Bank, about

30,000 went for the upkeep of the estate near Moscow, the town house,

and the allowance to the three princesses; about 15,000 was given in

pensions and the same amount for asylums; 150,000 alimony was sent to

the countess; about 70,000 went for interest on debts. The building of a

new church, previously begun, had cost about 10,000 in each of the last

two years, and he did not know how the rest, about 100,000 rubles, was

spent, and almost every year he was obliged to borrow. Besides this the

chief steward wrote every year telling him of fires and bad harvests, or

of the necessity of rebuilding factories and workshops. So the first

task Pierre had to face was one for which he had very little aptitude or

inclination--practical business.

He discussed estate affairs every day with his chief steward. But he

felt that this did not forward matters at all. He felt that these

consultations were detached from real affairs and did not link up with

them or make them move. On the one hand, the chief steward put the state

of things to him in the very worst light, pointing out the necessity of

paying off the debts and undertaking new activities with serf labor, to

which Pierre did not agree. On the other hand, Pierre demanded that

steps should be taken to liberate the serfs, which the steward met by

showing the necessity of first paying off the loans from the Land Bank,

and the consequent impossibility of a speedy emancipation.

The steward did not say it was quite impossible, but suggested selling

the forests in the province of Kostroma, the land lower down the river,

and the Crimean estate, in order to make it possible: all of which

operations according to him were connected with such complicated

measures--the removal of injunctions, petitions, permits, and so on--

that Pierre became quite bewildered and only replied:

"Yes, yes, do so."

Pierre had none of the practical persistence that would have enabled him

to attend to the business himself and so he disliked it and only tried

to pretend to the steward that he was attending to it. The steward for

his part tried to pretend to the count that he considered these

consultations very valuable for the proprietor and troublesome to

himself.

In Kiev Pierre found some people he knew, and strangers hastened to make

his acquaintance and joyfully welcomed the rich newcomer, the largest

landowner of the province. Temptations to Pierre's greatest weakness--

the one to which he had confessed when admitted to the Lodge--were so

strong that he could not resist them. Again whole days, weeks, and

months of his life passed in as great a rush and were as much occupied

with evening parties, dinners, lunches, and balls, giving him no time

for reflection, as in Petersburg. Instead of the new life he had hoped

to lead he still lived the old life, only in new surroundings.

Of the three precepts of Freemasonry Pierre realized that he did not

fulfill the one which enjoined every Mason to set an example of moral

life, and that of the seven virtues he lacked two--morality and the love

of death. He consoled himself with the thought that he fulfilled another

of the precepts--that of reforming the human race--and had other

virtues--love of his neighbor, and especially generosity.

In the spring of 1807 he decided to return to Petersburg. On the way he

intended to visit all his estates and see for himself how far his orders

had been carried out and in what state were the serfs whom God had

entrusted to his care and whom he intended to benefit.

The chief steward, who considered the young count's attempts almost

insane--unprofitable to himself, to the count, and to the serfs--made

some concessions. Continuing to represent the liberation of the serfs as

impracticable, he arranged for the erection of large buildings--schools,

hospitals, and asylums--on all the estates before the master arrived.

Everywhere preparations were made not for ceremonious welcomes (which he

knew Pierre would not like), but for just such gratefully religious

ones, with offerings of icons and the bread and salt of hospitality, as,

according to his understanding of his master, would touch and delude

him.

The southern spring, the comfortable rapid traveling in a Vienna

carriage, and the solitude of the road, all had a gladdening effect on

Pierre. The estates he had not before visited were each more picturesque

than the other; the serfs everywhere seemed thriving and touchingly

grateful for the benefits conferred on them. Everywhere were receptions,

which though they embarrassed Pierre awakened a joyful feeling in the

depth of his heart. In one place the peasants presented him with bread

and salt and an icon of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, asking permission,

as a mark of their gratitude for the benefits he had conferred on them,

to build a new chantry to the church at their own expense in honor of

Peter and Paul, his patron saints. In another place the women with

infants in arms met him to thank him for releasing them from hard work.

On a third estate the priest, bearing a cross, came to meet him

surrounded by children whom, by the count's generosity, he was

instructing in reading, writing, and religion. On all his estates Pierre

saw with his own eyes brick buildings erected or in course of erection,

all on one plan, for hospitals, schools, and almshouses, which were soon

to be opened. Everywhere he saw the stewards' accounts, according to

which the serfs' manorial labor had been diminished, and heard the

touching thanks of deputations of serfs in their full-skirted blue

coats.

What Pierre did not know was that the place where they presented him

with bread and salt and wished to build a chantry in honor of Peter and

Paul was a market village where a fair was held on St. Peter's day, and

that the richest peasants (who formed the deputation) had begun the

chantry long before, but that nine tenths of the peasants in that

villages were in a state of the greatest poverty. He did not know that

since the nursing mothers were no longer sent to work on his land, they

did still harder work on their own land. He did not know that the priest

who met him with the cross oppressed the peasants by his exactions, and

that the pupils' parents wept at having to let him take their children

and secured their release by heavy payments. He did not know that the

brick buildings, built to plan, were being built by serfs whose manorial

labor was thus increased, though lessened on paper. He did not know that

where the steward had shown him in the accounts that the serfs' payments

had been diminished by a third, their obligatory manorial work had been

increased by a half. And so Pierre was delighted with his visit to his

estates and quite recovered the philanthropic mood in which he had left

Petersburg, and wrote enthusiastic letters to his "brother-instructor"

as he called the Grand Master.

"How easy it is, how little effort it needs, to do so much good,"

thought Pierre, "and how little attention we pay to it!"

He was pleased at the gratitude he received, but felt abashed at

receiving it. This gratitude reminded him of how much more he might do

for these simple, kindly people.

The chief steward, a very stupid but cunning man who saw perfectly

through the naive and intelligent count and played with him as with a

toy, seeing the effect these prearranged receptions had on Pierre,

pressed him still harder with proofs of the impossibility and above all

the uselessness of freeing the serfs, who were quite happy as it was.

Pierre in his secret soul agreed with the steward that it would be

difficult to imagine happier people, and that God only knew what would

happen to them when they were free, but he insisted, though reluctantly,

on what he thought right. The steward promised to do all in his power to

carry out the count's wishes, seeing clearly that not only would the

count never be able to find out whether all measures had been taken for

the sale of the land and forests and to release them from the Land Bank,

but would probably never even inquire and would never know that the

newly erected buildings were standing empty and that the serfs continued

to give in money and work all that other people's serfs gave--that is to

say, all that could be got out of them.

CHAPTER XI

Returning from his journey through South Russia in the happiest state of

mind, Pierre carried out an intention he had long had of visiting his

friend Bolkonski, whom he had not seen for two years.

Bogucharovo lay in a flat uninteresting part of the country among fields

and forests of fir and birch, which were partly cut down. The house lay

behind a newly dug pond filled with water to the brink and with banks

still bare of grass. It was at the end of a village that stretched along

the highroad in the midst of a young copse in which were a few fir

trees.

The homestead consisted of a threshing floor, outhouses, stables, a

bathhouse, a lodge, and a large brick house with semicircular facade

still in course of construction. Round the house was a garden newly laid

out. The fences and gates were new and solid; two fire pumps and a water

cart, painted green, stood in a shed; the paths were straight, the

bridges were strong and had handrails. Everything bore an impress of

tidiness and good management. Some domestic serfs Pierre met, in reply

to inquiries as to where the prince lived, pointed out a small newly

built lodge close to the pond. Anton, a man who had looked after Prince

Andrew in his boyhood, helped Pierre out of his carriage, said that the

prince was at home, and showed him into a clean little anteroom.

Pierre was struck by the modesty of the small though clean house after

the brilliant surroundings in which he had last met his friend in

Petersburg.

He quickly entered the small reception room with its still-unplastered

wooden walls redolent of pine, and would have gone farther, but Anton

ran ahead on tiptoe and knocked at a door.

"Well, what is it?" came a sharp, unpleasant voice.

"A visitor," answered Anton.

"Ask him to wait," and the sound was heard of a chair being pushed back.

Pierre went with rapid steps to the door and suddenly came face to face

with Prince Andrew, who came out frowning and looking old. Pierre

embraced him and lifting his spectacles kissed his friend on the cheek

and looked at him closely.

"Well, I did not expect you, I am very glad," said Prince Andrew.

Pierre said nothing; he looked fixedly at his friend with surprise. He

was struck by the change in him. His words were kindly and there was a

smile on his lips and face, but his eyes were dull and lifeless and in

spite of his evident wish to do so he could not give them a joyous and

glad sparkle. Prince Andrew had grown thinner, paler, and more manly-

looking, but what amazed and estranged Pierre till he got used to it

were his inertia and a wrinkle on his brow indicating prolonged

concentration on some one thought.

As is usually the case with people meeting after a prolonged separation,

it was long before their conversation could settle on anything. They put

questions and gave brief replies about things they knew ought to be

talked over at length. At last the conversation gradually settled on

some of the topics at first lightly touched on: their past life, plans

for the future, Pierre's journeys and occupations, the war, and so on.

The preoccupation and despondency which Pierre had noticed in his

friend's look was now still more clearly expressed in the smile with

which he listened to Pierre, especially when he spoke with joyful

animation of the past or the future. It was as if Prince Andrew would

have liked to sympathize with what Pierre was saying, but could not. The

latter began to feel that it was in bad taste to speak of his

enthusiasms, dreams, and hopes of happiness or goodness, in Prince

Andrew's presence. He was ashamed to express his new masonic views,

which had been particularly revived and strengthened by his late tour.

He checked himself, fearing to seem naive, yet he felt an irresistible

desire to show his friend as soon as possible that he was now a quite

different, and better, Pierre than he had been in Petersburg.

"I can't tell you how much I have lived through since then. I hardly

know myself again."

"Yes, we have altered much, very much, since then," said Prince Andrew.

"Well, and you? What are your plans?"

"Plans!" repeated Prince Andrew ironically. "My plans?" he said, as if

astonished at the word. "Well, you see, I'm building. I mean to settle

here altogether next year...."

Pierre looked silently and searchingly into Prince Andrew's face, which

had grown much older.

"No, I meant to ask..." Pierre began, but Prince Andrew interrupted him.

"But why talk of me?... Talk to me, yes, tell me about your travels and

all you have been doing on your estates."

Pierre began describing what he had done on his estates, trying as far

as possible to conceal his own part in the improvements that had been

made. Prince Andrew several times prompted Pierre's story of what he had

been doing, as though it were all an old-time story, and he listened not

only without interest but even as if ashamed of what Pierre was telling

him.

Pierre felt uncomfortable and even depressed in his friend's company and

at last became silent.

"I'll tell you what, my dear fellow," said Prince Andrew, who evidently

also felt depressed and constrained with his visitor, "I am only

bivouacking here and have just come to look round. I am going back to my

sister today. I will introduce you to her. But of course you know her

already," he said, evidently trying to entertain a visitor with whom he

now found nothing in common. "We will go after dinner. And would you now

like to look round my place?"

They went out and walked about till dinnertime, talking of the political

news and common acquaintances like people who do not know each other

intimately. Prince Andrew spoke with some animation and interest only of

the new homestead he was constructing and its buildings, but even here,

while on the scaffolding, in the midst of a talk explaining the future

arrangements of the house, he interrupted himself:

"However, this is not at all interesting. Let us have dinner, and then

we'll set off."

At dinner, conversation turned on Pierre's marriage.

"I was very much surprised when I heard of it," said Prince Andrew.

Pierre blushed, as he always did when it was mentioned, and said

hurriedly: "I will tell you some time how it all happened. But you know

it is all over, and forever."

"Forever?" said Prince Andrew. "Nothing's forever."

"But you know how it all ended, don't you? You heard of the duel?"

"And so you had to go through that too!"

"One thing I thank God for is that I did not kill that man," said

Pierre.

"Why so?" asked Prince Andrew. "To kill a vicious dog is a very good

thing really."

"No, to kill a man is bad--wrong."

"Why is it wrong?" urged Prince Andrew. "It is not given to man to know

what is right and what is wrong. Men always did and always will err, and

in nothing more than in what they consider right and wrong."

"What does harm to another is wrong," said Pierre, feeling with pleasure

that for the first time since his arrival Prince Andrew was roused, had

begun to talk, and wanted to express what had brought him to his present

state.

"And who has told you what is bad for another man?" he asked.

"Bad! Bad!" exclaimed Pierre. "We all know what is bad for ourselves."

"Yes, we know that, but the harm I am conscious of in myself is

something I cannot inflict on others," said Prince Andrew, growing more

and more animated and evidently wishing to express his new outlook to

Pierre. He spoke in French. "I only know two very real evils in life:

remorse and illness. The only good is the absence of those evils. To

live for myself avoiding those two evils is my whole philosophy now."

"And love of one's neighbor, and self-sacrifice?" began Pierre. "No, I

can't agree with you! To live only so as not to do evil and not to have

to repent is not enough. I lived like that, I lived for myself and

ruined my life. And only now when I am living, or at least trying"

(Pierre's modesty made him correct himself) "to live for others, only

now have I understood all the happiness of life. No, I shall not agree

with you, and you do not really believe what you are saying." Prince

Andrew looked silently at Pierre with an ironic smile.

"When you see my sister, Princess Mary, you'll get on with her," he

said. "Perhaps you are right for yourself," he added after a short

pause, "but everyone lives in his own way. You lived for yourself and

say you nearly ruined your life and only found happiness when you began

living for others. I experienced just the reverse. I lived for glory.--

And after all what is glory? The same love of others, a desire to do

something for them, a desire for their approval.--So I lived for others,

and not almost, but quite, ruined my life. And I have become calmer

since I began to live only for myself."

"But what do you mean by living only for yourself?" asked Pierre,

growing excited. "What about your son, your sister, and your father?"

"But that's just the same as myself--they are not others," explained

Prince Andrew. "The others, one's neighbors, le prochain, as you and

Princess Mary call it, are the chief source of all error and evil. Le

prochain--your Kiev peasants to whom you want to do good."

And he looked at Pierre with a mocking, challenging expression. He

evidently wished to draw him on.

"You are joking," replied Pierre, growing more and more excited. "What

error or evil can there be in my wishing to do good, and even doing a

little--though I did very little and did it very badly? What evil can

there be in it if unfortunate people, our serfs, people like ourselves,

were growing up and dying with no idea of God and truth beyond

ceremonies and meaningless prayers and are now instructed in a

comforting belief in future life, retribution, recompense, and

consolation? What evil and error are there in it, if people were dying

of disease without help while material assistance could so easily be

rendered, and I supplied them with a doctor, a hospital, and an asylum

for the aged? And is it not a palpable, unquestionable good if a

peasant, or a woman with a baby, has no rest day or night and I give

them rest and leisure?" said Pierre, hurrying and lisping. "And I have

done that though badly and to a small extent; but I have done something

toward it and you cannot persuade me that it was not a good action, and

more than that, you can't make me believe that you do not think so

yourself. And the main thing is," he continued, "that I know, and know

for certain, that the enjoyment of doing this good is the only sure

happiness in life."

"Yes, if you put it like that it's quite a different matter," said

Prince Andrew. "I build a house and lay out a garden, and you build

hospitals. The one and the other may serve as a pastime. But what's

right and what's good must be judged by one who knows all, but not by

us. Well, you want an argument," he added, "come on then."

They rose from the table and sat down in the entrance porch which served

as a veranda.

"Come, let's argue then," said Prince Andrew, "You talk of schools," he

went on, crooking a finger, "education and so forth; that is, you want

to raise him" (pointing to a peasant who passed by them taking off his

cap) "from his animal condition and awaken in him spiritual needs, while

it seems to me that animal happiness is the only happiness possible, and

that is just what you want to deprive him of. I envy him, but you want

to make him what I am, without giving him my means. Then you say,

'lighten his toil.' But as I see it, physical labor is as essential to

him, as much a condition of his existence, as mental activity is to you

or me. You can't help thinking. I go to bed after two in the morning,

thoughts come and I can't sleep but toss about till dawn, because I

think and can't help thinking, just as he can't help plowing and mowing;

if he didn't, he would go to the drink shop or fall ill. Just as I could

not stand his terrible physical labor but should die of it in a week, so

he could not stand my physical idleness, but would grow fat and die. The

third thing--what else was it you talked about?" and Prince Andrew

crooked a third finger. "Ah, yes, hospitals, medicine. He has a fit, he

is dying, and you come and bleed him and patch him up. He will drag

about as a cripple, a burden to everybody, for another ten years. It

would be far easier and simpler for him to die. Others are being born

and there are plenty of them as it is. It would be different if you

grudged losing a laborer--that's how I regard him--but you want to cure

him from love of him. And he does not want that. And besides, what a

notion that medicine ever cured anyone! Killed them, yes!" said he,

frowning angrily and turning away from Pierre.

Prince Andrew expressed his ideas so clearly and distinctly that it was

evident he had reflected on this subject more than once, and he spoke

readily and rapidly like a man who has not talked for a long time. His

glance became more animated as his conclusions became more hopeless.

"Oh, that is dreadful, dreadful!" said Pierre. "I don't understand how

one can live with such ideas. I had such moments myself not long ago, in

Moscow and when traveling, but at such times I collapsed so that I don't

live at all--everything seems hateful to me... myself most of all. Then

I don't eat, don't wash... and how is it with you?..."

"Why not wash? That is not cleanly," said Prince Andrew; "on the

contrary one must try to make one's life as pleasant as possible. I'm

alive, that is not my fault, so I must live out my life as best I can

without hurting others."

"But with such ideas what motive have you for living? One would sit

without moving, undertaking nothing...."

"Life as it is leaves one no peace. I should be thankful to do nothing,

but here on the one hand the local nobility have done me the honor to

choose me to be their marshal; it was all I could do to get out of it.

They could not understand that I have not the necessary qualifications

for it--the kind of good-natured, fussy shallowness necessary for the

position. Then there's this house, which must be built in order to have

a nook of one's own in which to be quiet. And now there's this

recruiting."

"Why aren't you serving in the army?"

"After Austerlitz!" said Prince Andrew gloomily. "No, thank you very

much! I have promised myself not to serve again in the active Russian

army. And I won't--not even if Bonaparte were here at Smolensk

threatening Bald Hills--even then I wouldn't serve in the Russian army!

Well, as I was saying," he continued, recovering his composure, "now

there's this recruiting. My father is chief in command of the Third

District, and my only way of avoiding active service is to serve under

him."

"Then you are serving?"

"I am."

He paused a little while.

"And why do you serve?"

"Why, for this reason! My father is one of the most remarkable men of

his time. But he is growing old, and though not exactly cruel he has too

energetic a character. He is so accustomed to unlimited power that he is

terrible, and now he has this authority of a commander-in-chief of the

recruiting, granted by the Emperor. If I had been two hours late a

fortnight ago he would have had a paymaster's clerk at Yukhnovna

hanged," said Prince Andrew with a smile. "So I am serving because I

alone have any influence with my father, and now and then can save him

from actions which would torment him afterwards."

"Well, there you see!"

"Yes, but it is not as you imagine," Prince Andrew continued. "I did

not, and do not, in the least care about that scoundrel of a clerk who

had stolen some boots from the recruits; I should even have been very

glad to see him hanged, but I was sorry for my father--that again is for

myself."

Prince Andrew grew more and more animated. His eyes glittered feverishly

while he tried to prove to Pierre that in his actions there was no

desire to do good to his neighbor.

"There now, you wish to liberate your serfs," he continued; "that is a

very good thing, but not for you--I don't suppose you ever had anyone

flogged or sent to Siberia--and still less for your serfs. If they are

beaten, flogged, or sent to Siberia, I don't suppose they are any the

worse off. In Siberia they lead the same animal life, and the stripes on

their bodies heal, and they are happy as before. But it is a good thing

for proprietors who perish morally, bring remorse upon themselves,

stifle this remorse and grow callous, as a result of being able to

inflict punishments justly and unjustly. It is those people I pity, and

for their sake I should like to liberate the serfs. You may not have

seen, but I have seen, how good men brought up in those traditions of

unlimited power, in time when they grow more irritable, become cruel and

harsh, are conscious of it, but cannot restrain themselves and grow more

and more miserable."

Prince Andrew spoke so earnestly that Pierre could not help thinking

that these thoughts had been suggested to Prince Andrew by his father's

case.

He did not reply.

"So that's what I'm sorry for--human dignity, peace of mind, purity, and

not the serfs' backs and foreheads, which, beat and shave as you may,

always remain the same backs and foreheads."

"No, no! A thousand times no! I shall never agree with you," said

Pierre.

CHAPTER XII

In the evening Andrew and Pierre got into the open carriage and drove to

Bald Hills. Prince Andrew, glancing at Pierre, broke the silence now and

then with remarks which showed that he was in a good temper.

Pointing to the fields, he spoke of the improvements he was making in

his husbandry.

Pierre remained gloomily silent, answering in monosyllables and

apparently immersed in his own thoughts.

He was thinking that Prince Andrew was unhappy, had gone astray, did not

see the true light, and that he, Pierre, ought to aid, enlighten, and

raise him. But as soon as he thought of what he should say, he felt that

Prince Andrew with one word, one argument, would upset all his teaching,

and he shrank from beginning, afraid of exposing to possible ridicule

what to him was precious and sacred.

"No, but why do you think so?" Pierre suddenly began, lowering his head

and looking like a bull about to charge, "why do you think so? You

should not think so."

"Think? What about?" asked Prince Andrew with surprise.

"About life, about man's destiny. It can't be so. I myself thought like

that, and do you know what saved me? Freemasonry! No, don't smile.

Freemasonry is not a religious ceremonial sect, as I thought it was:

Freemasonry is the best expression of the best, the eternal, aspects of

humanity."

And he began to explain Freemasonry as he understood it to Prince

Andrew. He said that Freemasonry is the teaching of Christianity freed

from the bonds of State and Church, a teaching of equality, brotherhood,

and love.

"Only our holy brotherhood has the real meaning of life, all the rest is

a dream," said Pierre. "Understand, my dear fellow, that outside this

union all is filled with deceit and falsehood and I agree with you that

nothing is left for an intelligent and good man but to live out his

life, like you, merely trying not to harm others. But make our

fundamental convictions your own, join our brotherhood, give yourself up

to us, let yourself be guided, and you will at once feel yourself, as I

have felt myself, a part of that vast invisible chain the beginning of

which is hidden in heaven," said Pierre.

Prince Andrew, looking straight in front of him, listened in silence to

Pierre's words. More than once, when the noise of the wheels prevented

his catching what Pierre said, he asked him to repeat it, and by the

peculiar glow that came into Prince Andrew's eyes and by his silence,

Pierre saw that his words were not in vain and that Prince Andrew would

not interrupt him or laugh at what he said.

They reached a river that had overflowed its banks and which they had to

cross by ferry. While the carriage and horses were being placed on it,

they also stepped on the raft.

Prince Andrew, leaning his arms on the raft railing, gazed silently at

the flooding waters glittering in the setting sun.

"Well, what do you think about it?" Pierre asked. "Why are you silent?"

"What do I think about it? I am listening to you. It's all very well....

You say: join our brotherhood and we will show you the aim of life, the

destiny of man, and the laws which govern the world. But who are we?

Men. How is it you know everything? Why do I alone not see what you see?

You see a reign of goodness and truth on earth, but I don't see it."

Pierre interrupted him.

"Do you believe in a future life?" he asked.

"A future life?" Prince Andrew repeated, but Pierre, giving him no time

to reply, took the repetition for a denial, the more readily as he knew

Prince Andrew's former atheistic convictions.

"You say you can't see a reign of goodness and truth on earth. Nor could

I, and it cannot be seen if one looks on our life here as the end of

everything. On earth, here on this earth" (Pierre pointed to the

fields), "there is no truth, all is false and evil; but in the universe,

in the whole universe there is a kingdom of truth, and we who are now

the children of earth are--eternally--children of the whole universe.

Don't I feel in my soul that I am part of this vast harmonious whole?

Don't I feel that I form one link, one step, between the lower and

higher beings, in this vast harmonious multitude of beings in whom the

Deity--the Supreme Power if you prefer the term--is manifest? If I see,

clearly see, that ladder leading from plant to man, why should I suppose

it breaks off at me and does not go farther and farther? I feel that I

cannot vanish, since nothing vanishes in this world, but that I shall

always exist and always have existed. I feel that beyond me and above me

there are spirits, and that in this world there is truth."

"Yes, that is Herder's theory," said Prince Andrew, "but it is not that

which can convince me, dear friend--life and death are what convince.

What convinces is when one sees a being dear to one, bound up with one's

own life, before whom one was to blame and had hoped to make it right"

(Prince Andrew's voice trembled and he turned away), "and suddenly that

being is seized with pain, suffers, and ceases to exist.... Why? It

cannot be that there is no answer. And I believe there is.... That's

what convinces, that is what has convinced me," said Prince Andrew.

"Yes, yes, of course," said Pierre, "isn't that what I'm saying?"

"No. All I say is that it is not argument that convinces me of the

necessity of a future life, but this: when you go hand in hand with

someone and all at once that person vanishes there, into nowhere, and

you yourself are left facing that abyss, and look in. And I have looked

in...."

"Well, that's it then! You know that there is a there and there is a

Someone? There is the future life. The Someone is--God."

Prince Andrew did not reply. The carriage and horses had long since been

taken off, onto the farther bank, and reharnessed. The sun had sunk half

below the horizon and an evening frost was starring the puddles near the

ferry, but Pierre and Andrew, to the astonishment of the footmen,

coachmen, and ferrymen, still stood on the raft and talked.

"If there is a God and future life, there is truth and good, and man's

highest happiness consists in striving to attain them. We must live, we

must love, and we must believe that we live not only today on this scrap

of earth, but have lived and shall live forever, there, in the Whole,"

said Pierre, and he pointed to the sky.

Prince Andrew stood leaning on the railing of the raft listening to

Pierre, and he gazed with his eyes fixed on the red reflection of the

sun gleaming on the blue waters. There was perfect stillness. Pierre

became silent. The raft had long since stopped and only the waves of the

current beat softly against it below. Prince Andrew felt as if the sound

of the waves kept up a refrain to Pierre's words, whispering:

"It is true, believe it."

He sighed, and glanced with a radiant, childlike, tender look at

Pierre's face, flushed and rapturous, but yet shy before his superior

friend.

"Yes, if it only were so!" said Prince Andrew. "However, it is time to

get on," he added, and, stepping off the raft, he looked up at the sky

to which Pierre had pointed, and for the first time since Austerlitz saw

that high, everlasting sky he had seen while lying on that battlefield;

and something that had long been slumbering, something that was best

within him, suddenly awoke, joyful and youthful, in his soul. It

vanished as soon as he returned to the customary conditions of his life,

but he knew that this feeling which he did not know how to develop

existed within him. His meeting with Pierre formed an epoch in Prince

Andrew's life. Though outwardly he continued to live in the same old

way, inwardly he began a new life.

CHAPTER XIII

It was getting dusk when Prince Andrew and Pierre drove up to the front

entrance of the house at Bald Hills. As they approached the house,

Prince Andrew with a smile drew Pierre's attention to a commotion going

on at the back porch. A woman, bent with age, with a wallet on her back,

and a short, long-haired, young man in a black garment had rushed back

to the gate on seeing the carriage driving up. Two women ran out after

them, and all four, looking round at the carriage, ran in dismay up the

steps of the back porch.

"Those are Mary's 'God's folk,'" said Prince Andrew. "They have mistaken

us for my father. This is the one matter in which she disobeys him. He

orders these pilgrims to be driven away, but she receives them."

"But what are 'God's folk'?" asked Pierre.

Prince Andrew had no time to answer. The servants came out to meet them,

and he asked where the old prince was and whether he was expected back

soon.

The old prince had gone to the town and was expected back any minute.

Prince Andrew led Pierre to his own apartments, which were always kept

in perfect order and readiness for him in his father's house; he himself

went to the nursery.

"Let us go and see my sister," he said to Pierre when he returned. "I

have not found her yet, she is hiding now, sitting with her 'God's

folk.' It will serve her right, she will be confused, but you will see

her 'God's folk.' It's really very curious."

"What are 'God's folk'?" asked Pierre.

"Come, and you'll see for yourself."

Princess Mary really was disconcerted and red patches came on her face

when they went in. In her snug room, with lamps burning before the icon

stand, a young lad with a long nose and long hair, wearing a monk's

cassock, sat on the sofa beside her, behind a samovar. Near them, in an

armchair, sat a thin, shriveled, old woman, with a meek expression on

her childlike face.

"Andrew, why didn't you warn me?" said the princess, with mild reproach,

as she stood before her pilgrims like a hen before her chickens.

"Charmee de vous voir. Je suis tres contente de vous voir," \* she said

to Pierre as he kissed her hand. She had known him as a child, and now

his friendship with Andrew, his misfortune with his wife, and above all

his kindly, simple face disposed her favorably toward him. She looked at

him with her beautiful radiant eyes and seemed to say, "I like you very

much, but please don't laugh at my people." After exchanging the first

greetings, they sat down.

\* "Delighted to see you. I am very glad to see you."

"Ah, and Ivanushka is here too!" said Prince Andrew, glancing with a

smile at the young pilgrim.

"Andrew!" said Princess Mary, imploringly. "Il faut que vous sachiez que

c'est une femme," \* said Prince Andrew to Pierre.

"Andrew, au nom de Dieu!" \*(2) Princess Mary repeated.

\* "You must know that this is a woman."

\* (2) "For heaven's sake."

It was evident that Prince Andrew's ironical tone toward the pilgrims

and Princess Mary's helpless attempts to protect them were their

customary long-established relations on the matter.

"Mais, ma bonne amie," said Prince Andrew, "vous devriez au contraire

m'être reconnaissante de ce que j'explique a Pierre votre intimité avec

ce jeune homme." \*

\* "But, my dear, you ought on the contrary to be grateful to me for

explaining to Pierre your intimacy with this young man."

"Really?" said Pierre, gazing over his spectacles with curiosity and

seriousness (for which Princess Mary was specially grateful to him) into

Ivanushka's face, who, seeing that she was being spoken about, looked

round at them all with crafty eyes.

Princess Mary's embarrassment on her people's account was quite

unnecessary. They were not in the least abashed. The old woman, lowering

her eyes but casting side glances at the newcomers, had turned her cup

upside down and placed a nibbled bit of sugar beside it, and sat quietly

in her armchair, though hoping to be offered another cup of tea.

Ivanushka, sipping out of her saucer, looked with sly womanish eyes from

under her brows at the young men.

"Where have you been? To Kiev?" Prince Andrew asked the old woman.

"I have, good sir," she answered garrulously. "Just at Christmastime I

was deemed worthy to partake of the holy and heavenly sacrament at the

shrine of the saint. And now I'm from Kolyazin, master, where a great

and wonderful blessing has been revealed."

"And was Ivanushka with you?"

"I go by myself, benefactor," said Ivanushka, trying to speak in a bass

voice. "I only came across Pelageya in Yukhnovo..."

Pelageya interrupted her companion; she evidently wished to tell what

she had seen.

"In Kolyazin, master, a wonderful blessing has been revealed."

"What is it? Some new relics?" asked Prince Andrew.

"Andrew, do leave off," said Princess Mary. "Don't tell him, Pelageya."

"No... why not, my dear, why shouldn't I? I like him. He is kind, he is

one of God's chosen, he's a benefactor, he once gave me ten rubles, I

remember. When I was in Kiev, Crazy Cyril says to me (he's one of God's

own and goes barefoot summer and winter), he says, 'Why are you not

going to the right place? Go to Kolyazin where a wonder-working icon of

the Holy Mother of God has been revealed.' On hearing those words I said

good-by to the holy folk and went."

All were silent, only the pilgrim woman went on in measured tones,

drawing in her breath.

"So I come, master, and the people say to me: 'A great blessing has been

revealed, holy oil trickles from the cheeks of our blessed Mother, the

Holy Virgin Mother of God'...."

"All right, all right, you can tell us afterwards," said Princess Mary,

flushing.

"Let me ask her," said Pierre. "Did you see it yourselves?" he inquired.

"Oh, yes, master, I was found worthy. Such a brightness on the face like

the light of heaven, and from the blessed Mother's cheek it drops and

drops...."

"But, dear me, that must be a fraud!" said Pierre, naively, who had

listened attentively to the pilgrim.

"Oh, master, what are you saying?" exclaimed the horrified Pelageya,

turning to Princess Mary for support.

"They impose on the people," he repeated.

"Lord Jesus Christ!" exclaimed the pilgrim woman, crossing herself. "Oh,

don't speak so, master! There was a general who did not believe, and

said, 'The monks cheat,' and as soon as he'd said it he went blind. And

he dreamed that the Holy Virgin Mother of the Kiev catacombs came to him

and said, 'Believe in me and I will make you whole.' So he begged: 'Take

me to her, take me to her.' It's the real truth I'm telling you, I saw

it myself. So he was brought, quite blind, straight to her, and he goes

up to her and falls down and says, 'Make me whole,' says he, 'and I'll

give thee what the Tsar bestowed on me.' I saw it myself, master, the

star is fixed into the icon. Well, and what do you think? He received

his sight! It's a sin to speak so. God will punish you," she said

admonishingly, turning to Pierre.

"How did the star get into the icon?" Pierre asked.

"And was the Holy Mother promoted to the rank of general?" said Prince

Andrew, with a smile.

Pelageya suddenly grew quite pale and clasped her hands.

"Oh, master, master, what a sin! And you who have a son!" she began, her

pallor suddenly turning to a vivid red. "Master, what have you said? God

forgive you!" And she crossed herself. "Lord forgive him! My dear, what

does it mean?..." she asked, turning to Princess Mary. She got up and,

almost crying, began to arrange her wallet. She evidently felt

frightened and ashamed to have accepted charity in a house where such

things could be said, and was at the same time sorry to have now to

forgo the charity of this house.

"Now, why need you do it?" said Princess Mary. "Why did you come to

me?..."

"Come, Pelageya, I was joking," said Pierre. "Princesse, ma parole, je

n'ai pas voulu l'offenser. \* I did not mean anything, I was only

joking," he said, smiling shyly and trying to efface his offense. "It

was all my fault, and Andrew was only joking."

\* "Princess, on my word, I did not wish to offend her."

Pelageya stopped doubtfully, but in Pierre's face there was such a look

of sincere penitence, and Prince Andrew glanced so meekly now at her and

now at Pierre, that she was gradually reassured.

CHAPTER XIV

The pilgrim woman was appeased and, being encouraged to talk, gave a

long account of Father Amphilochus, who led so holy a life that his

hands smelled of incense, and how on her last visit to Kiev some monks

she knew let her have the keys of the catacombs, and how she, taking

some dried bread with her, had spent two days in the catacombs with the

saints. "I'd pray awhile to one, ponder awhile, then go on to another.

I'd sleep a bit and then again go and kiss the relics, and there was

such peace all around, such blessedness, that one don't want to come

out, even into the light of heaven again."

Pierre listened to her attentively and seriously. Prince Andrew went out

of the room, and then, leaving "God's folk" to finish their tea,

Princess Mary took Pierre into the drawing room.

"You are very kind," she said to him.

"Oh, I really did not mean to hurt her feelings. I understand them so

well and have the greatest respect for them."

Princess Mary looked at him silently and smiled affectionately.

"I have known you a long time, you see, and am as fond of you as of a

brother," she said. "How do you find Andrew?" she added hurriedly, not

giving him time to reply to her affectionate words. "I am very anxious

about him. His health was better in the winter, but last spring his

wound reopened and the doctor said he ought to go away for a cure. And I

am also very much afraid for him spiritually. He has not a character

like us women who, when we suffer, can weep away our sorrows. He keeps

it all within him. Today he is cheerful and in good spirits, but that is

the effect of your visit--he is not often like that. If you could

persuade him to go abroad. He needs activity, and this quiet regular

life is very bad for him. Others don't notice it, but I see it."

Toward ten o'clock the men servants rushed to the front door, hearing

the bells of the old prince's carriage approaching. Prince Andrew and

Pierre also went out into the porch.

"Who's that?" asked the old prince, noticing Pierre as he got out of the

carriage.

"Ah! Very glad! Kiss me," he said, having learned who the young stranger

was.

The old prince was in a good temper and very gracious to Pierre.

Before supper, Prince Andrew, coming back to his father's study, found

him disputing hotly with his visitor. Pierre was maintaining that a time

would come when there would be no more wars. The old prince disputed it

chaffingly, but without getting angry.

"Drain the blood from men's veins and put in water instead, then there

will be no more war! Old women's nonsense--old women's nonsense!" he

repeated, but still he patted Pierre affectionately on the shoulder, and

then went up to the table where Prince Andrew, evidently not wishing to

join in the conversation, was looking over the papers his father had

brought from town. The old prince went up to him and began to talk

business.

"The marshal, a Count Rostov, hasn't sent half his contingent. He came

to town and wanted to invite me to dinner--I gave him a pretty

dinner!... And there, look at this.... Well, my boy," the old prince

went on, addressing his son and patting Pierre on the shoulder. "A fine

fellow--your friend--I like him! He stirs me up. Another says clever

things and one doesn't care to listen, but this one talks rubbish yet

stirs an old fellow up. Well, go! Get along! Perhaps I'll come and sit

with you at supper. We'll have another dispute. Make friends with my

little fool, Princess Mary," he shouted after Pierre, through the door.

Only now, on his visit to Bald Hills, did Pierre fully realize the

strength and charm of his friendship with Prince Andrew. That charm was

not expressed so much in his relations with him as with all his family

and with the household. With the stern old prince and the gentle, timid

Princess Mary, though he had scarcely known them, Pierre at once felt

like an old friend. They were all fond of him already. Not only Princess

Mary, who had been won by his gentleness with the pilgrims, gave him her

most radiant looks, but even the one-year-old "Prince Nicholas" (as his

grandfather called him) smiled at Pierre and let himself be taken in his

arms, and Michael Ivanovich and Mademoiselle Bourienne looked at him

with pleasant smiles when he talked to the old prince.

The old prince came in to supper; this was evidently on Pierre's

account. And during the two days of the young man's visit he was

extremely kind to him and told him to visit them again.

When Pierre had gone and the members of the household met together, they

began to express their opinions of him as people always do after a new

acquaintance has left, but as seldom happens, no one said anything but

what was good of him.

CHAPTER XV

When returning from his leave, Rostov felt, for the first time, how

close was the bond that united him to Denisov and the whole regiment.

On approaching it, Rostov felt as he had done when approaching his home

in Moscow. When he saw the first hussar with the unbuttoned uniform of

his regiment, when he recognized red-haired Dementyev and saw the picket

ropes of the roan horses, when Lavrushka gleefully shouted to his

master, "The count has come!" and Denisov, who had been asleep on his

bed, ran all disheveled out of the mud hut to embrace him, and the

officers collected round to greet the new arrival, Rostov experienced

the same feeling as when his mother, his father, and his sister had

embraced him, and tears of joy choked him so that he could not speak.

The regiment was also a home, and as unalterably dear and precious as

his parents' house.

When he had reported himself to the commander of the regiment and had

been reassigned to his former squadron, had been on duty and had gone

out foraging, when he had again entered into all the little interests of

the regiment and felt himself deprived of liberty and bound in one

narrow, unchanging frame, he experienced the same sense of peace, of

moral support, and the same sense of being at home here in his own

place, as he had felt under the parental roof. But here was none of all

that turmoil of the world at large, where he did not know his right

place and took mistaken decisions; here was no Sonya with whom he ought,

or ought not, to have an explanation; here was no possibility of going

there or not going there; here there were not twenty-four hours in the

day which could be spent in such a variety of ways; there was not that

innumerable crowd of people of whom not one was nearer to him or farther

from him than another; there were none of those uncertain and undefined

money relations with his father, and nothing to recall that terrible

loss to Dolokhov. Here, in the regiment, all was clear and simple. The

whole world was divided into two unequal parts: one, our Pavlograd

regiment; the other, all the rest. And the rest was no concern of his.

In the regiment, everything was definite: who was lieutenant, who

captain, who was a good fellow, who a bad one, and most of all, who was

a comrade. The canteenkeeper gave one credit, one's pay came every four

months, there was nothing to think out or decide, you had only to do

nothing that was considered bad in the Pavlograd regiment and, when

given an order, to do what was clearly, distinctly, and definitely

ordered--and all would be well.

Having once more entered into the definite conditions of this regimental

life, Rostov felt the joy and relief a tired man feels on lying down to

rest. Life in the regiment, during this campaign, was all the pleasanter

for him, because, after his loss to Dolokhov (for which, in spite of all

his family's efforts to console him, he could not forgive himself), he

had made up his mind to atone for his fault by serving, not as he had

done before, but really well, and by being a perfectly first-rate

comrade and officer--in a word, a splendid man altogether, a thing which

seemed so difficult out in the world, but so possible in the regiment.

After his losses, he had determined to pay back his debt to his parents

in five years. He received ten thousand rubles a year, but now resolved

to take only two thousand and leave the rest to repay the debt to his

parents.

Our army, after repeated retreats and advances and battles at Pultusk

and Preussisch-Eylau, was concentrated near Bartenstein. It was awaiting

the Emperor's arrival and the beginning of a new campaign.

The Pavlograd regiment, belonging to that part of the army which had

served in the 1805 campaign, had been recruiting up to strength in

Russia, and arrived too late to take part in the first actions of the

campaign. It had been neither at Pultusk nor at Preussisch-Eylau and,

when it joined the army in the field in the second half of the campaign,

was attached to Platov's division.

Platov's division was acting independently of the main army. Several

times parts of the Pavlograd regiment had exchanged shots with the

enemy, had taken prisoners, and once had even captured Marshal Oudinot's

carriages. In April the Pavlograds were stationed immovably for some

weeks near a totally ruined and deserted German village.

A thaw had set in, it was muddy and cold, the ice on the river broke,

and the roads became impassable. For days neither provisions for the men

nor fodder for the horses had been issued. As no transports could

arrive, the men dispersed about the abandoned and deserted villages,

searching for potatoes, but found few even of these.

Everything had been eaten up and the inhabitants had all fled--if any

remained, they were worse than beggars and nothing more could be taken

from them; even the soldiers, usually pitiless enough, instead of taking

anything from them, often gave them the last of their rations.

The Pavlograd regiment had had only two men wounded in action, but had

lost nearly half its men from hunger and sickness. In the hospitals,

death was so certain that soldiers suffering from fever, or the swelling

that came from bad food, preferred to remain on duty, and hardly able to

drag their legs went to the front rather than to the hospitals. When

spring came on, the soldiers found a plant just showing out of the

ground that looked like asparagus, which, for some reason, they called

"Mashka's sweet root." It was very bitter, but they wandered about the

fields seeking it and dug it out with their sabers and ate it, though

they were ordered not to do so, as it was a noxious plant. That spring a

new disease broke out among the soldiers, a swelling of the arms, legs,

and face, which the doctors attributed to eating this root. But in spite

of all this, the soldiers of Denisov's squadron fed chiefly on "Mashka's

sweet root," because it was the second week that the last of the

biscuits were being doled out at the rate of half a pound a man and the

last potatoes received had sprouted and frozen.

The horses also had been fed for a fortnight on straw from the thatched

roofs and had become terribly thin, though still covered with tufts of

felty winter hair.

Despite this destitution, the soldiers and officers went on living just

as usual. Despite their pale swollen faces and tattered uniforms, the

hussars formed line for roll call, kept things in order, groomed their

horses, polished their arms, brought in straw from the thatched roofs in

place of fodder, and sat down to dine round the caldrons from which they

rose up hungry, joking about their nasty food and their hunger. As

usual, in their spare time, they lit bonfires, steamed themselves before

them naked; smoked, picked out and baked sprouting rotten potatoes, told

and listened to stories of Potemkin's and Suvorov's campaigns, or to

legends of Alesha the Sly, or the priest's laborer Mikolka.

The officers, as usual, lived in twos and threes in the roofless, half-

ruined houses. The seniors tried to collect straw and potatoes and, in

general, food for the men. The younger ones occupied themselves as

before, some playing cards (there was plenty of money, though there was

no food), some with more innocent games, such as quoits and skittles.

The general trend of the campaign was rarely spoken of, partly because

nothing certain was known about it, partly because there was a vague

feeling that in the main it was going badly.

Rostov lived, as before, with Denisov, and since their furlough they had

become more friendly than ever. Denisov never spoke of Rostov's family,

but by the tender friendship his commander showed him, Rostov felt that

the elder hussar's luckless love for Natasha played a part in

strengthening their friendship. Denisov evidently tried to expose Rostov

to danger as seldom as possible, and after an action greeted his safe

return with evident joy. On one of his foraging expeditions, in a

deserted and ruined village to which he had come in search of

provisions, Rostov found a family consisting of an old Pole and his

daughter with an infant in arms. They were half clad, hungry, too weak

to get away on foot and had no means of obtaining a conveyance. Rostov

brought them to his quarters, placed them in his own lodging, and kept

them for some weeks while the old man was recovering. One of his

comrades, talking of women, began chaffing Rostov, saying that he was

more wily than any of them and that it would not be a bad thing if he

introduced to them the pretty Polish girl he had saved. Rostov took the

joke as an insult, flared up, and said such unpleasant things to the

officer that it was all Denisov could do to prevent a duel. When the

officer had gone away, Denisov, who did not himself know what Rostov's

relations with the Polish girl might be, began to upbraid him for his

quickness of temper, and Rostov replied:

"Say what you like.... She is like a sister to me, and I can't tell you

how it offended me... because... well, for that reason...."

Denisov patted him on the shoulder and began rapidly pacing the room

without looking at Rostov, as was his way at moments of deep feeling.

"Ah, what a mad bweed you Wostovs are!" he muttered, and Rostov noticed

tears in his eyes.

CHAPTER XVI

In April the troops were enlivened by news of the Emperor's arrival, but

Rostov had no chance of being present at the review he held at

Bartenstein, as the Pavlograds were at the outposts far beyond that

place.

They were bivouacking. Denisov and Rostov were living in an earth hut,

dug out for them by the soldiers and roofed with branches and turf. The

hut was made in the following manner, which had then come into vogue. A

trench was dug three and a half feet wide, four feet eight inches deep,

and eight feet long. At one end of the trench, steps were cut out and

these formed the entrance and vestibule. The trench itself was the room,

in which the lucky ones, such as the squadron commander, had a board,

lying on piles at the end opposite the entrance, to serve as a table. On

each side of the trench, the earth was cut out to a breadth of about two

and a half feet, and this did duty for bedsteads and couches. The roof

was so constructed that one could stand up in the middle of the trench

and could even sit up on the beds if one drew close to the table.

Denisov, who was living luxuriously because the soldiers of his squadron

liked him, had also a board in the roof at the farther end, with a piece

of (broken but mended) glass in it for a window. When it was very cold,

embers from the soldiers' campfire were placed on a bent sheet of iron

on the steps in the "reception room"--as Denisov called that part of the

hut--and it was then so warm that the officers, of whom there were

always some with Denisov and Rostov, sat in their shirt sleeves.

In April, Rostov was on orderly duty. One morning, between seven and

eight, returning after a sleepless night, he sent for embers, changed

his rain-soaked underclothes, said his prayers, drank tea, got warm,

then tidied up the things on the table and in his own corner, and, his

face glowing from exposure to the wind and with nothing on but his

shirt, lay down on his back, putting his arms under his head. He was

pleasantly considering the probability of being promoted in a few days

for his last reconnoitering expedition, and was awaiting Denisov, who

had gone out somewhere and with whom he wanted a talk.

Suddenly he heard Denisov shouting in a vibrating voice behind the hut,

evidently much excited. Rostov moved to the window to see whom he was

speaking to, and saw the quartermaster, Topcheenko.

"I ordered you not to let them eat that Mashka woot stuff!" Denisov was

shouting. "And I saw with my own eyes how Lazarchuk bwought some fwom

the fields."

"I have given the order again and again, your honor, but they don't

obey," answered the quartermaster.

Rostov lay down again on his bed and thought complacently: "Let him fuss

and bustle now, my job's done and I'm lying down--capitally!" He could

hear that Lavrushka--that sly, bold orderly of Denisov's--was talking,

as well as the quartermaster. Lavrushka was saying something about

loaded wagons, biscuits, and oxen he had seen when he had gone out for

provisions.

Then Denisov's voice was heard shouting farther and farther away.

"Saddle! Second platoon!"

"Where are they off to now?" thought Rostov.

Five minutes later, Denisov came into the hut, climbed with muddy boots

on the bed, lit his pipe, furiously scattered his things about, took his

leaded whip, buckled on his saber, and went out again. In answer to

Rostov's inquiry where he was going, he answered vaguely and crossly

that he had some business.

"Let God and our gweat monarch judge me afterwards!" said Denisov going

out, and Rostov heard the hoofs of several horses splashing through the

mud. He did not even trouble to find out where Denisov had gone. Having

got warm in his corner, he fell asleep and did not leave the hut till

toward evening. Denisov had not yet returned. The weather had cleared

up, and near the next hut two officers and a cadet were playing svayka,

laughing as they threw their missiles which buried themselves in the

soft mud. Rostov joined them. In the middle of the game, the officers

saw some wagons approaching with fifteen hussars on their skinny horses

behind them. The wagons escorted by the hussars drew up to the picket

ropes and a crowd of hussars surrounded them.

"There now, Denisov has been worrying," said Rostov, "and here are the

provisions."

"So they are!" said the officers. "Won't the soldiers be glad!"

A little behind the hussars came Denisov, accompanied by two infantry

officers with whom he was talking.

Rostov went to meet them.

"I warn you, Captain," one of the officers, a short thin man, evidently

very angry, was saying.

"Haven't I told you I won't give them up?" replied Denisov.

"You will answer for it, Captain. It is mutiny--seizing the transport of

one's own army. Our men have had nothing to eat for two days."

"And mine have had nothing for two weeks," said Denisov.

"It is robbery! You'll answer for it, sir!" said the infantry officer,

raising his voice.

"Now, what are you pestewing me for?" cried Denisov, suddenly losing his

temper. "I shall answer for it and not you, and you'd better not buzz

about here till you get hurt. Be off! Go!" he shouted at the officers.

"Very well, then!" shouted the little officer, undaunted and not riding

away. "If you are determined to rob, I'll..."

"Go to the devil! quick ma'ch, while you're safe and sound!" and Denisov

turned his horse on the officer.

"Very well, very well!" muttered the officer, threateningly, and turning

his horse he trotted away, jolting in his saddle.

"A dog astwide a fence! A weal dog astwide a fence!" shouted Denisov

after him (the most insulting expression a cavalryman can address to a

mounted infantryman) and riding up to Rostov, he burst out laughing.

"I've taken twansports from the infantwy by force!" he said. "After all,

can't let our men starve."

The wagons that had reached the hussars had been consigned to an

infantry regiment, but learning from Lavrushka that the transport was

unescorted, Denisov with his hussars had seized it by force. The

soldiers had biscuits dealt out to them freely, and they even shared

them with the other squadrons.

The next day the regimental commander sent for Denisov, and holding his

fingers spread out before his eyes said:

"This is how I look at this affair: I know nothing about it and won't

begin proceedings, but I advise you to ride over to the staff and settle

the business there in the commissariat department and if possible sign a

receipt for such and such stores received. If not, as the demand was

booked against an infantry regiment, there will be a row and the affair

may end badly."

From the regimental commander's, Denisov rode straight to the staff with

a sincere desire to act on this advice. In the evening he came back to

his dugout in a state such as Rostov had never yet seen him in. Denisov

could not speak and gasped for breath. When Rostov asked what was the

matter, he only uttered some incoherent oaths and threats in a hoarse,

feeble voice.

Alarmed at Denisov's condition, Rostov suggested that he should undress,

drink some water, and send for the doctor.

"Twy me for wobbewy... oh! Some more water... Let them twy me, but I'll

always thwash scoundwels... and I'll tell the Empewo'... Ice..." he

muttered.

The regimental doctor, when he came, said it was absolutely necessary to

bleed Denisov. A deep saucer of black blood was taken from his hairy arm

and only then was he able to relate what had happened to him.

"I get there," began Denisov. "'Now then, where's your chief's

quarters?' They were pointed out. 'Please to wait.' 'I've widden twenty

miles and have duties to attend to and no time to wait. Announce me.'

Vewy well, so out comes their head chief--also took it into his head to

lecture me: 'It's wobbewy!'--'Wobbewy,' I say, 'is not done by man who

seizes pwovisions to feed his soldiers, but by him who takes them to

fill his own pockets!' 'Will you please be silent?' 'Vewy good!' Then he

says: 'Go and give a weceipt to the commissioner, but your affair will

be passed on to headquarters.' I go to the commissioner. I enter, and at

the table... who do you think? No, but wait a bit!... Who is it that's

starving us?" shouted Denisov, hitting the table with the fist of his

newly bled arm so violently that the table nearly broke down and the

tumblers on it jumped about. "Telyanin! 'What? So it's you who's

starving us to death! Is it? Take this and this!' and I hit him so pat,

stwaight on his snout... 'Ah, what a... what a...!' and I sta'ted

fwashing him... Well, I've had a bit of fun I can tell you!" cried

Denisov, gleeful and yet angry, his white teeth showing under his black

mustache. "I'd have killed him if they hadn't taken him away!"

"But what are you shouting for? Calm yourself," said Rostov. "You've set

your arm bleeding afresh. Wait, we must tie it up again."

Denisov was bandaged up again and put to bed. Next day he woke calm and

cheerful.

But at noon the adjutant of the regiment came into Rostov's and

Denisov's dugout with a grave and serious face and regretfully showed

them a paper addressed to Major Denisov from the regimental commander in

which inquiries were made about yesterday's occurrence. The adjutant

told them that the affair was likely to take a very bad turn: that a

court-martial had been appointed, and that in view of the severity with

which marauding and insubordination were now regarded, degradation to

the ranks would be the best that could be hoped for.

The case, as represented by the offended parties, was that, after

seizing the transports, Major Denisov, being drunk, went to the chief

quartermaster and without any provocation called him a thief, threatened

to strike him, and on being led out had rushed into the office and given

two officials a thrashing, and dislocated the arm of one of them.

In answer to Rostov's renewed questions, Denisov said, laughing, that he

thought he remembered that some other fellow had got mixed up in it, but

that it was all nonsense and rubbish, and he did not in the least fear

any kind of trial, and that if those scoundrels dared attack him he

would give them an answer that they would not easily forget.

Denisov spoke contemptuously of the whole matter, but Rostov knew him

too well not to detect that (while hiding it from others) at heart he

feared a court-martial and was worried over the affair, which was

evidently taking a bad turn. Every day, letters of inquiry and notices

from the court arrived, and on the first of May, Denisov was ordered to

hand the squadron over to the next in seniority and appear before the

staff of his division to explain his violence at the commissariat

office. On the previous day Platov reconnoitered with two Cossack

regiments and two squadrons of hussars. Denisov, as was his wont, rode

out in front of the outposts, parading his courage. A bullet fired by a

French sharpshooter hit him in the fleshy part of his leg. Perhaps at

another time Denisov would not have left the regiment for so slight a

wound, but now he took advantage of it to excuse himself from appearing

at the staff and went into hospital.

CHAPTER XVII

In June the battle of Friedland was fought, in which the Pavlograds did

not take part, and after that an armistice was proclaimed. Rostov, who

felt his friend's absence very much, having no news of him since he left

and feeling very anxious about his wound and the progress of his

affairs, took advantage of the armistice to get leave to visit Denisov

in hospital.

The hospital was in a small Prussian town that had been twice devastated

by Russian and French troops. Because it was summer, when it is so

beautiful out in the fields, the little town presented a particularly

dismal appearance with its broken roofs and fences, its foul streets,

tattered inhabitants, and the sick and drunken soldiers wandering about.

The hospital was in a brick building with some of the window frames and

panes broken and a courtyard surrounded by the remains of a wooden fence

that had been pulled to pieces. Several bandaged soldiers, with pale

swollen faces, were sitting or walking about in the sunshine in the

yard.

Directly Rostov entered the door he was enveloped by a smell of

putrefaction and hospital air. On the stairs he met a Russian army

doctor smoking a cigar. The doctor was followed by a Russian assistant.

"I can't tear myself to pieces," the doctor was saying. "Come to Makar

Alexeevich in the evening. I shall be there."

The assistant asked some further questions.

"Oh, do the best you can! Isn't it all the same?" The doctor noticed

Rostov coming upstairs.

"What do you want, sir?" said the doctor. "What do you want? The bullets

having spared you, do you want to try typhus? This is a pesthouse, sir."

"How so?" asked Rostov.

"Typhus, sir. It's death to go in. Only we two, Makeev and I" (he

pointed to the assistant), "keep on here. Some five of us doctors have

died in this place.... When a new one comes he is done for in a week,"

said the doctor with evident satisfaction. "Prussian doctors have been

invited here, but our allies don't like it at all."

Rostov explained that he wanted to see Major Denisov of the hussars, who

was wounded.

"I don't know. I can't tell you, sir. Only think! I am alone in charge

of three hospitals with more than four hundred patients! It's well that

the charitable Prussian ladies send us two pounds of coffee and some

lint each month or we should be lost!" he laughed. "Four hundred, sir,

and they're always sending me fresh ones. There are four hundred? Eh?"

he asked, turning to the assistant.

The assistant looked fagged out. He was evidently vexed and impatient

for the talkative doctor to go.

"Major Denisov," Rostov said again. "He was wounded at Molliten."

"Dead, I fancy. Eh, Makeev?" queried the doctor, in a tone of

indifference.

The assistant, however, did not confirm the doctor's words.

"Is he tall and with reddish hair?" asked the doctor.

Rostov described Denisov's appearance.

"There was one like that," said the doctor, as if pleased. "That one is

dead, I fancy. However, I'll look up our list. We had a list. Have you

got it, Makeev?"

"Makar Alexeevich has the list," answered the assistant. "But if you'll

step into the officers' wards you'll see for yourself," he added,

turning to Rostov.

"Ah, you'd better not go, sir," said the doctor, "or you may have to

stay here yourself."

But Rostov bowed himself away from the doctor and asked the assistant to

show him the way.

"Only don't blame me!" the doctor shouted up after him.

Rostov and the assistant went into the dark corridor. The smell was so

strong there that Rostov held his nose and had to pause and collect his

strength before he could go on. A door opened to the right, and an

emaciated sallow man on crutches, barefoot and in underclothing, limped

out and, leaning against the doorpost, looked with glittering envious

eyes at those who were passing. Glancing in at the door, Rostov saw that

the sick and wounded were lying on the floor on straw and overcoats.

"May I go in and look?"

"What is there to see?" said the assistant.

But, just because the assistant evidently did not want him to go in,

Rostov entered the soldiers' ward. The foul air, to which he had already

begun to get used in the corridor, was still stronger here. It was a

little different, more pungent, and one felt that this was where it

originated.

In the long room, brightly lit up by the sun through the large windows,

the sick and wounded lay in two rows with their heads to the walls, and

leaving a passage in the middle. Most of them were unconscious and paid

no attention to the newcomers. Those who were conscious raised

themselves or lifted their thin yellow faces, and all looked intently at

Rostov with the same expression of hope, of relief, reproach, and envy

of another's health. Rostov went to the middle of the room and looking

through the open doors into the two adjoining rooms saw the same thing

there. He stood still, looking silently around. He had not at all

expected such a sight. Just before him, almost across the middle of the

passage on the bare floor, lay a sick man, probably a Cossack to judge

by the cut of his hair. The man lay on his back, his huge arms and legs

outstretched. His face was purple, his eyes were rolled back so that

only the whites were seen, and on his bare legs and arms which were

still red, the veins stood out like cords. He was knocking the back of

his head against the floor, hoarsely uttering some word which he kept

repeating. Rostov listened and made out the word. It was "drink, drink,

a drink!" Rostov glanced round, looking for someone who would put this

man back in his place and bring him water.

"Who looks after the sick here?" he asked the assistant.

Just then a commissariat soldier, a hospital orderly, came in from the

next room, marching stiffly, and drew up in front of Rostov.

"Good day, your honor!" he shouted, rolling his eyes at Rostov and

evidently mistaking him for one of the hospital authorities.

"Get him to his place and give him some water," said Rostov, pointing to

the Cossack.

"Yes, your honor," the soldier replied complacently, and rolling his

eyes more than ever he drew himself up still straighter, but did not

move.

"No, it's impossible to do anything here," thought Rostov, lowering his

eyes, and he was going out, but became aware of an intense look fixed on

him on his right, and he turned. Close to the corner, on an overcoat,

sat an old, unshaven, gray-bearded soldier as thin as a skeleton, with a

stern sallow face and eyes intently fixed on Rostov. The man's neighbor

on one side whispered something to him, pointing at Rostov, who noticed

that the old man wanted to speak to him. He drew nearer and saw that the

old man had only one leg bent under him, the other had been amputated

above the knee. His neighbor on the other side, who lay motionless some

distance from him with his head thrown back, was a young soldier with a

snub nose. His pale waxen face was still freckled and his eyes were

rolled back. Rostov looked at the young soldier and a cold chill ran

down his back.

"Why, this one seems..." he began, turning to the assistant.

"And how we've been begging, your honor," said the old soldier, his jaw

quivering. "He's been dead since morning. After all we're men, not

dogs."

"I'll send someone at once. He shall be taken away--taken away at once,"

said the assistant hurriedly. "Let us go, your honor."

"Yes, yes, let us go," said Rostov hastily, and lowering his eyes and

shrinking, he tried to pass unnoticed between the rows of reproachful

envious eyes that were fixed upon him, and went out of the room.

CHAPTER XVIII

Going along the corridor, the assistant led Rostov to the officers'

wards, consisting of three rooms, the doors of which stood open. There

were beds in these rooms and the sick and wounded officers were lying or

sitting on them. Some were walking about the rooms in hospital dressing

gowns. The first person Rostov met in the officers' ward was a thin

little man with one arm, who was walking about the first room in a

nightcap and hospital dressing gown, with a pipe between his teeth.

Rostov looked at him, trying to remember where he had seen him before.

"See where we've met again!" said the little man. "Tushin, Tushin, don't

you remember, who gave you a lift at Schon Grabern? And I've had a bit

cut off, you see..." he went on with a smile, pointing to the empty

sleeve of his dressing gown. "Looking for Vasili Dmitrich Denisov? My

neighbor," he added, when he heard who Rostov wanted. "Here, here," and

Tushin led him into the next room, from whence came sounds of several

laughing voices.

"How can they laugh, or even live at all here?" thought Rostov, still

aware of that smell of decomposing flesh that had been so strong in the

soldiers' ward, and still seeming to see fixed on him those envious

looks which had followed him out from both sides, and the face of that

young soldier with eyes rolled back.

Denisov lay asleep on his bed with his head under the blanket, though it

was nearly noon.

"Ah, Wostov? How are you, how are you?" he called out, still in the same

voice as in the regiment, but Rostov noticed sadly that under this

habitual ease and animation some new, sinister, hidden feeling showed

itself in the expression of Denisov's face and the intonations of his

voice.

His wound, though a slight one, had not yet healed even now, six weeks

after he had been hit. His face had the same swollen pallor as the faces

of the other hospital patients, but it was not this that struck Rostov.

What struck him was that Denisov did not seem glad to see him, and

smiled at him unnaturally. He did not ask about the regiment, nor about

the general state of affairs, and when Rostov spoke of these matters did

not listen.

Rostov even noticed that Denisov did not like to be reminded of the

regiment, or in general of that other free life which was going on

outside the hospital. He seemed to try to forget that old life and was

only interested in the affair with the commissariat officers. On

Rostov's inquiry as to how the matter stood, he at once produced from

under his pillow a paper he had received from the commission and the

rough draft of his answer to it. He became animated when he began

reading his paper and specially drew Rostov's attention to the stinging

rejoinders he made to his enemies. His hospital companions, who had

gathered round Rostov--a fresh arrival from the world outside--gradually

began to disperse as soon as Denisov began reading his answer. Rostov

noticed by their faces that all those gentlemen had already heard that

story more than once and were tired of it. Only the man who had the next

bed, a stout Uhlan, continued to sit on his bed, gloomily frowning and

smoking a pipe, and little one-armed Tushin still listened, shaking his

head disapprovingly. In the middle of the reading, the Uhlan interrupted

Denisov.

"But what I say is," he said, turning to Rostov, "it would be best

simply to petition the Emperor for pardon. They say great rewards will

now be distributed, and surely a pardon would be granted...."

"Me petition the Empewo'!" exclaimed Denisov, in a voice to which he

tried hard to give the old energy and fire, but which sounded like an

expression of irritable impotence. "What for? If I were a wobber I would

ask mercy, but I'm being court-martialed for bwinging wobbers to book.

Let them twy me, I'm not afwaid of anyone. I've served the Tsar and my

countwy honowably and have not stolen! And am I to be degwaded?...

Listen, I'm w'iting to them stwaight. This is what I say: 'If I had

wobbed the Tweasuwy...'"

"It's certainly well written," said Tushin, "but that's not the point,

Vasili Dmitrich," and he also turned to Rostov. "One has to submit, and

Vasili Dmitrich doesn't want to. You know the auditor told you it was a

bad business."

"Well, let it be bad," said Denisov.

"The auditor wrote out a petition for you," continued Tushin, "and you

ought to sign it and ask this gentleman to take it. No doubt he"

(indicating Rostov) "has connections on the staff. You won't find a

better opportunity."

"Haven't I said I'm not going to gwovel?" Denisov interrupted him, went

on reading his paper.

Rostov had not the courage to persuade Denisov, though he instinctively

felt that the way advised by Tushin and the other officers was the

safest, and though he would have been glad to be of service to Denisov.

He knew his stubborn will and straightforward hasty temper.

When the reading of Denisov's virulent reply, which took more than an

hour, was over, Rostov said nothing, and he spent the rest of the day in

a most dejected state of mind amid Denisov's hospital comrades, who had

gathered round him, telling them what he knew and listening to their

stories. Denisov was moodily silent all the evening.

Late in the evening, when Rostov was about to leave, he asked Denisov

whether he had no commission for him.

"Yes, wait a bit," said Denisov, glancing round at the officers, and

taking his papers from under his pillow he went to the window, where he

had an inkpot, and sat down to write.

"It seems it's no use knocking one's head against a wall!" he said,

coming from the window and giving Rostov a large envelope. In it was the

petition to the Emperor drawn up by the auditor, in which Denisov,

without alluding to the offenses of the commissariat officials, simply

asked for pardon.

"Hand it in. It seems..."

He did not finish, but gave a painfully unnatural smile.

CHAPTER XIX

Having returned to the regiment and told the commander the state of

Denisov's affairs, Rostov rode to Tilsit with the letter to the Emperor.

On the thirteenth of June the French and Russian Emperors arrived in

Tilsit. Boris Drubetskoy had asked the important personage on whom he

was in attendance, to include him in the suite appointed for the stay at

Tilsit.

"I should like to see the great man," he said, alluding to Napoleon,

whom hitherto he, like everyone else, had always called Buonaparte.

"You are speaking of Buonaparte?" asked the general, smiling.

Boris looked at his general inquiringly and immediately saw that he was

being tested.

"I am speaking, Prince, of the Emperor Napoleon," he replied. The

general patted him on the shoulder, with a smile.

"You will go far," he said, and took him to Tilsit with him.

Boris was among the few present at the Niemen on the day the two

Emperors met. He saw the raft, decorated with monograms, saw Napoleon

pass before the French Guards on the farther bank of the river, saw the

pensive face of the Emperor Alexander as he sat in silence in a tavern

on the bank of the Niemen awaiting Napoleon's arrival, saw both Emperors

get into boats, and saw how Napoleon--reaching the raft first--stepped

quickly forward to meet Alexander and held out his hand to him, and how

they both retired into the pavilion. Since he had begun to move in the

highest circles Boris had made it his habit to watch attentively all

that went on around him and to note it down. At the time of the meeting

at Tilsit he asked the names of those who had come with Napoleon and

about the uniforms they wore, and listened attentively to words spoken

by important personages. At the moment the Emperors went into the

pavilion he looked at his watch, and did not forget to look at it again

when Alexander came out. The interview had lasted an hour and fifty-

three minutes. He noted this down that same evening, among other facts

he felt to be of historic importance. As the Emperor's suite was a very

small one, it was a matter of great importance, for a man who valued his

success in the service, to be at Tilsit on the occasion of this

interview between the two Emperors, and having succeeded in this, Boris

felt that henceforth his position was fully assured. He had not only

become known, but people had grown accustomed to him and accepted him.

Twice he had executed commissions to the Emperor himself, so that the

latter knew his face, and all those at court, far from cold-shouldering

him as at first when they considered him a newcomer, would now have been

surprised had he been absent.

Boris lodged with another adjutant, the Polish Count Zhilinski.

Zhilinski, a Pole brought up in Paris, was rich, and passionately fond

of the French, and almost every day of the stay at Tilsit, French

officers of the Guard and from French headquarters were dining and

lunching with him and Boris.

On the evening of the twenty-fourth of June, Count Zhilinski arranged a

supper for his French friends. The guest of honor was an aide-de-camp of

Napoleon's, there were also several French officers of the Guard, and a

page of Napoleon's, a young lad of an old aristocratic French family.

That same day, Rostov, profiting by the darkness to avoid being

recognized in civilian dress, came to Tilsit and went to the lodging

occupied by Boris and Zhilinski.

Rostov, in common with the whole army from which he came, was far from

having experienced the change of feeling toward Napoleon and the French-

-who from being foes had suddenly become friends--that had taken place

at headquarters and in Boris. In the army, Bonaparte and the French were

still regarded with mingled feelings of anger, contempt, and fear. Only

recently, talking with one of Platov's Cossack officers, Rostov had

argued that if Napoleon were taken prisoner he would be treated not as a

sovereign, but as a criminal. Quite lately, happening to meet a wounded

French colonel on the road, Rostov had maintained with heat that peace

was impossible between a legitimate sovereign and the criminal

Bonaparte. Rostov was therefore unpleasantly struck by the presence of

French officers in Boris' lodging, dressed in uniforms he had been

accustomed to see from quite a different point of view from the outposts

of the flank. As soon as he noticed a French officer, who thrust his

head out of the door, that warlike feeling of hostility which he always

experienced at the sight of the enemy suddenly seized him. He stopped at

the threshold and asked in Russian whether Drubetskoy lived there.

Boris, hearing a strange voice in the anteroom, came out to meet him. An

expression of annoyance showed itself for a moment on his face on first

recognizing Rostov.

"Ah, it's you? Very glad, very glad to see you," he said, however,

coming toward him with a smile. But Rostov had noticed his first

impulse.

"I've come at a bad time I think. I should not have come, but I have

business," he said coldly.

"No, I only wonder how you managed to get away from your regiment. Dans

un moment je suis a vous," \* he said, answering someone who called him.

\* "In a minute I shall be at your disposal."

"I see I'm intruding," Rostov repeated.

The look of annoyance had already disappeared from Boris' face: having

evidently reflected and decided how to act, he very quietly took both

Rostov's hands and led him into the next room. His eyes, looking

serenely and steadily at Rostov, seemed to be veiled by something, as if

screened by blue spectacles of conventionality. So it seemed to Rostov.

"Oh, come now! As if you could come at a wrong time!" said Boris, and he

led him into the room where the supper table was laid and introduced him

to his guests, explaining that he was not a civilian, but an hussar

officer, and an old friend of his.

"Count Zhilinski--le Comte N. N.--le Capitaine S. S.," said he, naming

his guests. Rostov looked frowningly at the Frenchmen, bowed

reluctantly, and remained silent.

Zhilinski evidently did not receive this new Russian person very

willingly into his circle and did not speak to Rostov. Boris did not

appear to notice the constraint the newcomer produced and, with the same

pleasant composure and the same veiled look in his eyes with which he

had met Rostov, tried to enliven the conversation. One of the Frenchmen,

with the politeness characteristic of his countrymen, addressed the

obstinately taciturn Rostov, saying that the latter had probably come to

Tilsit to see the Emperor.

"No, I came on business," replied Rostov, briefly.

Rostov had been out of humor from the moment he noticed the look of

dissatisfaction on Boris' face, and as always happens to those in a bad

humor, it seemed to him that everyone regarded him with aversion and

that he was in everybody's way. He really was in their way, for he alone

took no part in the conversation which again became general. The looks

the visitors cast on him seemed to say: "And what is he sitting here

for?" He rose and went up to Boris.

"Anyhow, I'm in your way," he said in a low tone. "Come and talk over my

business and I'll go away."

"Oh, no, not at all," said Boris. "But if you are tired, come and lie

down in my room and have a rest."

"Yes, really..."

They went into the little room where Boris slept. Rostov, without

sitting down, began at once, irritably (as if Boris were to blame in

some way) telling him about Denisov's affair, asking him whether,

through his general, he could and would intercede with the Emperor on

Denisov's behalf and get Denisov's petition handed in. When he and Boris

were alone, Rostov felt for the first time that he could not look Boris

in the face without a sense of awkwardness. Boris, with one leg crossed

over the other and stroking his left hand with the slender fingers of

his right, listened to Rostov as a general listens to the report of a

subordinate, now looking aside and now gazing straight into Rostov's

eyes with the same veiled look. Each time this happened Rostov felt

uncomfortable and cast down his eyes.

"I have heard of such cases and know that His Majesty is very severe in

such affairs. I think it would be best not to bring it before the

Emperor, but to apply to the commander of the corps.... But in general,

I think..."

"So you don't want to do anything? Well then, say so!" Rostov almost

shouted, not looking Boris in the face.

Boris smiled.

"On the contrary, I will do what I can. Only I thought..."

At that moment Zhilinski's voice was heard calling Boris.

"Well then, go, go, go..." said Rostov, and refusing supper and

remaining alone in the little room, he walked up and down for a long

time, hearing the lighthearted French conversation from the next room.

CHAPTER XX

Rostov had come to Tilsit the day least suitable for a petition on

Denisov's behalf. He could not himself go to the general in attendance

as he was in mufti and had come to Tilsit without permission to do so,

and Boris, even had he wished to, could not have done so on the

following day. On that day, June 27, the preliminaries of peace were

signed. The Emperors exchanged decorations: Alexander received the Cross

of the Legion of Honor and Napoleon the Order of St. Andrew of the First

Degree, and a dinner had been arranged for the evening, given by a

battalion of the French Guards to the Preobrazhensk battalion. The

Emperors were to be present at that banquet.

Rostov felt so ill at ease and uncomfortable with Boris that, when the

latter looked in after supper, he pretended to be asleep, and early next

morning went away, avoiding Boris. In his civilian clothes and a round

hat, he wandered about the town, staring at the French and their

uniforms and at the streets and houses where the Russian and French

Emperors were staying. In a square he saw tables being set up and

preparations made for the dinner; he saw the Russian and French colors

draped from side to side of the streets, with huge monograms A and N. In

the windows of the houses also flags and bunting were displayed.

"Boris doesn't want to help me and I don't want to ask him. That's

settled," thought Nicholas. "All is over between us, but I won't leave

here without having done all I can for Denisov and certainly not without

getting his letter to the Emperor. The Emperor!... He is here!" thought

Rostov, who had unconsciously returned to the house where Alexander

lodged.

Saddled horses were standing before the house and the suite were

assembling, evidently preparing for the Emperor to come out.

"I may see him at any moment," thought Rostov. "If only I were to hand

the letter direct to him and tell him all... could they really arrest me

for my civilian clothes? Surely not! He would understand on whose side

justice lies. He understands everything, knows everything. Who can be

more just, more magnanimous than he? And even if they did arrest me for

being here, what would it matter?" thought he, looking at an officer who

was entering the house the Emperor occupied. "After all, people do go

in.... It's all nonsense! I'll go in and hand the letter to the Emperor

myself so much the worse for Drubetskoy who drives me to it!" And

suddenly with a determination he himself did not expect, Rostov felt for

the letter in his pocket and went straight to the house.

"No, I won't miss my opportunity now, as I did after Austerlitz," he

thought, expecting every moment to meet the monarch, and conscious of

the blood that rushed to his heart at the thought. "I will fall at his

feet and beseech him. He will lift me up, will listen, and will even

thank me. 'I am happy when I can do good, but to remedy injustice is the

greatest happiness,'" Rostov fancied the sovereign saying. And passing

people who looked after him with curiosity, he entered the porch of the

Emperor's house.

A broad staircase led straight up from the entry, and to the right he

saw a closed door. Below, under the staircase, was a door leading to the

lower floor.

"Whom do you want?" someone inquired.

"To hand in a letter, a petition, to His Majesty," said Nicholas, with a

tremor in his voice.

"A petition? This way, to the officer on duty" (he was shown the door

leading downstairs), "only it won't be accepted."

On hearing this indifferent voice, Rostov grew frightened at what he was

doing; the thought of meeting the Emperor at any moment was so

fascinating and consequently so alarming that he was ready to run away,

but the official who had questioned him opened the door, and Rostov

entered.

A short stout man of about thirty, in white breeches and high boots and

a batiste shirt that he had evidently only just put on, standing in that

room, and his valet was buttoning on to the back of his breeches a new

pair of handsome silk-embroidered braces that, for some reason,

attracted Rostov's attention. This man was speaking to someone in the

adjoining room.

"A good figure and in her first bloom," he was saying, but on seeing

Rostov, he stopped short and frowned.

"What is it? A petition?"

"What is it?" asked the person in the other room.

"Another petitioner," answered the man with the braces.

"Tell him to come later. He'll be coming out directly, we must go."

"Later... later! Tomorrow. It's too late..."

Rostov turned and was about to go, but the man in the braces stopped

him.

"Whom have you come from? Who are you?"

"I come from Major Denisov," answered Rostov.

"Are you an officer?"

"Lieutenant Count Rostov."

"What audacity! Hand it in through your commander. And go along with

you... go," and he continued to put on the uniform the valet handed him.

Rostov went back into the hall and noticed that in the porch there were

many officers and generals in full parade uniform, whom he had to pass.

Cursing his temerity, his heart sinking at the thought of finding

himself at any moment face to face with the Emperor and being put to

shame and arrested in his presence, fully alive now to the impropriety

of his conduct and repenting of it, Rostov, with downcast eyes, was

making his way out of the house through the brilliant suite when a

familiar voice called him and a hand detained him.

"What are you doing here, sir, in civilian dress?" asked a deep voice.

It was a cavalry general who had obtained the Emperor's special favor

during this campaign, and who had formerly commanded the division in

which Rostov was serving.

Rostov, in dismay, began justifying himself, but seeing the kindly,

jocular face of the general, he took him aside and in an excited voice

told him the whole affair, asking him to intercede for Denisov, whom the

general knew. Having heard Rostov to the end, the general shook his head

gravely.

"I'm sorry, sorry for that fine fellow. Give me the letter."

Hardly had Rostov handed him the letter and finished explaining

Denisov's case, when hasty steps and the jingling of spurs were heard on

the stairs, and the general, leaving him, went to the porch. The

gentlemen of the Emperor's suite ran down the stairs and went to their

horses. Hayne, the same groom who had been at Austerlitz, led up the

Emperor's horse, and the faint creak of a footstep Rostov knew at once

was heard on the stairs. Forgetting the danger of being recognized,

Rostov went close to the porch, together with some inquisitive

civilians, and again, after two years, saw those features he adored:

that same face and same look and step, and the same union of majesty and

mildness.... And the feeling of enthusiasm and love for his sovereign

rose again in Rostov's soul in all its old force. In the uniform of the

Preobrazhensk regiment--white chamois-leather breeches and high boots--

and wearing a star Rostov did not know (it was that of the Legion

d'honneur), the monarch came out into the porch, putting on his gloves

and carrying his hat under his arm. He stopped and looked about him,

brightening everything around by his glance. He spoke a few words to

some of the generals, and, recognizing the former commander of Rostov's

division, smiled and beckoned to him.

All the suite drew back and Rostov saw the general talking for some time

to the Emperor.

The Emperor said a few words to him and took a step toward his horse.

Again the crowd of members of the suite and street gazers (among whom

was Rostov) moved nearer to the Emperor. Stopping beside his horse, with

his hand on the saddle, the Emperor turned to the cavalry general and

said in a loud voice, evidently wishing to be heard by all:

"I cannot do it, General. I cannot, because the law is stronger than I,"

and he raised his foot to the stirrup.

The general bowed his head respectfully, and the monarch mounted and

rode down the street at a gallop. Beside himself with enthusiasm, Rostov

ran after him with the crowd.

CHAPTER XXI

The Emperor rode to the square where, facing one another, a battalion of

the Preobrazhensk regiment stood on the right and a battalion of the

French Guards in their bearskin caps on the left.

As the Tsar rode up to one flank of the battalions, which presented

arms, another group of horsemen galloped up to the opposite flank, and

at the head of them Rostov recognized Napoleon. It could be no one else.

He came at a gallop, wearing a small hat, a blue uniform open over a

white vest, and the St. Andrew ribbon over his shoulder. He was riding a

very fine thoroughbred gray Arab horse with a crimson gold-embroidered

saddlecloth. On approaching Alexander he raised his hat, and as he did

so, Rostov, with his cavalryman's eye, could not help noticing that

Napoleon did not sit well or firmly in the saddle. The battalions

shouted "Hurrah!" and "Vive l'Empereur!" Napoleon said something to

Alexander, and both Emperors dismounted and took each other's hands.

Napoleon's face wore an unpleasant and artificial smile. Alexander was

saying something affable to him.

In spite of the trampling of the French gendarmes' horses, which were

pushing back the crowd, Rostov kept his eyes on every movement of

Alexander and Bonaparte. It struck him as a surprise that Alexander

treated Bonaparte as an equal and that the latter was quite at ease with

the Tsar, as if such relations with an Emperor were an everyday matter

to him.

Alexander and Napoleon, with the long train of their suites, approached

the right flank of the Preobrazhensk battalion and came straight up to

the crowd standing there. The crowd unexpectedly found itself so close

to the Emperors that Rostov, standing in the front row, was afraid he

might be recognized.

"Sire, I ask your permission to present the Legion of Honor to the

bravest of your soldiers," said a sharp, precise voice, articulating

every letter.

This was said by the undersized Napoleon, looking up straight into

Alexander's eyes. Alexander listened attentively to what was said to him

and, bending his head, smiled pleasantly.

"To him who has borne himself most bravely in this last war," added

Napoleon, accentuating each syllable, as with a composure and assurance

exasperating to Rostov, he ran his eyes over the Russian ranks drawn up

before him, who all presented arms with their eyes fixed on their

Emperor.

"Will Your Majesty allow me to consult the colonel?" said Alexander and

took a few hasty steps toward Prince Kozlovski, the commander of the

battalion.

Bonaparte meanwhile began taking the glove off his small white hand,

tore it in doing so, and threw it away. An aide-de-camp behind him

rushed forward and picked it up.

"To whom shall it be given?" the Emperor Alexander asked Koslovski, in

Russian in a low voice.

"To whomever Your Majesty commands."

The Emperor knit his brows with dissatisfaction and, glancing back,

remarked:

"But we must give him an answer."

Kozlovski scanned the ranks resolutely and included Rostov in his

scrutiny.

"Can it be me?" thought Rostov.

"Lazarev!" the colonel called, with a frown, and Lazarev, the first

soldier in the rank, stepped briskly forward.

"Where are you off to? Stop here!" voices whispered to Lazarev who did

not know where to go. Lazarev stopped, casting a sidelong look at his

colonel in alarm. His face twitched, as often happens to soldiers called

before the ranks.

Napoleon slightly turned his head, and put his plump little hand out

behind him as if to take something. The members of his suite, guessing

at once what he wanted, moved about and whispered as they passed

something from one to another, and a page--the same one Rostov had seen

the previous evening at Boris'--ran forward and, bowing respectfully

over the outstretched hand and not keeping it waiting a moment, laid in

it an Order on a red ribbon. Napoleon, without looking, pressed two

fingers together and the badge was between them. Then he approached

Lazarev (who rolled his eyes and persistently gazed at his own monarch),

looked round at the Emperor Alexander to imply that what he was now

doing was done for the sake of his ally, and the small white hand

holding the Order touched one of Lazarev's buttons. It was as if

Napoleon knew that it was only necessary for his hand to deign to touch

that soldier's breast for the soldier to be forever happy, rewarded, and

distinguished from everyone else in the world. Napoleon merely laid the

cross on Lazarev's breast and, dropping his hand, turned toward

Alexander as though sure that the cross would adhere there. And it

really did.

Officious hands, Russian and French, immediately seized the cross and

fastened it to the uniform. Lazarev glanced morosely at the little man

with white hands who was doing something to him and, still standing

motionless presenting arms, looked again straight into Alexander's eyes,

as if asking whether he should stand there, or go away, or do something

else. But receiving no orders, he remained for some time in that rigid

position.

The Emperors remounted and rode away. The Preobrazhensk battalion,

breaking rank, mingled with the French Guards and sat down at the tables

prepared for them.

Lazarev sat in the place of honor. Russian and French officers embraced

him, congratulated him, and pressed his hands. Crowds of officers and

civilians drew near merely to see him. A rumble of Russian and French

voices and laughter filled the air round the tables in the square. Two

officers with flushed faces, looking cheerful and happy, passed by

Rostov.

"What d'you think of the treat? All on silver plate," one of them was

saying. "Have you seen Lazarev?"

"I have."

"Tomorrow, I hear, the Preobrazhenskis will give them a dinner."

"Yes, but what luck for Lazarev! Twelve hundred francs' pension for

life."

"Here's a cap, lads!" shouted a Preobrazhensk soldier, donning a shaggy

French cap.

"It's a fine thing! First-rate!"

"Have you heard the password?" asked one Guards' officer of another.

"The day before yesterday it was 'Napoleon, France, bravoure';

yesterday, 'Alexandre, Russie, grandeur.' One day our Emperor gives it

and next day Napoleon. Tomorrow our Emperor will send a St. George's

Cross to the bravest of the French Guards. It has to be done. He must

respond in kind."

Boris, too, with his friend Zhilinski, came to see the Preobrazhensk

banquet. On his way back, he noticed Rostov standing by the corner of a

house.

"Rostov! How d'you do? We missed one another," he said, and could not

refrain from asking what was the matter, so strangely dismal and

troubled was Rostov's face.

"Nothing, nothing," replied Rostov.

"You'll call round?"

"Yes, I will."

Rostov stood at that corner for a long time, watching the feast from a

distance. In his mind, a painful process was going on which he could not

bring to a conclusion. Terrible doubts rose in his soul. Now he

remembered Denisov with his changed expression, his submission, and the

whole hospital, with arms and legs torn off and its dirt and disease. So

vividly did he recall that hospital stench of dead flesh that he looked

round to see where the smell came from. Next he thought of that self-

satisfied Bonaparte, with his small white hand, who was now an Emperor,

liked and respected by Alexander. Then why those severed arms and legs

and those dead men?... Then again he thought of Lazarev rewarded and

Denisov punished and unpardoned. He caught himself harboring such

strange thoughts that he was frightened.

The smell of the food the Preobrazhenskis were eating and a sense of

hunger recalled him from these reflections; he had to get something to

eat before going away. He went to a hotel he had noticed that morning.

There he found so many people, among them officers who, like himself,

had come in civilian clothes, that he had difficulty in getting a

dinner. Two officers of his own division joined him. The conversation

naturally turned on the peace. The officers, his comrades, like most of

the army, were dissatisfied with the peace concluded after the battle of

Friedland. They said that had we held out a little longer Napoleon would

have been done for, as his troops had neither provisions nor ammunition.

Nicholas ate and drank (chiefly the latter) in silence. He finished a

couple of bottles of wine by himself. The process in his mind went on

tormenting him without reaching a conclusion. He feared to give way to

his thoughts, yet could not get rid of them. Suddenly, on one of the

officers' saying that it was humiliating to look at the French, Rostov

began shouting with uncalled-for wrath, and therefore much to the

surprise of the officers:

"How can you judge what's best?" he cried, the blood suddenly rushing to

his face. "How can you judge the Emperor's actions? What right have we

to argue? We cannot comprehend either the Emperor's aims or his

actions!"

"But I never said a word about the Emperor!" said the officer,

justifying himself, and unable to understand Rostov's outburst, except

on the supposition that he was drunk.

But Rostov did not listen to him.

"We are not diplomatic officials, we are soldiers and nothing more," he

went on. "If we are ordered to die, we must die. If we're punished, it

means that we have deserved it, it's not for us to judge. If the Emperor

pleases to recognize Bonaparte as Emperor and to conclude an alliance

with him, it means that that is the right thing to do. If once we begin

judging and arguing about everything, nothing sacred will be left! That

way we shall be saying there is no God--nothing!" shouted Nicholas,

banging the table--very little to the point as it seemed to his

listeners, but quite relevantly to the course of his own thoughts.

"Our business is to do our duty, to fight and not to think! That's

all...." said he.

"And to drink," said one of the officers, not wishing to quarrel.

"Yes, and to drink," assented Nicholas. "Hullo there! Another bottle!"

he shouted.

In 1808 the Emperor Alexander went to Erfurt for a fresh interview with

the Emperor Napoleon, and in the upper circles of Petersburg there was

much talk of the grandeur of this important meeting.

CHAPTER XXII

In 1809 the intimacy between "the world's two arbiters," as Napoleon and

Alexander were called, was such that when Napoleon declared war on

Austria a Russian corps crossed the frontier to co-operate with our old

enemy Bonaparte against our old ally the Emperor of Austria, and in

court circles the possibility of marriage between Napoleon and one of

Alexander's sisters was spoken of. But besides considerations of foreign

policy, the attention of Russian society was at that time keenly

directed on the internal changes that were being undertaken in all the

departments of government.

Life meanwhile--real life, with its essential interests of health and

sickness, toil and rest, and its intellectual interests in thought,

science, poetry, music, love, friendship, hatred, and passions--went on

as usual, independently of and apart from political friendship or enmity

with Napoleon Bonaparte and from all the schemes of reconstruction.

BOOK SIX: 1808 - 10

CHAPTER I

Prince Andrew had spent two years continuously in the country.

All the plans Pierre had attempted on his estates--and constantly

changing from one thing to another had never accomplished--were carried

out by Prince Andrew without display and without perceptible difficulty.

He had in the highest degree a practical tenacity which Pierre lacked,

and without fuss or strain on his part this set things going.

On one of his estates the three hundred serfs were liberated and became

free agricultural laborers--this being one of the first examples of the

kind in Russia. On other estates the serfs' compulsory labor was

commuted for a quitrent. A trained midwife was engaged for Bogucharovo

at his expense, and a priest was paid to teach reading and writing to

the children of the peasants and household serfs.

Prince Andrew spent half his time at Bald Hills with his father and his

son, who was still in the care of nurses. The other half he spent in

"Bogucharovo Cloister," as his father called Prince Andrew's estate.

Despite the indifference to the affairs of the world he had expressed to

Pierre, he diligently followed all that went on, received many books,

and to his surprise noticed that when he or his father had visitors from

Petersburg, the very vortex of life, these people lagged behind himself-

-who never left the country--in knowledge of what was happening in home

and foreign affairs.

Besides being occupied with his estates and reading a great variety of

books, Prince Andrew was at this time busy with a critical survey of our

last two unfortunate campaigns, and with drawing up a proposal for a

reform of the army rules and regulations.

In the spring of 1809 he went to visit the Ryazan estates which had been

inherited by his son, whose guardian he was.

Warmed by the spring sunshine he sat in the caleche looking at the new

grass, the first leaves on the birches, and the first puffs of white

spring clouds floating across the clear blue sky. He was not thinking of

anything, but looked absent-mindedly and cheerfully from side to side.

They crossed the ferry where he had talked with Pierre the year before.

They went through the muddy village, past threshing floors and green

fields of winter rye, downhill where snow still lodged near the bridge,

uphill where the clay had been liquefied by the rain, past strips of

stubble land and bushes touched with green here and there, and into a

birch forest growing on both sides of the road. In the forest it was

almost hot, no wind could be felt. The birches with their sticky green

leaves were motionless, and lilac-colored flowers and the first blades

of green grass were pushing up and lifting last year's leaves. The

coarse evergreen color of the small fir trees scattered here and there

among the birches was an unpleasant reminder of winter. On entering the

forest the horses began to snort and sweated visibly.

Peter the footman made some remark to the coachman; the latter assented.

But apparently the coachman's sympathy was not enough for Peter, and he

turned on the box toward his master.

"How pleasant it is, your excellency!" he said with a respectful smile.

"What?"

"It's pleasant, your excellency!"

"What is he talking about?" thought Prince Andrew. "Oh, the spring, I

suppose," he thought as he turned round. "Yes, really everything is

green already.... How early! The birches and cherry and alders too are

coming out.... But the oaks show no sign yet. Ah, here is one oak!"

At the edge of the road stood an oak. Probably ten times the age of the

birches that formed the forest, it was ten times as thick and twice as

tall as they. It was an enormous tree, its girth twice as great as a man

could embrace, and evidently long ago some of its branches had been

broken off and its bark scarred. With its huge ungainly limbs sprawling

unsymmetrically, and its gnarled hands and fingers, it stood an aged,

stern, and scornful monster among the smiling birch trees. Only the

dead-looking evergreen firs dotted about in the forest, and this oak,

refused to yield to the charm of spring or notice either the spring or

the sunshine.

"Spring, love, happiness!" this oak seemed to say. "Are you not weary of

that stupid, meaningless, constantly repeated fraud? Always the same and

always a fraud? There is no spring, no sun, no happiness! Look at those

cramped dead firs, ever the same, and at me too, sticking out my broken

and barked fingers just where they have grown, whether from my back or

my sides: as they have grown so I stand, and I do not believe in your

hopes and your lies."

As he passed through the forest Prince Andrew turned several times to

look at that oak, as if expecting something from it. Under the oak, too,

were flowers and grass, but it stood among them scowling, rigid,

misshapen, and grim as ever.

"Yes, the oak is right, a thousand times right," thought Prince Andrew.

"Let others--the young--yield afresh to that fraud, but we know life,

our life is finished!"

A whole sequence of new thoughts, hopeless but mournfully pleasant, rose

in his soul in connection with that tree. During this journey he, as it

were, considered his life afresh and arrived at his old conclusion,

restful in its hopelessness: that it was not for him to begin anything

anew--but that he must live out his life, content to do no harm, and not

disturbing himself or desiring anything.

CHAPTER II

Prince Andrew had to see the Marshal of the Nobility for the district in

connection with the affairs of the Ryazan estate of which he was

trustee. This Marshal was Count Ilya Rostov, and in the middle of May

Prince Andrew went to visit him.

It was now hot spring weather. The whole forest was already clothed in

green. It was dusty and so hot that on passing near water one longed to

bathe.

Prince Andrew, depressed and preoccupied with the business about which

he had to speak to the Marshal, was driving up the avenue in the grounds

of the Rostovs' house at Otradnoe. He heard merry girlish cries behind

some trees on the right and saw a group of girls running to cross the

path of his caleche. Ahead of the rest and nearer to him ran a dark-

haired, remarkably slim, pretty girl in a yellow chintz dress, with a

white handkerchief on her head from under which loose locks of hair

escaped. The girl was shouting something but, seeing that he was a

stranger, ran back laughing without looking at him.

Suddenly, he did not know why, he felt a pang. The day was so beautiful,

the sun so bright, everything around so gay, but that slim pretty girl

did not know, or wish to know, of his existence and was contented and

cheerful in her own separate--probably foolish--but bright and happy

life. "What is she so glad about? What is she thinking of? Not of the

military regulations or of the arrangement of the Ryazan serfs'

quitrents. Of what is she thinking? Why is she so happy?" Prince Andrew

asked himself with instinctive curiosity.

In 1809 Count Ilya Rostov was living at Otradnoe just as he had done in

former years, that is, entertaining almost the whole province with

hunts, theatricals, dinners, and music. He was glad to see Prince

Andrew, as he was to see any new visitor, and insisted on his staying

the night.

During the dull day, in the course of which he was entertained by his

elderly hosts and by the more important of the visitors (the old count's

house was crowded on account of an approaching name day), Prince Andrew

repeatedly glanced at Natasha, gay and laughing among the younger

members of the company, and asked himself each time, "What is she

thinking about? Why is she so glad?"

That night, alone in new surroundings, he was long unable to sleep. He

read awhile and then put out his candle, but relit it. It was hot in the

room, the inside shutters of which were closed. He was cross with the

stupid old man (as he called Rostov), who had made him stay by assuring

him that some necessary documents had not yet arrived from town, and he

was vexed with himself for having stayed.

He got up and went to the window to open it. As soon as he opened the

shutters the moonlight, as if it had long been watching for this, burst

into the room. He opened the casement. The night was fresh, bright, and

very still. Just before the window was a row of pollard trees, looking

black on one side and with a silvery light on the other. Beneath the

trees grew some kind of lush, wet, bushy vegetation with silver-lit

leaves and stems here and there. Farther back beyond the dark trees a

roof glittered with dew, to the right was a leafy tree with brilliantly

white trunk and branches, and above it shone the moon, nearly at its

full, in a pale, almost starless, spring sky. Prince Andrew leaned his

elbows on the window ledge and his eyes rested on that sky.

His room was on the first floor. Those in the rooms above were also

awake. He heard female voices overhead.

"Just once more," said a girlish voice above him which Prince Andrew

recognized at once.

"But when are you coming to bed?" replied another voice.

"I won't, I can't sleep, what's the use? Come now for the last time."

Two girlish voices sang a musical passage--the end of some song.

"Oh, how lovely! Now go to sleep, and there's an end of it."

"You go to sleep, but I can't," said the first voice, coming nearer to

the window. She was evidently leaning right out, for the rustle of her

dress and even her breathing could be heard. Everything was stone-still,

like the moon and its light and the shadows. Prince Andrew, too, dared

not stir, for fear of betraying his unintentional presence.

"Sonya! Sonya!" he again heard the first speaker. "Oh, how can you

sleep? Only look how glorious it is! Ah, how glorious! Do wake up,

Sonya!" she said almost with tears in her voice. "There never, never was

such a lovely night before!"

Sonya made some reluctant reply.

"Do just come and see what a moon!... Oh, how lovely! Come here....

Darling, sweetheart, come here! There, you see? I feel like sitting down

on my heels, putting my arms round my knees like this, straining tight,

as tight as possible, and flying away! Like this...."

"Take care, you'll fall out."

He heard the sound of a scuffle and Sonya's disapproving voice: "It's

past one o'clock."

"Oh, you only spoil things for me. All right, go, go!"

Again all was silent, but Prince Andrew knew she was still sitting

there. From time to time he heard a soft rustle and at times a sigh.

"O God, O God! What does it mean?" she suddenly exclaimed. "To bed then,

if it must be!" and she slammed the casement.

"For her I might as well not exist!" thought Prince Andrew while he

listened to her voice, for some reason expecting yet fearing that she

might say something about him. "There she is again! As if it were on

purpose," thought he.

In his soul there suddenly arose such an unexpected turmoil of youthful

thoughts and hopes, contrary to the whole tenor of his life, that unable

to explain his condition to himself he lay down and fell asleep at once.

CHAPTER III

Next morning, having taken leave of no one but the count, and not

waiting for the ladies to appear, Prince Andrew set off for home.

It was already the beginning of June when on his return journey he drove

into the birch forest where the gnarled old oak had made so strange and

memorable an impression on him. In the forest the harness bells sounded

yet more muffled than they had done six weeks before, for now all was

thick, shady, and dense, and the young firs dotted about in the forest

did not jar on the general beauty but, lending themselves to the mood

around, were delicately green with fluffy young shoots.

The whole day had been hot. Somewhere a storm was gathering, but only a

small cloud had scattered some raindrops lightly, sprinkling the road

and the sappy leaves. The left side of the forest was dark in the shade,

the right side glittered in the sunlight, wet and shiny and scarcely

swayed by the breeze. Everything was in blossom, the nightingales

trilled, and their voices reverberated now near, now far away.

"Yes, here in this forest was that oak with which I agreed," thought

Prince Andrew. "But where is it?" he again wondered, gazing at the left

side of the road, and without recognizing it he looked with admiration

at the very oak he sought. The old oak, quite transfigured, spreading

out a canopy of sappy dark-green foliage, stood rapt and slightly

trembling in the rays of the evening sun. Neither gnarled fingers nor

old scars nor old doubts and sorrows were any of them in evidence now.

Through the hard century-old bark, even where there were no twigs,

leaves had sprouted such as one could hardly believe the old veteran

could have produced.

"Yes, it is the same oak," thought Prince Andrew, and all at once he was

seized by an unreasoning springtime feeling of joy and renewal. All the

best moments of his life suddenly rose to his memory. Austerlitz with

the lofty heavens, his wife's dead reproachful face, Pierre at the

ferry, that girl thrilled by the beauty of the night, and that night

itself and the moon, and.... all this rushed suddenly to his mind.

"No, life is not over at thirty-one!" Prince Andrew suddenly decided

finally and decisively. "It is not enough for me to know what I have in

me--everyone must know it: Pierre, and that young girl who wanted to fly

away into the sky, everyone must know me, so that my life may not be

lived for myself alone while others live so apart from it, but so that

it may be reflected in them all, and they and I may live in harmony!"

On reaching home Prince Andrew decided to go to Petersburg that autumn

and found all sorts of reasons for this decision. A whole series of

sensible and logical considerations showing it to be essential for him

to go to Petersburg, and even to re-enter the service, kept springing up

in his mind. He could not now understand how he could ever even have

doubted the necessity of taking an active share in life, just as a month

before he had not understood how the idea of leaving the quiet country

could ever enter his head. It now seemed clear to him that all his

experience of life must be senselessly wasted unless he applied it to

some kind of work and again played an active part in life. He did not

even remember how formerly, on the strength of similar wretched logical

arguments, it had seemed obvious that he would be degrading himself if

he now, after the lessons he had had in life, allowed himself to believe

in the possibility of being useful and in the possibility of happiness

or love. Now reason suggested quite the opposite. After that journey to

Ryazan he found the country dull; his former pursuits no longer

interested him, and often when sitting alone in his study he got up,

went to the mirror, and gazed a long time at his own face. Then he would

turn away to the portrait of his dead Lise, who with hair curled a la

grecque looked tenderly and gaily at him out of the gilt frame. She did

not now say those former terrible words to him, but looked simply,

merrily, and inquisitively at him. And Prince Andrew, crossing his arms

behind him, long paced the room, now frowning, now smiling, as he

reflected on those irrational, inexpressible thoughts, secret as a

crime, which altered his whole life and were connected with Pierre, with

fame, with the girl at the window, the oak, and woman's beauty and love.

And if anyone came into his room at such moments he was particularly

cold, stern, and above all unpleasantly logical.

"My dear," Princess Mary entering at such a moment would say, "little

Nicholas can't go out today, it's very cold."

"If it were hot," Prince Andrew would reply at such times very dryly to

his sister, "he could go out in his smock, but as it is cold he must

wear warm clothes, which were designed for that purpose. That is what

follows from the fact that it is cold; and not that a child who needs

fresh air should remain at home," he would add with extreme logic, as if

punishing someone for those secret illogical emotions that stirred

within him.

At such moments Princess Mary would think how intellectual work dries

men up.

CHAPTER IV

Prince Andrew arrived in Petersburg in August, 1809. It was the time

when the youthful Speranski was at the zenith of his fame and his

reforms were being pushed forward with the greatest energy. That same

August the Emperor was thrown from his caleche, injured his leg, and

remained three weeks at Peterhof, receiving Speranski every day and no

one else. At that time the two famous decrees were being prepared that

so agitated society--abolishing court ranks and introducing examinations

to qualify for the grades of Collegiate Assessor and State Councilor--

and not merely these but a whole state constitution, intended to change

the existing order of government in Russia: legal, administrative, and

financial, from the Council of State down to the district tribunals. Now

those vague liberal dreams with which the Emperor Alexander had ascended

the throne, and which he had tried to put into effect with the aid of

his associates, Czartoryski, Novosiltsev, Kochubey, and Strogonov--whom

he himself in jest had called his Comite de salut public--were taking

shape and being realized.

Now all these men were replaced by Speranski on the civil side, and

Arakcheev on the military. Soon after his arrival Prince Andrew, as a

gentleman of the chamber, presented himself at court and at a levee. The

Emperor, though he met him twice, did not favor him with a single word.

It had always seemed to Prince Andrew before that he was antipathetic to

the Emperor and that the latter disliked his face and personality

generally, and in the cold, repellent glance the Emperor gave him, he

now found further confirmation of this surmise. The courtiers explained

the Emperor's neglect of him by His Majesty's displeasure at Bolkonski's

not having served since 1805.

"I know myself that one cannot help one's sympathies and antipathies,"

thought Prince Andrew, "so it will not do to present my proposal for the

reform of the army regulations to the Emperor personally, but the

project will speak for itself."

He mentioned what he had written to an old field marshal, a friend of

his father's. The field marshal made an appointment to see him, received

him graciously, and promised to inform the Emperor. A few days later

Prince Andrew received notice that he was to go to see the Minister of

War, Count Arakcheev.

On the appointed day Prince Andrew entered Count Arakcheev's waiting

room at nine in the morning.

He did not know Arakcheev personally, had never seen him, and all he had

heard of him inspired him with but little respect for the man.

"He is Minister of War, a man trusted by the Emperor, and I need not

concern myself about his personal qualities: he has been commissioned to

consider my project, so he alone can get it adopted," thought Prince

Andrew as he waited among a number of important and unimportant people

in Count Arakcheev's waiting room.

During his service, chiefly as an adjutant, Prince Andrew had seen the

anterooms of many important men, and the different types of such rooms

were well known to him. Count Arakcheev's anteroom had quite a special

character. The faces of the unimportant people awaiting their turn for

an audience showed embarrassment and servility; the faces of those of

higher rank expressed a common feeling of awkwardness, covered by a mask

of unconcern and ridicule of themselves, their situation, and the person

for whom they were waiting. Some walked thoughtfully up and down, others

whispered and laughed. Prince Andrew heard the nickname "Sila

Andreevich" and the words, "Uncle will give it to us hot," in reference

to Count Arakcheev. One general (an important personage), evidently

feeling offended at having to wait so long, sat crossing and uncrossing

his legs and smiling contemptuously to himself.

But the moment the door opened one feeling alone appeared on all faces--

that of fear. Prince Andrew for the second time asked the adjutant on

duty to take in his name, but received an ironical look and was told

that his turn would come in due course. After some others had been shown

in and out of the minister's room by the adjutant on duty, an officer

who struck Prince Andrew by his humiliated and frightened air was

admitted at that terrible door. This officer's audience lasted a long

time. Then suddenly the grating sound of a harsh voice was heard from

the other side of the door, and the officer--with pale face and

trembling lips--came out and passed through the waiting room, clutching

his head.

After this Prince Andrew was conducted to the door and the officer on

duty said in a whisper, "To the right, at the window."

Prince Andrew entered a plain tidy room and saw at the table a man of

forty with a long waist, a long closely cropped head, deep wrinkles,

scowling brows above dull greenish-hazel eyes and an overhanging red

nose. Arakcheev turned his head toward him without looking at him.

"What is your petition?" asked Arakcheev.

"I am not petitioning, your excellency," returned Prince Andrew quietly.

Arakcheev's eyes turned toward him.

"Sit down," said he. "Prince Bolkonski?"

"I am not petitioning about anything. His Majesty the Emperor has

deigned to send your excellency a project submitted by me..."

"You see, my dear sir, I have read your project," interrupted Arakcheev,

uttering only the first words amiably and then--again without looking at

Prince Andrew--relapsing gradually into a tone of grumbling contempt.

"You are proposing new military laws? There are many laws but no one to

carry out the old ones. Nowadays everybody designs laws, it is easier

writing than doing."

"I came at His Majesty the Emperor's wish to learn from your excellency

how you propose to deal with the memorandum I have presented," said

Prince Andrew politely.

"I have endorsed a resolution on your memorandum and sent it to the

committee. I do not approve of it," said Arakcheev, rising and taking a

paper from his writing table. "Here!" and he handed it to Prince Andrew.

Across the paper was scrawled in pencil, without capital letters,

misspelled, and without punctuation: "Unsoundly constructed because

resembles an imitation of the French military code and from the Articles

of War needlessly deviating."

"To what committee has the memorandum been referred?" inquired Prince

Andrew.

"To the Committee on Army Regulations, and I have recommended that your

honor should be appointed a member, but without a salary."

Prince Andrew smiled.

"I don't want one."

"A member without salary," repeated Arakcheev. "I have the honor... Eh!

Call the next one! Who else is there?" he shouted, bowing to Prince

Andrew.

CHAPTER V

While waiting for the announcement of his appointment to the committee

Prince Andrew looked up his former acquaintances, particularly those he

knew to be in power and whose aid he might need. In Petersburg he now

experienced the same feeling he had had on the eve of a battle, when

troubled by anxious curiosity and irresistibly attracted to the ruling

circles where the future, on which the fate of millions depended, was

being shaped. From the irritation of the older men, the curiosity of the

uninitiated, the reserve of the initiated, the hurry and preoccupation

of everyone, and the innumerable committees and commissions of whose

existence he learned every day, he felt that now, in 1809, here in

Petersburg a vast civil conflict was in preparation, the commander in

chief of which was a mysterious person he did not know, but who was

supposed to be a man of genius--Speranski. And this movement of

reconstruction of which Prince Andrew had a vague idea, and Speranski

its chief promoter, began to interest him so keenly that the question of

the army regulations quickly receded to a secondary place in his

consciousness.

Prince Andrew was most favorably placed to secure good reception in the

highest and most diverse Petersburg circles of the day. The reforming

party cordially welcomed and courted him, in the first place because he

was reputed to be clever and very well read, and secondly because by

liberating his serfs he had obtained the reputation of being a liberal.

The party of the old and dissatisfied, who censured the innovations,

turned to him expecting his sympathy in their disapproval of the

reforms, simply because he was the son of his father. The feminine

society world welcomed him gladly, because he was rich, distinguished, a

good match, and almost a newcomer, with a halo of romance on account of

his supposed death and the tragic loss of his wife. Besides this the

general opinion of all who had known him previously was that he had

greatly improved during these last five years, having softened and grown

more manly, lost his former affectation, pride, and contemptuous irony,

and acquired the serenity that comes with years. People talked about

him, were interested in him, and wanted to meet him.

The day after his interview with Count Arakcheev, Prince Andrew spent

the evening at Count Kochubey's. He told the count of his interview with

Sila Andreevich (Kochubey spoke of Arakcheev by that nickname with the

same vague irony Prince Andrew had noticed in the Minister of War's

anteroom).

"Mon cher, even in this case you can't do without Michael Mikhaylovich

Speranski. He manages everything. I'll speak to him. He has promised to

come this evening."

"What has Speranski to do with the army regulations?" asked Prince

Andrew.

Kochubey shook his head smilingly, as if surprised at Bolkonski's

simplicity.

"We were talking to him about you a few days ago," Kochubey continued,

"and about your freed plowmen."

"Oh, is it you, Prince, who have freed your serfs?" said an old man of

Catherine's day, turning contemptuously toward Bolkonski.

"It was a small estate that brought in no profit," replied Prince

Andrew, trying to extenuate his action so as not to irritate the old man

uselessly.

"Afraid of being late..." said the old man, looking at Kochubey.

"There's one thing I don't understand," he continued. "Who will plow the

land if they are set free? It is easy to write laws, but difficult to

rule.... Just the same as now--I ask you, Count--who will be heads of

the departments when everybody has to pass examinations?"

"Those who pass the examinations, I suppose," replied Kochubey, crossing

his legs and glancing round.

"Well, I have Pryanichnikov serving under me, a splendid man, a

priceless man, but he's sixty. Is he to go up for examination?"

"Yes, that's a difficulty, as education is not at all general, but..."

Count Kochubey did not finish. He rose, took Prince Andrew by the arm,

and went to meet a tall, bald, fair man of about forty with a large open

forehead and a long face of unusual and peculiar whiteness, who was just

entering. The newcomer wore a blue swallow-tail coat with a cross

suspended from his neck and a star on his left breast. It was Speranski.

Prince Andrew recognized him at once, and felt a throb within him, as

happens at critical moments of life. Whether it was from respect, envy,

or anticipation, he did not know. Speranski's whole figure was of a

peculiar type that made him easily recognizable. In the society in which

Prince Andrew lived he had never seen anyone who together with awkward

and clumsy gestures possessed such calmness and self-assurance; he had

never seen so resolute yet gentle an expression as that in those half-

closed, rather humid eyes, or so firm a smile that expressed nothing;

nor had he heard such a refined, smooth, soft voice; above all he had

never seen such delicate whiteness of face or hands--hands which were

broad, but very plump, soft, and white. Such whiteness and softness

Prince Andrew had only seen on the faces of soldiers who had been long

in hospital. This was Speranski, Secretary of State, reporter to the

Emperor and his companion at Erfurt, where he had more than once met and

talked with Napoleon.

Speranski did not shift his eyes from one face to another as people

involuntarily do on entering a large company and was in no hurry to

speak. He spoke slowly, with assurance that he would be listened to, and

he looked only at the person with whom he was conversing.

Prince Andrew followed Speranski's every word and movement with

particular attention. As happens to some people, especially to men who

judge those near to them severely, he always on meeting anyone new--

especially anyone whom, like Speranski, he knew by reputation--expected

to discover in him the perfection of human qualities.

Speranski told Kochubey he was sorry he had been unable to come sooner

as he had been detained at the palace. He did not say that the Emperor

had kept him, and Prince Andrew noticed this affectation of modesty.

When Kochubey introduced Prince Andrew, Speranski slowly turned his eyes

to Bolkonski with his customary smile and looked at him in silence.

"I am very glad to make your acquaintance. I had heard of you, as

everyone has," he said after a pause.

Kochubey said a few words about the reception Arakcheev had given

Bolkonski. Speranski smiled more markedly.

"The chairman of the Committee on Army Regulations is my good friend

Monsieur Magnitski," he said, fully articulating every word and

syllable, "and if you like I can put you in touch with him." He paused

at the full stop. "I hope you will find him sympathetic and ready to co-

operate in promoting all that is reasonable."

A circle soon formed round Speranski, and the old man who had talked

about his subordinate Pryanichnikov addressed a question to him.

Prince Andrew without joining in the conversation watched every movement

of Speranski's: this man, not long since an insignificant divinity

student, who now, Bolkonski thought, held in his hands--those plump

white hands--the fate of Russia. Prince Andrew was struck by the

extraordinarily disdainful composure with which Speranski answered the

old man. He appeared to address condescending words to him from an

immeasurable height. When the old man began to speak too loud, Speranski

smiled and said he could not judge of the advantage or disadvantage of

what pleased the sovereign.

Having talked for a little while in the general circle, Speranski rose

and coming up to Prince Andrew took him along to the other end of the

room. It was clear that he thought it necessary to interest himself in

Bolkonski.

"I had no chance to talk with you, Prince, during the animated

conversation in which that venerable gentleman involved me," he said

with a mildly contemptuous smile, as if intimating by that smile that he

and Prince Andrew understood the insignificance of the people with whom

he had just been talking. This flattered Prince Andrew. "I have known of

you for a long time: first from your action with regard to your serfs, a

first example, of which it is very desirable that there should be more

imitators; and secondly because you are one of those gentlemen of the

chamber who have not considered themselves offended by the new decree

concerning the ranks allotted to courtiers, which is causing so much

gossip and tittle-tattle."

"No," said Prince Andrew, "my father did not wish me to take advantage

of the privilege. I began the service from the lower grade."

"Your father, a man of the last century, evidently stands above our

contemporaries who so condemn this measure which merely reestablishes

natural justice."

"I think, however, that these condemnations have some ground," returned

Prince Andrew, trying to resist Speranski's influence, of which he began

to be conscious. He did not like to agree with him in everything and

felt a wish to contradict. Though he usually spoke easily and well, he

felt a difficulty in expressing himself now while talking with

Speranski. He was too much absorbed in observing the famous man's

personality.

"Grounds of personal ambition maybe," Speranski put in quietly.

"And of state interest to some extent," said Prince Andrew.

"What do you mean?" asked Speranski quietly, lowering his eyes.

"I am an admirer of Montesquieu," replied Prince Andrew, "and his idea

that le principe des monarchies est l'honneur me parait incontestable.

Certains droits et privileges de la noblesse me paraissent etre des

moyens de soutenir ce sentiment." \*

\* "The principle of monarchies is honor seems to me incontestable.

Certain rights and privileges for the aristocracy appear to me a means

of maintaining that sentiment."

The smile vanished from Speranski's white face, which was much improved

by the change. Probably Prince Andrew's thought interested him.

"Si vous envisagez la question sous ce point de vue," \* he began,

pronouncing French with evident difficulty, and speaking even slower

than in Russian but quite calmly.

\* "If you regard the question from that point of view."

Speranski went on to say that honor, l'honneur, cannot be upheld by

privileges harmful to the service; that honor, l'honneur, is either a

negative concept of not doing what is blameworthy or it is a source of

emulation in pursuit of commendation and rewards, which recognize it.

His arguments were concise, simple, and clear.

"An institution upholding honor, the source of emulation, is one similar

to the Legion d'honneur of the great Emperor Napoleon, not harmful but

helpful to the success of the service, but not a class or court

privilege."

"I do not dispute that, but it cannot be denied that court privileges

have attained the same end," returned Prince Andrew. "Every courtier

considers himself bound to maintain his position worthily."

"Yet you do not care to avail yourself of the privilege, Prince," said

Speranski, indicating by a smile that he wished to finish amiably an

argument which was embarrassing for his companion. "If you will do me

the honor of calling on me on Wednesday," he added, "I will, after

talking with Magnitski, let you know what may interest you, and shall

also have the pleasure of a more detailed chat with you."

Closing his eyes, he bowed a la francaise, without taking leave, and

trying to attract as little attention as possible, he left the room.

CHAPTER VI

During the first weeks of his stay in Petersburg Prince Andrew felt the

whole trend of thought he had formed during his life of seclusion quite

overshadowed by the trifling cares that engrossed him in that city.

On returning home in the evening he would jot down in his notebook four

or five necessary calls or appointments for certain hours. The mechanism

of life, the arrangement of the day so as to be in time everywhere,

absorbed the greater part of his vital energy. He did nothing, did not

even think or find time to think, but only talked, and talked

successfully, of what he had thought while in the country.

He sometimes noticed with dissatisfaction that he repeated the same

remark on the same day in different circles. But he was so busy for

whole days together that he had no time to notice that he was thinking

of nothing.

As he had done on their first meeting at Kochubey's, Speranski produced

a strong impression on Prince Andrew on the Wednesday, when he received

him tête-à-tête at his own house and talked to him long and

confidentially.

To Bolkonski so many people appeared contemptible and insignificant

creatures, and he so longed to find in someone the living ideal of that

perfection toward which he strove, that he readily believed that in

Speranski he had found this ideal of a perfectly rational and virtuous

man. Had Speranski sprung from the same class as himself and possessed

the same breeding and traditions, Bolkonski would soon have discovered

his weak, human, unheroic sides; but as it was, Speranski's strange and

logical turn of mind inspired him with respect all the more because he

did not quite understand him. Moreover, Speranski, either because he

appreciated the other's capacity or because he considered it necessary

to win him to his side, showed off his dispassionate calm reasonableness

before Prince Andrew and flattered him with that subtle flattery which

goes hand in hand with self-assurance and consists in a tacit assumption

that one's companion is the only man besides oneself capable of

understanding the folly of the rest of mankind and the reasonableness

and profundity of one's own ideas.

During their long conversation on Wednesday evening, Speranski more than

once remarked: "We regard everything that is above the common level of

rooted custom..." or, with a smile: "But we want the wolves to be fed

and the sheep to be safe..." or: "They cannot understand this..." and

all in a way that seemed to say: "We, you and I, understand what they

are and who we are."

This first long conversation with Speranski only strengthened in Prince

Andrew the feeling he had experienced toward him at their first meeting.

He saw in him a remarkable, clear-thinking man of vast intellect who by

his energy and persistence had attained power, which he was using solely

for the welfare of Russia. In Prince Andrew's eyes Speranski was the man

he would himself have wished to be--one who explained all the facts of

life reasonably, considered important only what was rational, and was

capable of applying the standard of reason to everything. Everything

seemed so simple and clear in Speranski's exposition that Prince Andrew

involuntarily agreed with him about everything. If he replied and

argued, it was only because he wished to maintain his independence and

not submit to Speranski's opinions entirely. Everything was right and

everything was as it should be: only one thing disconcerted Prince

Andrew. This was Speranski's cold, mirrorlike look, which did not allow

one to penetrate to his soul, and his delicate white hands, which Prince

Andrew involuntarily watched as one does watch the hands of those who

possess power. This mirrorlike gaze and those delicate hands irritated

Prince Andrew, he knew not why. He was unpleasantly struck, too, by the

excessive contempt for others that he observed in Speranski, and by the

diversity of lines of argument he used to support his opinions. He made

use of every kind of mental device, except analogy, and passed too

boldly, it seemed to Prince Andrew, from one to another. Now he would

take up the position of a practical man and condemn dreamers; now that

of a satirist, and laugh ironically at his opponents; now grow severely

logical, or suddenly rise to the realm of metaphysics. (This last

resource was one he very frequently employed.) He would transfer a

question to metaphysical heights, pass on to definitions of space, time,

and thought, and, having deduced the refutation he needed, would again

descend to the level of the original discussion.

In general the trait of Speranski's mentality which struck Prince Andrew

most was his absolute and unshakable belief in the power and authority

of reason. It was evident that the thought could never occur to him

which to Prince Andrew seemed so natural, namely, that it is after all

impossible to express all one thinks; and that he had never felt the

doubt, "Is not all I think and believe nonsense?" And it was just this

peculiarity of Speranski's mind that particularly attracted Prince

Andrew.

During the first period of their acquaintance Bolkonski felt a

passionate admiration for him similar to that which he had once felt for

Bonaparte. The fact that Speranski was the son of a village priest, and

that stupid people might meanly despise him on account of his humble

origin (as in fact many did), caused Prince Andrew to cherish his

sentiment for him the more, and unconsciously to strengthen it.

On that first evening Bolkonski spent with him, having mentioned the

Commission for the Revision of the Code of Laws, Speranski told him

sarcastically that the Commission had existed for a hundred and fifty

years, had cost millions, and had done nothing except that Rosenkampf

had stuck labels on the corresponding paragraphs of the different codes.

"And that is all the state has for the millions it has spent," said he.

"We want to give the Senate new juridical powers, but we have no laws.

That is why it is a sin for men like you, Prince, not to serve in these

times!"

Prince Andrew said that for that work an education in jurisprudence was

needed which he did not possess.

"But nobody possesses it, so what would you have? It is a vicious circle

from which we must break a way out."

A week later Prince Andrew was a member of the Committee on Army

Regulations and--what he had not at all expected--was chairman of a

section of the committee for the revision of the laws. At Speranski's

request he took the first part of the Civil Code that was being drawn up

and, with the aid of the Code Napoleon and the Institutes of Justinian,

he worked at formulating the section on Personal Rights.

CHAPTER VII

Nearly two years before this, in 1808, Pierre on returning to Petersburg

after visiting his estates had involuntarily found himself in a leading

position among the Petersburg Freemasons. He arranged dining and funeral

lodge meetings, enrolled new members, and busied himself uniting various

lodges and acquiring authentic charters. He gave money for the erection

of temples and supplemented as far as he could the collection of alms,

in regard to which the majority of members were stingy and irregular. He

supported almost singlehanded a poorhouse the order had founded in

Petersburg.

His life meanwhile continued as before, with the same infatuations and

dissipations. He liked to dine and drink well, and though he considered

it immoral and humiliating could not resist the temptations of the

bachelor circles in which he moved.

Amid the turmoil of his activities and distractions, however, Pierre at

the end of a year began to feel that the more firmly he tried to rest

upon it, the more masonic ground on which he stood gave way under him.

At the same time he felt that the deeper the ground sank under him the

closer bound he involuntarily became to the order. When he had joined

the Freemasons he had experienced the feeling of one who confidently

steps onto the smooth surface of a bog. When he put his foot down it

sank in. To make quite sure of the firmness of the ground, he put his

other foot down and sank deeper still, became stuck in it, and

involuntarily waded knee-deep in the bog.

Joseph Alexeevich was not in Petersburg--he had of late stood aside from

the affairs of the Petersburg lodges, and lived almost entirely in

Moscow. All the members of the lodges were men Pierre knew in ordinary

life, and it was difficult for him to regard them merely as Brothers in

Freemasonry and not as Prince B. or Ivan Vasilevich D., whom he knew in

society mostly as weak and insignificant men. Under the masonic aprons

and insignia he saw the uniforms and decorations at which they aimed in

ordinary life. Often after collecting alms, and reckoning up twenty to

thirty rubles received for the most part in promises from a dozen

members, of whom half were as well able to pay as himself, Pierre

remembered the masonic vow in which each Brother promised to devote all

his belongings to his neighbor, and doubts on which he tried not to

dwell arose in his soul.

He divided the Brothers he knew into four categories. In the first he

put those who did not take an active part in the affairs of the lodges

or in human affairs, but were exclusively occupied with the mystical

science of the order: with questions of the threefold designation of

God, the three primordial elements--sulphur, mercury, and salt--or the

meaning of the square and all the various figures of the temple of

Solomon. Pierre respected this class of Brothers to which the elder ones

chiefly belonged, including, Pierre thought, Joseph Alexeevich himself,

but he did not share their interests. His heart was not in the mystical

aspect of Freemasonry.

In the second category Pierre reckoned himself and others like him,

seeking and vacillating, who had not yet found in Freemasonry a straight

and comprehensible path, but hoped to do so.

In the third category he included those Brothers (the majority) who saw

nothing in Freemasonry but the external forms and ceremonies, and prized

the strict performance of these forms without troubling about their

purport or significance. Such were Willarski and even the Grand Master

of the principal lodge.

Finally, to the fourth category also a great many Brothers belonged,

particularly those who had lately joined. These according to Pierre's

observations were men who had no belief in anything, nor desire for

anything, but joined the Freemasons merely to associate with the wealthy

young Brothers who were influential through their connections or rank,

and of whom there were very many in the lodge.

Pierre began to feel dissatisfied with what he was doing. Freemasonry,

at any rate as he saw it here, sometimes seemed to him based merely on

externals. He did not think of doubting Freemasonry itself, but

suspected that Russian Masonry had taken a wrong path and deviated from

its original principles. And so toward the end of the year he went

abroad to be initiated into the higher secrets of the order.

In the summer of 1809 Pierre returned to Petersburg. Our Freemasons knew

from correspondence with those abroad that Bezukhov had obtained the

confidence of many highly placed persons, had been initiated into many

mysteries, had been raised to a higher grade, and was bringing back with

him much that might conduce to the advantage of the masonic cause in

Russia. The Petersburg Freemasons all came to see him, tried to

ingratiate themselves with him, and it seemed to them all that he was

preparing something for them and concealing it.

A solemn meeting of the lodge of the second degree was convened, at

which Pierre promised to communicate to the Petersburg Brothers what he

had to deliver to them from the highest leaders of their order. The

meeting was a full one. After the usual ceremonies Pierre rose and began

his address.

"Dear Brothers," he began, blushing and stammering, with a written

speech in his hand, "it is not sufficient to observe our mysteries in

the seclusion of our lodge--we must act--act! We are drowsing, but we

must act." Pierre raised his notebook and began to read.

"For the dissemination of pure truth and to secure the triumph of

virtue," he read, "we must cleanse men from prejudice, diffuse

principles in harmony with the spirit of the times, undertake the

education of the young, unite ourselves in indissoluble bonds with the

wisest men, boldly yet prudently overcome superstitions, infidelity, and

folly, and form of those devoted to us a body linked together by unity

of purpose and possessed of authority and power.

"To attain this end we must secure a preponderance of virtue over vice

and must endeavor to secure that the honest man may, even in this world,

receive a lasting reward for his virtue. But in these great endeavors we

are gravely hampered by the political institutions of today. What is to

be done in these circumstances? To favor revolutions, overthrow

everything, repel force by force?... No! We are very far from that.

Every violent reform deserves censure, for it quite fails to remedy evil

while men remain what they are, and also because wisdom needs no

violence.

"The whole plan of our order should be based on the idea of preparing

men of firmness and virtue bound together by unity of conviction--aiming

at the punishment of vice and folly, and patronizing talent and virtue:

raising worthy men from the dust and attaching them to our Brotherhood.

Only then will our order have the power unobtrusively to bind the hands

of the protectors of disorder and to control them without their being

aware of it. In a word, we must found a form of government holding

universal sway, which should be diffused over the whole world without

destroying the bonds of citizenship, and beside which all other

governments can continue in their customary course and do everything

except what impedes the great aim of our order, which is to obtain for

virtue the victory over vice. This aim was that of Christianity itself.

It taught men to be wise and good and for their own benefit to follow

the example and instruction of the best and wisest men.

"At that time, when everything was plunged in darkness, preaching alone

was of course sufficient. The novelty of Truth endowed her with special

strength, but now we need much more powerful methods. It is now

necessary that man, governed by his senses, should find in virtue a

charm palpable to those senses. It is impossible to eradicate the

passions; but we must strive to direct them to a noble aim, and it is

therefore necessary that everyone should be able to satisfy his passions

within the limits of virtue. Our order should provide means to that end.

"As soon as we have a certain number of worthy men in every state, each

of them again training two others and all being closely united,

everything will be possible for our order, which has already in secret

accomplished much for the welfare of mankind."

This speech not only made a strong impression, but created excitement in

the lodge. The majority of the Brothers, seeing in it dangerous designs

of Illuminism, \* met it with a coldness that surprised Pierre. The Grand

Master began answering him, and Pierre began developing his views with

more and more warmth. It was long since there had been so stormy a

meeting. Parties were formed, some accusing Pierre of Illuminism, others

supporting him. At that meeting he was struck for the first time by the

endless variety of men's minds, which prevents a truth from ever

presenting itself identically to two persons. Even those members who

seemed to be on his side understood him in their own way with

limitations and alterations he could not agree to, as what he always

wanted most was to convey his thought to others just as he himself

understood it.

\* The Illuminati sought to substitute republican for monarchical

institutions.

At the end of the meeting the Grand Master with irony and ill-will

reproved Bezukhov for his vehemence and said it was not love of virtue

alone, but also a love of strife that had moved him in the dispute.

Pierre did not answer him and asked briefly whether his proposal would

be accepted. He was told that it would not, and without waiting for the

usual formalities he left the lodge and went home.

CHAPTER VIII

Again Pierre was overtaken by the depression he so dreaded. For three

days after the delivery of his speech at the lodge he lay on a sofa at

home receiving no one and going nowhere.

It was just then that he received a letter from his wife, who implored

him to see her, telling him how grieved she was about him and how she

wished to devote her whole life to him.

At the end of the letter she informed him that in a few days she would

return to Petersburg from abroad.

Following this letter one of the masonic Brothers whom Pierre respected

less than the others forced his way in to see him and, turning the

conversation upon Pierre's matrimonial affairs, by way of fraternal

advice expressed the opinion that his severity to his wife was wrong and

that he was neglecting one of the first rules of Freemasonry by not

forgiving the penitent.

At the same time his mother-in-law, Prince Vasili's wife, sent to him

imploring him to come if only for a few minutes to discuss a most

important matter. Pierre saw that there was a conspiracy against him and

that they wanted to reunite him with his wife, and in the mood he then

was, this was not even unpleasant to him. Nothing mattered to him.

Nothing in life seemed to him of much importance, and under the

influence of the depression that possessed him he valued neither his

liberty nor his resolution to punish his wife.

"No one is right and no one is to blame; so she too is not to blame," he

thought.

If he did not at once give his consent to a reunion with his wife, it

was only because in his state of depression he did not feel able to take

any step. Had his wife come to him, he would not have turned her away.

Compared to what preoccupied him, was it not a matter of indifference

whether he lived with his wife or not?

Without replying either to his wife or his mother-in-law, Pierre late

one night prepared for a journey and started for Moscow to see Joseph

Alexeevich. This is what he noted in his diary:

Moscow, 17th November

I have just returned from my benefactor, and hasten to write down what I

have experienced. Joseph Alexeevich is living poorly and has for three

years been suffering from a painful disease of the bladder. No one has

ever heard him utter a groan or a word of complaint. From morning till

late at night, except when he eats his very plain food, he is working at

science. He received me graciously and made me sit down on the bed on

which he lay. I made the sign of the Knights of the East and of

Jerusalem, and he responded in the same manner, asking me with a mild

smile what I had learned and gained in the Prussian and Scottish lodges.

I told him everything as best I could, and told him what I had proposed

to our Petersburg lodge, of the bad reception I had encountered, and of

my rupture with the Brothers. Joseph Alexeevich, having remained silent

and thoughtful for a good while, told me his view of the matter, which

at once lit up for me my whole past and the future path I should follow.

He surprised me by asking whether I remembered the threefold aim of the

order: (1) The preservation and study of the mystery. (2) The

purification and reformation of oneself for its reception, and (3) The

improvement of the human race by striving for such purification. Which

is the principal aim of these three? Certainly self-reformation and

self-purification. Only to this aim can we always strive independently

of circumstances. But at the same time just this aim demands the

greatest efforts of us; and so, led astray by pride, losing sight of

this aim, we occupy ourselves either with the mystery which in our

impurity we are unworthy to receive, or seek the reformation of the

human race while ourselves setting an example of baseness and

profligacy. Illuminism is not a pure doctrine, just because it is

attracted by social activity and puffed up by pride. On this ground

Joseph Alexeevich condemned my speech and my whole activity, and in the

depth of my soul I agreed with him. Talking of my family affairs he said

to me, "the chief duty of a true Mason, as I have told you, lies in

perfecting himself. We often think that by removing all the difficulties

of our life we shall more quickly reach our aim, but on the contrary, my

dear sir, it is only in the midst of worldly cares that we can attain

our three chief aims: (1) Self-knowledge--for man can only know himself

by comparison, (2) Self-perfecting, which can only be attained by

conflict, and (3) The attainment of the chief virtue--love of death.

Only the vicissitudes of life can show us its vanity and develop our

innate love of death or of rebirth to a new life." These words are all

the more remarkable because, in spite of his great physical sufferings,

Joseph Alexeevich is never weary of life though he loves death, for

which--in spite of the purity and loftiness of his inner man--he does

not yet feel himself sufficiently prepared. My benefactor then explained

to me fully the meaning of the Great Square of creation and pointed out

to me that the numbers three and seven are the basis of everything. He

advised me not to avoid intercourse with the Petersburg Brothers, but to

take up only second-grade posts in the lodge, to try, while diverting

the Brothers from pride, to turn them toward the true path self-

knowledge and self-perfecting. Besides this he advised me for myself

personally above all to keep a watch over myself, and to that end he

gave me a notebook, the one I am now writing in and in which I will in

future note down all my actions.

Petersburg, 23rd November

I am again living with my wife. My mother-in-law came to me in tears and

said that Helene was here and that she implored me to hear her; that she

was innocent and unhappy at my desertion, and much more. I knew that if

I once let myself see her I should not have strength to go on refusing

what she wanted. In my perplexity I did not know whose aid and advice to

seek. Had my benefactor been here he would have told me what to do. I

went to my room and reread Joseph Alexeevich's letters and recalled my

conversations with him, and deduced from it all that I ought not to

refuse a supplicant, and ought to reach a helping hand to everyone--

especially to one so closely bound to me--and that I must bear my cross.

But if I forgive her for the sake of doing right, then let union with

her have only a spiritual aim. That is what I decided, and what I wrote

to Joseph Alexeevich. I told my wife that I begged her to forget the

past, to forgive me whatever wrong I may have done her, and that I had

nothing to forgive. It gave me joy to tell her this. She need not know

how hard it was for me to see her again. I have settled on the upper

floor of this big house and am experiencing a happy feeling of

regeneration.

CHAPTER IX

At that time, as always happens, the highest society that met at court

and at the grand balls was divided into several circles, each with its

own particular tone. The largest of these was the French circle of the

Napoleonic alliance, the circle of Count Rumyantsev and Caulaincourt. In

this group Helene, as soon as she had settled in Petersburg with her

husband, took a very prominent place. She was visited by the members of

the French embassy and by many belonging to that circle and noted for

their intellect and polished manners.

Helene had been at Erfurt during the famous meeting of the Emperors and

had brought from there these connections with the Napoleonic

notabilities. At Erfurt her success had been brilliant. Napoleon himself

had noticed her in the theater and said of her: "C'est un superbe

animal." \* Her success as a beautiful and elegant woman did not surprise

Pierre, for she had become even handsomer than before. What did surprise

him was that during these last two years his wife had succeeded in

gaining the reputation "d' une femme charmante, aussi spirituelle que

belle." \*(2) The distinguished Prince de Ligne wrote her eight-page

letters. Bilibin saved up his epigrams to produce them in Countess

Bezukhova's presence. To be received in the Countess Bezukhova's salon

was regarded as a diploma of intellect. Young men read books before

attending Helene's evenings, to have something to say in her salon, and

secretaries of the embassy, and even ambassadors, confided diplomatic

secrets to her, so that in a way Helene was a power. Pierre, who knew

she was very stupid, sometimes attended, with a strange feeling of

perplexity and fear, her evenings and dinner parties, where politics,

poetry, and philosophy were discussed. At these parties his feelings

were like those of a conjuror who always expects his trick to be found

out at any moment. But whether because stupidity was just what was

needed to run such a salon, or because those who were deceived found

pleasure in the deception, at any rate it remained unexposed and Helene

Bezukhova's reputation as a lovely and clever woman became so firmly

established that she could say the emptiest and stupidest things and

everybody would go into raptures over every word of hers and look for a

profound meaning in it of which she herself had no conception.

\* "That's a superb animal."

\* (2) "Of a charming woman, as witty as she is lovely."

Pierre was just the husband needed for a brilliant society woman. He was

that absent-minded crank, a grand seigneur husband who was in no one's

way, and far from spoiling the high tone and general impression of the

drawing room, he served, by the contrast he presented to her, as an

advantageous background to his elegant and tactful wife. Pierre during

the last two years, as a result of his continual absorption in abstract

interests and his sincere contempt for all else, had acquired in his

wife's circle, which did not interest him, that air of unconcern,

indifference, and benevolence toward all, which cannot be acquired

artificially and therefore inspires involuntary respect. He entered his

wife's drawing room as one enters a theater, was acquainted with

everybody, equally pleased to see everyone, and equally indifferent to

them all. Sometimes he joined in a conversation which interested him

and, regardless of whether any "gentlemen of the embassy" were present

or not, lispingly expressed his views, which were sometimes not at all

in accord with the accepted tone of the moment. But the general opinion

concerning the queer husband of "the most distinguished woman in

Petersburg" was so well established that no one took his freaks

seriously.

Among the many young men who frequented her house every day, Boris

Drubetskoy, who had already achieved great success in the service, was

the most intimate friend of the Bezukhov household since Helene's return

from Erfurt. Helene spoke of him as "mon page" and treated him like a

child. Her smile for him was the same as for everybody, but sometimes

that smile made Pierre uncomfortable. Toward him Boris behaved with a

particularly dignified and sad deference. This shade of deference also

disturbed Pierre. He had suffered so painfully three years before from

the mortification to which his wife had subjected him that he now

protected himself from the danger of its repetition, first by not being

a husband to his wife, and secondly by not allowing himself to suspect.

"No, now that she has become a bluestocking she has finally renounced

her former infatuations," he told himself. "There has never been an

instance of a bluestocking being carried away by affairs of the heart"--

a statement which, though gathered from an unknown source, he believed

implicitly. Yet strange to say Boris' presence in his wife's drawing

room (and he was almost always there) had a physical effect upon Pierre;

it constricted his limbs and destroyed the unconsciousness and freedom

of his movements.

"What a strange antipathy," thought Pierre, "yet I used to like him very

much."

In the eyes of the world Pierre was a great gentleman, the rather blind

and absurd husband of a distinguished wife, a clever crank who did

nothing but harmed nobody and was a first-rate, good-natured fellow. But

a complex and difficult process of internal development was taking place

all this time in Pierre's soul, revealing much to him and causing him

many spiritual doubts and joys.

CHAPTER X

Pierre went on with his diary, and this is what he wrote in it during

that time:

24th November

Got up at eight, read the Scriptures, then went to my duties. (By Joseph

Alexeevich's advice Pierre had entered the service of the state and

served on one of the committees.) Returned home for dinner and dined

alone--the countess had many visitors I do not like. I ate and drank

moderately and after dinner copied out some passages for the Brothers.

In the evening I went down to the countess and told a funny story about

B., and only remembered that I ought not to have done so when everybody

laughed loudly at it.

I am going to bed with a happy and tranquil mind. Great God, help me to

walk in Thy paths, (1) to conquer anger by calmness and deliberation,

(2) to vanquish lust by self-restraint and repulsion, (3) to withdraw

from worldliness, but not avoid (a) the service of the state, (b) family

duties, (c) relations with my friends, and the management of my affairs.

27th November

I got up late. On waking I lay long in bed yielding to sloth. O God,

help and strengthen me that I may walk in Thy ways! Read the Scriptures,

but without proper feeling. Brother Urusov came and we talked about

worldly vanities. He told me of the Emperor's new projects. I began to

criticize them, but remembered my rules and my benefactor's words--that

a true Freemason should be a zealous worker for the state when his aid

is required and a quiet onlooker when not called on to assist. My tongue

is my enemy. Brothers G. V. and O. visited me and we had a preliminary

talk about the reception of a new Brother. They laid on me the duty of

Rhetor. I feel myself weak and unworthy. Then our talk turned to the

interpretation of the seven pillars and steps of the Temple, the seven

sciences, the seven virtues, the seven vices, and the seven gifts of the

Holy Spirit. Brother O. was very eloquent. In the evening the admission

took place. The new decoration of the Premises contributed much to the

magnificence of the spectacle. It was Boris Drubetskoy who was admitted.

I nominated him and was the Rhetor. A strange feeling agitated me all

the time I was alone with him in the dark chamber. I caught myself

harboring a feeling of hatred toward him which I vainly tried to

overcome. That is why I should really like to save him from evil and

lead him into the path of truth, but evil thoughts of him did not leave

me. It seemed to me that his object in entering the Brotherhood was

merely to be intimate and in favor with members of our lodge. Apart from

the fact that he had asked me several times whether N. and S. were

members of our lodge (a question to which I could not reply) and that

according to my observation he is incapable of feeling respect for our

holy order and is too preoccupied and satisfied with the outer man to

desire spiritual improvement, I had no cause to doubt him, but he seemed

to me insincere, and all the time I stood alone with him in the dark

temple it seemed to me that he was smiling contemptuously at my words,

and I wished really to stab his bare breast with the sword I held to it.

I could not be eloquent, nor could I frankly mention my doubts to the

Brothers and to the Grand Master. Great Architect of Nature, help me to

find the true path out of the labyrinth of lies!

After this, three pages were left blank in the diary, and then the

following was written:

I have had a long and instructive talk alone with Brother V., who

advised me to hold fast by Brother A. Though I am unworthy, much was

revealed to me. Adonai is the name of the creator of the world. Elohim

is the name of the ruler of all. The third name is the name unutterable

which means the All. Talks with Brother V. strengthen, refresh, and

support me in the path of virtue. In his presence doubt has no place.

The distinction between the poor teachings of mundane science and our

sacred all-embracing teaching is clear to me. Human sciences dissect

everything to comprehend it, and kill everything to examine it. In the

holy science of our order all is one, all is known in its entirety and

life. The Trinity--the three elements of matter--are sulphur, mercury,

and salt. Sulphur is of an oily and fiery nature; in combination with

salt by its fiery nature it arouses a desire in the latter by means of

which it attracts mercury, seizes it, holds it, and in combination

produces other bodies. Mercury is a fluid, volatile, spiritual essence.

Christ, the Holy Spirit, Him!...

3rd December

Awoke late, read the Scriptures but was apathetic. Afterwards went and

paced up and down the large hall. I wished to meditate, but instead my

imagination pictured an occurrence of four years ago, when Dolokhov,

meeting me in Moscow after our duel, said he hoped I was enjoying

perfect peace of mind in spite of my wife's absence. At the time I gave

him no answer. Now I recalled every detail of that meeting and in my

mind gave him the most malevolent and bitter replies. I recollected

myself and drove away that thought only when I found myself glowing with

anger, but I did not sufficiently repent. Afterwards Boris Drubetskoy

came and began relating various adventures. His coming vexed me from the

first, and I said something disagreeable to him. He replied. I flared up

and said much that was unpleasant and even rude to him. He became

silent, and I recollected myself only when it was too late. My God, I

cannot get on with him at all. The cause of this is my egotism. I set

myself above him and so become much worse than he, for he is lenient to

my rudeness while I on the contrary nourish contempt for him. O God,

grant that in his presence I may rather see my own vileness, and behave

so that he too may benefit. After dinner I fell asleep and as I was

drowsing off I clearly heard a voice saying in my left ear, "Thy day!"

I dreamed that I was walking in the dark and was suddenly surrounded by

dogs, but I went on undismayed. Suddenly a smallish dog seized my left

thigh with its teeth and would not let go. I began to throttle it with

my hands. Scarcely had I torn it off before another, a bigger one, began

biting me. I lifted it up, but the higher I lifted it the bigger and

heavier it grew. And suddenly Brother A. came and, taking my arm, led me

to a building to enter which we had to pass along a narrow plank. I

stepped on it, but it bent and gave way and I began to clamber up a

fence which I could scarcely reach with my hands. After much effort I

dragged myself up, so that my leg hung down on one side and my body on

the other. I looked round and saw Brother A. standing on the fence and

pointing me to a broad avenue and garden, and in the garden was a large

and beautiful building. I woke up. O Lord, great Architect of Nature,

help me to tear from myself these dogs--my passions especially the last,

which unites in itself the strength of all the former ones, and aid me

to enter that temple of virtue to a vision of which I attained in my

dream.

7th December

I dreamed that Joseph Alexeevich was sitting in my house, and that I was

very glad and wished to entertain him. It seemed as if I chattered

incessantly with other people and suddenly remembered that this could

not please him, and I wished to come close to him and embrace him. But

as soon as I drew near I saw that his face had changed and grown young,

and he was quietly telling me something about the teaching of our order,

but so softly that I could not hear it. Then it seemed that we all left

the room and something strange happened. We were sitting or lying on the

floor. He was telling me something, and I wished to show him my

sensibility, and not listening to what he was saying I began picturing

to myself the condition of my inner man and the grace of God sanctifying

me. And tears came into my eyes, and I was glad he noticed this. But he

looked at me with vexation and jumped up, breaking off his remarks. I

felt abashed and asked whether what he had been saying did not concern

me; but he did not reply, gave me a kind look, and then we suddenly

found ourselves in my bedroom where there is a double bed. He lay down

on the edge of it and I burned with longing to caress him and lie down

too. And he said, "Tell me frankly what is your chief temptation? Do you

know it? I think you know it already." Abashed by this question, I

replied that sloth was my chief temptation. He shook his head

incredulously; and even more abashed, I said that though I was living

with my wife as he advised, I was not living with her as her husband. To

this he replied that one should not deprive a wife of one's embraces and

gave me to understand that that was my duty. But I replied that I should

be ashamed to do it, and suddenly everything vanished. And I awoke and

found in my mind the text from the Gospel: "The life was the light of

men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it

not." Joseph Alexeevich's face had looked young and bright. That day I

received a letter from my benefactor in which he wrote about "conjugal

duties."

9th December

I had a dream from which I awoke with a throbbing heart. I saw that I

was in Moscow in my house, in the big sitting room, and Joseph

Alexeevich came in from the drawing room. I seemed to know at once that

the process of regeneration had already taken place in him, and I rushed

to meet him. I embraced him and kissed his hands, and he said, "Hast

thou noticed that my face is different?" I looked at him, still holding

him in my arms, and saw that his face was young, but that he had no hair

on his head and his features were quite changed. And I said, "I should

have known you had I met you by chance," and I thought to myself, "Am I

telling the truth?" And suddenly I saw him lying like a dead body; then

he gradually recovered and went with me into my study carrying a large

book of sheets of drawing paper; I said, "I drew that," and he answered

by bowing his head. I opened the book, and on all the pages there were

excellent drawings. And in my dream I knew that these drawings

represented the love adventures of the soul with its beloved. And on its

pages I saw a beautiful representation of a maiden in transparent

garments and with a transparent body, flying up to the clouds. And I

seemed to know that this maiden was nothing else than a representation

of the Song of Songs. And looking at those drawings I dreamed I felt

that I was doing wrong, but could not tear myself away from them. Lord,

help me! My God, if Thy forsaking me is Thy doing, Thy will be done; but

if I am myself the cause, teach me what I should do! I shall perish of

my debauchery if Thou utterly desertest me!

CHAPTER XI

The Rostovs' monetary affairs had not improved during the two years they

had spent in the country.

Though Nicholas Rostov had kept firmly to his resolution and was still

serving modestly in an obscure regiment, spending comparatively little,

the way of life at Otradnoe--Mitenka's management of affairs, in

particular--was such that the debts inevitably increased every year. The

only resource obviously presenting itself to the old count was to apply

for an official post, so he had come to Petersburg to look for one and

also, as he said, to let the lassies enjoy themselves for the last time.

Soon after their arrival in Petersburg Berg proposed to Vera and was

accepted.

Though in Moscow the Rostovs belonged to the best society without

themselves giving it a thought, yet in Petersburg their circle of

acquaintances was a mixed and indefinite one. In Petersburg they were

provincials, and the very people they had entertained in Moscow without

inquiring to what set they belonged, here looked down on them.

The Rostovs lived in the same hospitable way in Petersburg as in Moscow,

and the most diverse people met at their suppers. Country neighbors from

Otradnoe, impoverished old squires and their daughters, Peronskaya a

maid of honor, Pierre Bezukhov, and the son of their district postmaster

who had obtained a post in Petersburg. Among the men who very soon

became frequent visitors at the Rostovs' house in Petersburg were Boris,

Pierre whom the count had met in the street and dragged home with him,

and Berg who spent whole days at the Rostovs' and paid the eldest

daughter, Countess Vera, the attentions a young man pays when he intends

to propose.

Not in vain had Berg shown everybody his right hand wounded at

Austerlitz and held a perfectly unnecessary sword in his left. He

narrated that episode so persistently and with so important an air that

everyone believed in the merit and usefulness of his deed, and he had

obtained two decorations for Austerlitz.

In the Finnish war he also managed to distinguish himself. He had picked

up the scrap of a grenade that had killed an aide-de-camp standing near

the commander-in-chief and had taken it to his commander. Just as he had

done after Austerlitz, he related this occurrence at such length and so

insistently that everyone again believed it had been necessary to do

this, and he received two decorations for the Finnish war also. In 1809

he was a captain in the Guards, wore medals, and held some special

lucrative posts in Petersburg.

Though some skeptics smiled when told of Berg's merits, it could not be

denied that he was a painstaking and brave officer, on excellent terms

with his superiors, and a moral young man with a brilliant career before

him and an assured position in society.

Four years before, meeting a German comrade in the stalls of a Moscow

theater, Berg had pointed out Vera Rostova to him and had said in

German, "das soll mein Weib werden," \* and from that moment had made up

his mind to marry her. Now in Petersburg, having considered the Rostovs'

position and his own, he decided that the time had come to propose.

\* "That girl shall be my wife."

Berg's proposal was at first received with a perplexity that was not

flattering to him. At first it seemed strange that the son of an obscure

Livonian gentleman should propose marriage to a Countess Rostova; but

Berg's chief characteristic was such a naive and good natured egotism

that the Rostovs involuntarily came to think it would be a good thing,

since he himself was so firmly convinced that it was good, indeed

excellent. Moreover, the Rostovs' affairs were seriously embarrassed, as

the suitor could not but know; and above all, Vera was twenty-four, had

been taken out everywhere, and though she was certainly good-looking and

sensible, no one up to now had proposed to her. So they gave their

consent.

"You see," said Berg to his comrade, whom he called "friend" only

because he knew that everyone has friends, "you see, I have considered

it all, and should not marry if I had not thought it all out or if it

were in any way unsuitable. But on the contrary, my papa and mamma are

now provided for--I have arranged that rent for them in the Baltic

Provinces--and I can live in Petersburg on my pay, and with her fortune

and my good management we can get along nicely. I am not marrying for

money--I consider that dishonorable--but a wife should bring her share

and a husband his. I have my position in the service, she has

connections and some means. In our times that is worth something, isn't

it? But above all, she is a handsome, estimable girl, and she loves

me..."

Berg blushed and smiled.

"And I love her, because her character is sensible and very good. Now

the other sister, though they are the same family, is quite different--

an unpleasant character and has not the same intelligence. She is so...

you know?... Unpleasant... But my fiancee!... Well, you will be coming,"

he was going to say, "to dine," but changed his mind and said "to take

tea with us," and quickly doubling up his tongue he blew a small round

ring of tobacco smoke, perfectly embodying his dream of happiness.

After the first feeling of perplexity aroused in the parents by Berg's

proposal, the holiday tone of joyousness usual at such times took

possession of the family, but the rejoicing was external and insincere.

In the family's feeling toward this wedding a certain awkwardness and

constraint was evident, as if they were ashamed of not having loved Vera

sufficiently and of being so ready to get her off their hands. The old

count felt this most. He would probably have been unable to state the

cause of his embarrassment, but it resulted from the state of his

affairs. He did not know at all how much he had, what his debts amounted

to, or what dowry he could give Vera. When his daughters were born he

had assigned to each of them, for her dowry, an estate with three

hundred serfs; but one of these estates had already been sold, and the

other was mortgaged and the interest so much in arrears that it would

have to be sold, so that it was impossible to give it to Vera. Nor had

he any money.

Berg had already been engaged a month, and only a week remained before

the wedding, but the count had not yet decided in his own mind the

question of the dowry, nor spoken to his wife about it. At one time the

count thought of giving her the Ryazan estate or of selling a forest, at

another time of borrowing money on a note of hand. A few days before the

wedding Berg entered the count's study early one morning and, with a

pleasant smile, respectfully asked his future father-in-law to let him

know what Vera's dowry would be. The count was so disconcerted by this

long-foreseen inquiry that without consideration he gave the first reply

that came into his head. "I like your being businesslike about it.... I

like it. You shall be satisfied...."

And patting Berg on the shoulder he got up, wishing to end the

conversation. But Berg, smiling pleasantly, explained that if he did not

know for certain how much Vera would have and did not receive at least

part of the dowry in advance, he would have to break matters off.

"Because, consider, Count--if I allowed myself to marry now without

having definite means to maintain my wife, I should be acting badly...."

The conversation ended by the count, who wished to be generous and to

avoid further importunity, saying that he would give a note of hand for

eighty thousand rubles. Berg smiled meekly, kissed the count on the

shoulder, and said that he was very grateful, but that it was impossible

for him to arrange his new life without receiving thirty thousand in

ready money. "Or at least twenty thousand, Count," he added, "and then a

note of hand for only sixty thousand."

"Yes, yes, all right!" said the count hurriedly. "Only excuse me, my

dear fellow, I'll give you twenty thousand and a note of hand for eighty

thousand as well. Yes, yes! Kiss me."

CHAPTER XII

Natasha was sixteen and it was the year 1809, the very year to which she

had counted on her fingers with Boris after they had kissed four years

ago. Since then she had not seen him. Before Sonya and her mother, if

Boris happened to be mentioned, she spoke quite freely of that episode

as of some childish, long-forgotten matter that was not worth

mentioning. But in the secret depths of her soul the question whether

her engagement to Boris was a jest or an important, binding promise

tormented her.

Since Boris left Moscow in 1805 to join the army he had not seen the

Rostovs. He had been in Moscow several times, and had passed near

Otradnoe, but had never been to see them.

Sometimes it occurred to Natasha that he did not wish to see her, and

this conjecture was confirmed by the sad tone in which her elders spoke

of him.

"Nowadays old friends are not remembered," the countess would say when

Boris was mentioned.

Anna Mikhaylovna also had of late visited them less frequently, seemed

to hold herself with particular dignity, and always spoke rapturously

and gratefully of the merits of her son and the brilliant career on

which he had entered. When the Rostovs came to Petersburg Boris called

on them.

He drove to their house in some agitation. The memory of Natasha was his

most poetic recollection. But he went with the firm intention of letting

her and her parents feel that the childish relations between himself and

Natasha could not be binding either on her or on him. He had a brilliant

position in society thanks to his intimacy with Countess Bezukhova, a

brilliant position in the service thanks to the patronage of an

important personage whose complete confidence he enjoyed, and he was

beginning to make plans for marrying one of the richest heiresses in

Petersburg, plans which might very easily be realized. When he entered

the Rostovs' drawing room Natasha was in her own room. When she heard of

his arrival she almost ran into the drawing room, flushed and beaming

with a more than cordial smile.

Boris remembered Natasha in a short dress, with dark eyes shining from

under her curls and boisterous, childish laughter, as he had known her

four years before; and so he was taken aback when quite a different

Natasha entered, and his face expressed rapturous astonishment. This

expression on his face pleased Natasha.

"Well, do you recognize your little madcap playmate?" asked the

countess.

Boris kissed Natasha's hand and said that he was astonished at the

change in her.

"How handsome you have grown!"

"I should think so!" replied Natasha's laughing eyes.

"And is Papa older?" she asked.

Natasha sat down and, without joining in Boris' conversation with the

countess, silently and minutely studied her childhood's suitor. He felt

the weight of that resolute and affectionate scrutiny and glanced at her

occasionally.

Boris' uniform, spurs, tie, and the way his hair was brushed were all

comme il faut and in the latest fashion. This Natasha noticed at once.

He sat rather sideways in the armchair next to the countess, arranging

with his right hand the cleanest of gloves that fitted his left hand

like a skin, and he spoke with a particularly refined compression of his

lips about the amusements of the highest Petersburg society, recalling

with mild irony old times in Moscow and Moscow acquaintances. It was not

accidentally, Natasha felt, that he alluded, when speaking of the

highest aristocracy, to an ambassador's ball he had attended, and to

invitations he had received from N.N. and S.S.

All this time Natasha sat silent, glancing up at him from under her

brows. This gaze disturbed and confused Boris more and more. He looked

round more frequently toward her, and broke off in what he was saying.

He did not stay more than ten minutes, then rose and took his leave. The

same inquisitive, challenging, and rather mocking eyes still looked at

him. After his first visit Boris said to himself that Natasha attracted

him just as much as ever, but that he must not yield to that feeling,

because to marry her, a girl almost without fortune, would mean ruin to

his career, while to renew their former relations without intending to

marry her would be dishonorable. Boris made up his mind to avoid meeting

Natasha, but despite that resolution he called again a few days later

and began calling often and spending whole days at the Rostovs'. It

seemed to him that he ought to have an explanation with Natasha and tell

her that the old times must be forgotten, that in spite of everything...

she could not be his wife, that he had no means, and they would never

let her marry him. But he failed to do so and felt awkward about

entering on such an explanation. From day to day he became more and more

entangled. It seemed to her mother and Sonya that Natasha was in love

with Boris as of old. She sang him his favorite songs, showed him her

album, making him write in it, did not allow him to allude to the past,

letting it be understood how delightful was the present; and every day

he went away in a fog, without having said what he meant to, and not

knowing what he was doing or why he came, or how it would all end. He

left off visiting Helene and received reproachful notes from her every

day, and yet he continued to spend whole days with the Rostovs.

CHAPTER XIII

One night when the old countess, in nightcap and dressing jacket,

without her false curls, and with her poor little knob of hair showing

under her white cotton cap, knelt sighing and groaning on a rug and

bowing to the ground in prayer, her door creaked and Natasha, also in a

dressing jacket with slippers on her bare feet and her hair in

curlpapers, ran in. The countess--her prayerful mood dispelled--looked

round and frowned. She was finishing her last prayer: "Can it be that

this couch will be my grave?" Natasha, flushed and eager, seeing her

mother in prayer, suddenly checked her rush, half sat down, and

unconsciously put out her tongue as if chiding herself. Seeing that her

mother was still praying she ran on tiptoe to the bed and, rapidly

slipping one little foot against the other, pushed off her slippers and

jumped onto the bed the countess had feared might become her grave. This

couch was high, with a feather bed and five pillows each smaller than

the one below. Natasha jumped on it, sank into the feather bed, rolled

over to the wall, and began snuggling up the bedclothes as she settled

down, raising her knees to her chin, kicking out and laughing almost

inaudibly, now covering herself up head and all, and now peeping at her

mother. The countess finished her prayers and came to the bed with a

stern face, but seeing, that Natasha's head was covered, she smiled in

her kind, weak way.

"Now then, now then!" said she.

"Mamma, can we have a talk? Yes?" said Natasha. "Now, just one on your

throat and another... that'll do!" And seizing her mother round the

neck, she kissed her on the throat. In her behavior to her mother

Natasha seemed rough, but she was so sensitive and tactful that however

she clasped her mother she always managed to do it without hurting her

or making her feel uncomfortable or displeased.

"Well, what is it tonight?" said the mother, having arranged her pillows

and waited until Natasha, after turning over a couple of times, had

settled down beside her under the quilt, spread out her arms, and

assumed a serious expression.

These visits of Natasha's at night before the count returned from his

club were one of the greatest pleasures of both mother, and daughter.

"What is it tonight?--But I have to tell you..."

Natasha put her hand on her mother's mouth.

"About Boris... I know," she said seriously; "that's what I have come

about. Don't say it--I know. No, do tell me!" and she removed her hand.

"Tell me, Mamma! He's nice?"

"Natasha, you are sixteen. At your age I was married. You say Boris is

nice. He is very nice, and I love him like a son. But what then?... What

are you thinking about? You have quite turned his head, I can see

that...."

As she said this the countess looked round at her daughter. Natasha was

lying looking steadily straight before her at one of the mahogany

sphinxes carved on the corners of the bedstead, so that the countess

only saw her daughter's face in profile. That face struck her by its

peculiarly serious and concentrated expression.

Natasha was listening and considering.

"Well, what then?" said she.

"You have quite turned his head, and why? What do you want of him? You

know you can't marry him."

"Why not?" said Natasha, without changing her position.

"Because he is young, because he is poor, because he is a relation...

and because you yourself don't love him."

"How do you know?"

"I know. It is not right, darling!"

"But if I want to..." said Natasha.

"Leave off talking nonsense," said the countess.

"But if I want to..."

"Natasha, I am in earnest..."

Natasha did not let her finish. She drew the countess' large hand to

her, kissed it on the back and then on the palm, then again turned it

over and began kissing first one knuckle, then the space between the

knuckles, then the next knuckle, whispering, "January, February, March,

April, May. Speak, Mamma, why don't you say anything? Speak!" said she,

turning to her mother, who was tenderly gazing at her daughter and in

that contemplation seemed to have forgotten all she had wished to say.

"It won't do, my love! Not everyone will understand this friendship

dating from your childish days, and to see him so intimate with you may

injure you in the eyes of other young men who visit us, and above all it

torments him for nothing. He may already have found a suitable and

wealthy match, and now he's half crazy."

"Crazy?" repeated Natasha.

"I'll tell you some things about myself. I had a cousin..."

"I know! Cyril Matveich... but he is old."

"He was not always old. But this is what I'll do, Natasha, I'll have a

talk with Boris. He need not come so often...."

"Why not, if he likes to?"

"Because I know it will end in nothing...."

"How can you know? No, Mamma, don't speak to him! What nonsense!" said

Natasha in the tone of one being deprived of her property. "Well, I

won't marry, but let him come if he enjoys it and I enjoy it." Natasha

smiled and looked at her mother. "Not to marry, but just so," she added.

"How so, my pet?"

"Just so. There's no need for me to marry him. But... just so."

"Just so, just so," repeated the countess, and shaking all over, she

went off into a good humored, unexpected, elderly laugh.

"Don't laugh, stop!" cried Natasha. "You're shaking the whole bed!

You're awfully like me, just such another giggler.... Wait..." and she

seized the countess' hands and kissed a knuckle of the little finger,

saying, "June," and continued, kissing, "July, August," on the other

hand. "But, Mamma, is he very much in love? What do you think? Was

anybody ever so much in love with you? And he's very nice, very, very

nice. Only not quite my taste--he is so narrow, like the dining-room

clock.... Don't you understand? Narrow, you know--gray, light gray..."

"What rubbish you're talking!" said the countess.

Natasha continued: "Don't you really understand? Nicholas would

understand.... Bezukhov, now, is blue, dark-blue and red, and he is

square."

"You flirt with him too," said the countess, laughing.

"No, he is a Freemason, I have found out. He is fine, dark-blue and

red.... How can I explain it to you?"

"Little countess!" the count's voice called from behind the door.

"You're not asleep?" Natasha jumped up, snatched up her slippers, and

ran barefoot to her own room.

It was a long time before she could sleep. She kept thinking that no one

could understand all that she understood and all there was in her.

"Sonya?" she thought, glancing at that curled-up, sleeping little kitten

with her enormous plait of hair. "No, how could she? She's virtuous. She

fell in love with Nicholas and does not wish to know anything more. Even

Mamma does not understand. It is wonderful how clever I am and how...

charming she is," she went on, speaking of herself in the third person,

and imagining it was some very wise man--the wisest and best of men--who

was saying it of her. "There is everything, everything in her,"

continued this man. "She is unusually intelligent, charming... and then

she is pretty, uncommonly pretty, and agile--she swims and rides

splendidly... and her voice! One can really say it's a wonderful voice!"

She hummed a scrap from her favorite opera by Cherubini, threw herself

on her bed, laughed at the pleasant thought that she would immediately

fall asleep, called Dunyasha the maid to put out the candle, and before

Dunyasha had left the room had already passed into yet another happier

world of dreams, where everything was as light and beautiful as in

reality, and even more so because it was different.

Next day the countess called Boris aside and had a talk with him, after

which he ceased coming to the Rostovs'.

CHAPTER XIV

On the thirty-first of December, New Year's Eve, 1809 - 10 an old

grandee of Catherine's day was giving a ball and midnight supper. The

diplomatic corps and the Emperor himself were to be present.

The grandee's well-known mansion on the English Quay glittered with

innumerable lights. Police were stationed at the brightly lit entrance

which was carpeted with red baize, and not only gendarmes but dozens of

police officers and even the police master himself stood at the porch.

Carriages kept driving away and fresh ones arriving, with red-liveried

footmen and footmen in plumed hats. From the carriages emerged men

wearing uniforms, stars, and ribbons, while ladies in satin and ermine

cautiously descended the carriage steps which were let down for them

with a clatter, and then walked hurriedly and noiselessly over the baize

at the entrance.

Almost every time a new carriage drove up a whisper ran through the

crowd and caps were doffed.

"The Emperor?... No, a minister.... prince... ambassador. Don't you see

the plumes?..." was whispered among the crowd.

One person, better dressed than the rest, seemed to know everyone and

mentioned by name the greatest dignitaries of the day.

A third of the visitors had already arrived, but the Rostovs, who were

to be present, were still hurrying to get dressed.

There had been many discussions and preparations for this ball in the

Rostov family, many fears that the invitation would not arrive, that the

dresses would not be ready, or that something would not be arranged as

it should be.

Marya Ignatevna Peronskaya, a thin and shallow maid of honor at the

court of the Dowager Empress, who was a friend and relation of the

countess and piloted the provincial Rostovs in Petersburg high society,

was to accompany them to the ball.

They were to call for her at her house in the Taurida Gardens at ten

o'clock, but it was already five minutes to ten, and the girls were not

yet dressed.

Natasha was going to her first grand ball. She had got up at eight that

morning and had been in a fever of excitement and activity all day. All

her powers since morning had been concentrated on ensuring that they

all--she herself, Mamma, and Sonya--should be as well dressed as

possible. Sonya and her mother put themselves entirely in her hands. The

countess was to wear a claret-colored velvet dress, and the two girls

white gauze over pink silk slips, with roses on their bodices and their

hair dressed a la grecque.

Everything essential had already been done; feet, hands, necks, and ears

washed, perfumed, and powdered, as befits a ball; the openwork silk

stockings and white satin shoes with ribbons were already on; the

hairdressing was almost done. Sonya was finishing dressing and so was

the countess, but Natasha, who had bustled about helping them all, was

behindhand. She was still sitting before a looking-glass with a dressing

jacket thrown over her slender shoulders. Sonya stood ready dressed in

the middle of the room and, pressing the head of a pin till it hurt her

dainty finger, was fixing on a last ribbon that squeaked as the pin went

through it.

"That's not the way, that's not the way, Sonya!" cried Natasha turning

her head and clutching with both hands at her hair which the maid who

was dressing it had not time to release. "That bow is not right. Come

here!"

Sonya sat down and Natasha pinned the ribbon on differently.

"Allow me, Miss! I can't do it like that," said the maid who was holding

Natasha's hair.

"Oh, dear! Well then, wait. That's right, Sonya."

"Aren't you ready? It is nearly ten," came the countess' voice.

"Directly! Directly! And you, Mamma?"

"I have only my cap to pin on."

"Don't do it without me!" called Natasha. "You won't do it right."

"But it's already ten."

They had decided to be at the ball by half past ten, and Natasha had

still to get dressed and they had to call at the Taurida Gardens.

When her hair was done, Natasha, in her short petticoat from under which

her dancing shoes showed, and in her mother's dressing jacket, ran up to

Sonya, scrutinized her, and then ran to her mother. Turning her mother's

head this way and that, she fastened on the cap and, hurriedly kissing

her gray hair, ran back to the maids who were turning up the hem of her

skirt.

The cause of the delay was Natasha's skirt, which was too long. Two

maids were turning up the hem and hurriedly biting off the ends of

thread. A third with pins in her mouth was running about between the

countess and Sonya, and a fourth held the whole of the gossamer garment

up high on one uplifted hand.

"Mavra, quicker, darling!"

"Give me my thimble, Miss, from there..."

"Whenever will you be ready?" asked the count coming to the door. "Here

is some scent. Peronskaya must be tired of waiting."

"It's ready, Miss," said the maid, holding up the shortened gauze dress

with two fingers, and blowing and shaking something off it, as if by

this to express a consciousness of the airiness and purity of what she

held.

Natasha began putting on the dress.

"In a minute! In a minute! Don't come in, Papa!" she cried to her father

as he opened the door--speaking from under the filmy skirt which still

covered her whole face.

Sonya slammed the door to. A minute later they let the count in. He was

wearing a blue swallow-tail coat, shoes and stockings, and was perfumed

and his hair pomaded.

"Oh, Papa! how nice you look! Charming!" cried Natasha, as she stood in

the middle of the room smoothing out the folds of the gauze.

"If you please, Miss! allow me," said the maid, who on her knees was

pulling the skirt straight and shifting the pins from one side of her

mouth to the other with her tongue.

"Say what you like," exclaimed Sonya, in a despairing voice as she

looked at Natasha, "say what you like, it's still too long."

Natasha stepped back to look at herself in the pier glass. The dress was

too long.

"Really, madam, it is not at all too long," said Mavra, crawling on her

knees after her young lady.

"Well, if it's too long we'll tack it up... we'll tack it up in one

minute," said the resolute Dunyasha taking a needle that was stuck on

the front of her little shawl and, still kneeling on the floor, set to

work once more.

At that moment, with soft steps, the countess came in shyly, in her cap

and velvet gown.

"Oo-oo, my beauty!" exclaimed the count, "she looks better than any of

you!"

He would have embraced her but, blushing, she stepped aside fearing to

be rumpled.

"Mamma, your cap, more to this side," said Natasha. "I'll arrange it,"

and she rushed forward so that the maids who were tacking up her skirt

could not move fast enough and a piece of gauze was torn off.

"Oh goodness! What has happened? Really it was not my fault!"

"Never mind, I'll run it up, it won't show," said Dunyasha.

"What a beauty--a very queen!" said the nurse as she came to the door.

"And Sonya! They are lovely!"

At a quarter past ten they at last got into their carriages and started.

But they had still to call at the Taurida Gardens.

Peronskaya was quite ready. In spite of her age and plainness she had

gone through the same process as the Rostovs, but with less flurry--for

to her it was a matter of routine. Her ugly old body was washed,

perfumed, and powdered in just the same way. She had washed behind her

ears just as carefully, and when she entered her drawing room in her

yellow dress, wearing her badge as maid of honor, her old lady's maid

was as full of rapturous admiration as the Rostovs' servants had been.

She praised the Rostovs' toilets. They praised her taste and toilet, and

at eleven o'clock, careful of their coiffures and dresses, they settled

themselves in their carriages and drove off.

CHAPTER XV

Natasha had not had a moment free since early morning and had not once

had time to think of what lay before her.

In the damp chill air and crowded closeness of the swaying carriage, she

for the first time vividly imagined what was in store for her there at

the ball, in those brightly lighted rooms--with music, flowers, dances,

the Emperor, and all the brilliant young people of Petersburg. The

prospect was so splendid that she hardly believed it would come true, so

out of keeping was it with the chill darkness and closeness of the

carriage. She understood all that awaited her only when, after stepping

over the red baize at the entrance, she entered the hall, took off her

fur cloak, and, beside Sonya and in front of her mother, mounted the

brightly illuminated stairs between the flowers. Only then did she

remember how she must behave at a ball, and tried to assume the majestic

air she considered indispensable for a girl on such an occasion. But,

fortunately for her, she felt her eyes growing misty, she saw nothing

clearly, her pulse beat a hundred to the minute, and the blood throbbed

at her heart. She could not assume that pose, which would have made her

ridiculous, and she moved on almost fainting from excitement and trying

with all her might to conceal it. And this was the very attitude that

became her best. Before and behind them other visitors were entering,

also talking in low tones and wearing ball dresses. The mirrors on the

landing reflected ladies in white, pale-blue, and pink dresses, with

diamonds and pearls on their bare necks and arms.

Natasha looked in the mirrors and could not distinguish her reflection

from the others. All was blended into one brilliant procession. On

entering the ballroom the regular hum of voices, footsteps, and

greetings deafened Natasha, and the light and glitter dazzled her still

more. The host and hostess, who had already been standing at the door

for half an hour repeating the same words to the various arrivals,

"Charme de vous voir," \* greeted the Rostovs and Peronskaya in the same

manner.

\* "Delighted to see you."

The two girls in their white dresses, each with a rose in her black

hair, both curtsied in the same way, but the hostess' eye involuntarily

rested longer on the slim Natasha. She looked at her and gave her alone

a special smile in addition to her usual smile as hostess. Looking at

her she may have recalled the golden, irrecoverable days of her own

girlhood and her own first ball. The host also followed Natasha with his

eyes and asked the count which was his daughter.

"Charming!" said he, kissing the tips of his fingers.

In the ballroom guests stood crowding at the entrance doors awaiting the

Emperor. The countess took up a position in one of the front rows of

that crowd. Natasha heard and felt that several people were asking about

her and looking at her. She realized that those noticing her liked her,

and this observation helped to calm her.

"There are some like ourselves and some worse," she thought.

Peronskaya was pointing out to the countess the most important people at

the ball.

"That is the Dutch ambassador, do you see? That gray-haired man," she

said, indicating an old man with a profusion of silver-gray curly hair,

who was surrounded by ladies laughing at something he said.

"Ah, here she is, the Queen of Petersburg, Countess Bezukhova," said

Peronskaya, indicating Helene who had just entered. "How lovely! She is

quite equal to Marya Antonovna. See how the men, young and old, pay

court to her. Beautiful and clever... they say Prince--is quite mad

about her. But see, those two, though not good-looking, are even more

run after."

She pointed to a lady who was crossing the room followed by a very plain

daughter.

"She is a splendid match, a millionairess," said Peronskaya. "And look,

here come her suitors."

"That is Bezukhova's brother, Anatole Kuragin," she said, indicating a

handsome officer of the Horse Guards who passed by them with head erect,

looking at something over the heads of the ladies. "He's handsome, isn't

he? I hear they will marry him to that rich girl. But your cousin,

Drubetskoy, is also very attentive to her. They say she has millions. Oh

yes, that's the French ambassador himself!" she replied to the countess'

inquiry about Caulaincourt. "Looks as if he were a king! All the same,

the French are charming, very charming. No one more charming in society.

Ah, here she is! Yes, she is still the most beautiful of them all, our

Marya Antonovna! And how simply she is dressed! Lovely! And that stout

one in spectacles is the universal Freemason," she went on, indicating

Pierre. "Put him beside his wife and he looks a regular buffoon!"

Pierre, swaying his stout body, advanced, making way through the crowd

and nodding to right and left as casually and good-naturedly as if he

were passing through a crowd at a fair. He pushed through, evidently

looking for someone.

Natasha looked joyfully at the familiar face of Pierre, "the buffoon,"

as Peronskaya had called him, and knew he was looking for them, and for

her in particular. He had promised to be at the ball and introduce

partners to her.

But before he reached them Pierre stopped beside a very handsome, dark

man of middle height, and in a white uniform, who stood by a window

talking to a tall man wearing stars and a ribbon. Natasha at once

recognized the shorter and younger man in the white uniform: it was

Bolkonski, who seemed to her to have grown much younger, happier, and

better-looking.

"There's someone else we know--Bolkonski, do you see, Mamma?" said

Natasha, pointing out Prince Andrew. "You remember, he stayed a night

with us at Otradnoe."

"Oh, you know him?" said Peronskaya. "I can't bear him. Il fait a

present la pluie et le beau temps. \* He's too proud for anything. Takes

after his father. And he's hand in glove with Speranski, writing some

project or other. Just look how he treats the ladies! There's one

talking to him and he has turned away," she said, pointing at him. "I'd

give it to him if he treated me as he does those ladies."

\* "He is all the rage just now."

CHAPTER XVI

Suddenly everybody stirred, began talking, and pressed forward and then

back, and between the two rows, which separated, the Emperor entered to

the sounds of music that had immediately struck up. Behind him walked

his host and hostess. He walked in rapidly, bowing to right and left as

if anxious to get the first moments of the reception over. The band

played the polonaise in vogue at that time on account of the words that

had been set to it, beginning: "Alexander, Elisaveta, all our hearts you

ravish quite..." The Emperor passed on to the drawing room, the crowd

made a rush for the doors, and several persons with excited faces

hurried there and back again. Then the crowd hastily retired from the

drawing-room door, at which the Emperor reappeared talking to the

hostess. A young man, looking distraught, pounced down on the ladies,

asking them to move aside. Some ladies, with faces betraying complete

forgetfulness of all the rules of decorum, pushed forward to the

detriment of their toilets. The men began to choose partners and take

their places for the polonaise.

Everyone moved back, and the Emperor came smiling out of the drawing

room leading his hostess by the hand but not keeping time to the music.

The host followed with Marya Antonovna Naryshkina; then came

ambassadors, ministers, and various generals, whom Peronskaya diligently

named. More than half the ladies already had partners and were taking

up, or preparing to take up, their positions for the polonaise. Natasha

felt that she would be left with her mother and Sonya among a minority

of women who crowded near the wall, not having been invited to dance.

She stood with her slender arms hanging down, her scarcely defined bosom

rising and falling regularly, and with bated breath and glittering,

frightened eyes gazed straight before her, evidently prepared for the

height of joy or misery. She was not concerned about the Emperor or any

of those great people whom Peronskaya was pointing out--she had but one

thought: "Is it possible no one will ask me, that I shall not be among

the first to dance? Is it possible that not one of all these men will

notice me? They do not even seem to see me, or if they do they look as

if they were saying, 'Ah, she's not the one I'm after, so it's not worth

looking at her!' No, it's impossible," she thought. "They must know how

I long to dance, how splendidly I dance, and how they would enjoy

dancing with me."

The strains of the polonaise, which had continued for a considerable

time, had begun to sound like a sad reminiscence to Natasha's ears. She

wanted to cry. Peronskaya had left them. The count was at the other end

of the room. She and the countess and Sonya were standing by themselves

as in the depths of a forest amid that crowd of strangers, with no one

interested in them and not wanted by anyone. Prince Andrew with a lady

passed by, evidently not recognizing them. The handsome Anatole was

smilingly talking to a partner on his arm and looked at Natasha as one

looks at a wall. Boris passed them twice and each time turned away. Berg

and his wife, who were not dancing, came up to them.

This family gathering seemed humiliating to Natasha--as if there were

nowhere else for the family to talk but here at the ball. She did not

listen to or look at Vera, who was telling her something about her own

green dress.

At last the Emperor stopped beside his last partner (he had danced with

three) and the music ceased. A worried aide-de-camp ran up to the

Rostovs requesting them to stand farther back, though as it was they

were already close to the wall, and from the gallery resounded the

distinct, precise, enticingly rhythmical strains of a waltz. The Emperor

looked smilingly down the room. A minute passed but no one had yet begun

dancing. An aide-de-camp, the Master of Ceremonies, went up to Countess

Bezukhova and asked her to dance. She smilingly raised her hand and laid

it on his shoulder without looking at him. The aide-de-camp, an adept in

his art, grasping his partner firmly round her waist, with confident

deliberation started smoothly, gliding first round the edge of the

circle, then at the corner of the room he caught Helene's left hand and

turned her, the only sound audible, apart from the ever-quickening

music, being the rhythmic click of the spurs on his rapid, agile feet,

while at every third beat his partner's velvet dress spread out and

seemed to flash as she whirled round. Natasha gazed at them and was

ready to cry because it was not she who was dancing that first turn of

the waltz.

Prince Andrew, in the white uniform of a cavalry colonel, wearing

stockings and dancing shoes, stood looking animated and bright in the

front row of the circle not far from the Rostovs. Baron Firhoff was

talking to him about the first sitting of the Council of State to be

held next day. Prince Andrew, as one closely connected with Speranski

and participating in the work of the legislative commission, could give

reliable information about that sitting, concerning which various rumors

were current. But not listening to what Firhoff was saying, he was

gazing now at the sovereign and now at the men intending to dance who

had not yet gathered courage to enter the circle.

Prince Andrew was watching these men abashed by the Emperor's presence,

and the women who were breathlessly longing to be asked to dance.

Pierre came up to him and caught him by the arm.

"You always dance. I have a protegee, the young Rostova, here. Ask her,"

he said.

"Where is she?" asked Bolkonski. "Excuse me!" he added, turning to the

baron, "we will finish this conversation elsewhere--at a ball one must

dance." He stepped forward in the direction Pierre indicated. The

despairing, dejected expression of Natasha's face caught his eye. He

recognized her, guessed her feelings, saw that it was her debut,

remembered her conversation at the window, and with an expression of

pleasure on his face approached Countess Rostova.

"Allow me to introduce you to my daughter," said the countess, with

heightened color.

"I have the pleasure of being already acquainted, if the countess

remembers me," said Prince Andrew with a low and courteous bow quite

belying Peronskaya's remarks about his rudeness, and approaching Natasha

he held out his arm to grasp her waist before he had completed his

invitation. He asked her to waltz. That tremulous expression on

Natasha's face, prepared either for despair or rapture, suddenly

brightened into a happy, grateful, childlike smile.

"I have long been waiting for you," that frightened happy little girl

seemed to say by the smile that replaced the threatened tears, as she

raised her hand to Prince Andrew's shoulder. They were the second couple

to enter the circle. Prince Andrew was one of the best dancers of his

day and Natasha danced exquisitely. Her little feet in their white satin

dancing shoes did their work swiftly, lightly, and independently of

herself, while her face beamed with ecstatic happiness. Her slender bare

arms and neck were not beautiful--compared to Helene's her shoulders

looked thin and her bosom undeveloped. But Helene seemed, as it were,

hardened by a varnish left by the thousands of looks that had scanned

her person, while Natasha was like a girl exposed for the first time,

who would have felt very much ashamed had she not been assured that this

was absolutely necessary.

Prince Andrew liked dancing, and wishing to escape as quickly as

possible from the political and clever talk which everyone addressed to

him, wishing also to break up the circle of restraint he disliked,

caused by the Emperor's presence, he danced, and had chosen Natasha

because Pierre pointed her out to him and because she was the first

pretty girl who caught his eye; but scarcely had he embraced that

slender supple figure and felt her stirring so close to him and smiling

so near him than the wine of her charm rose to his head, and he felt

himself revived and rejuvenated when after leaving her he stood

breathing deeply and watching the other dancers.

CHAPTER XVII

After Prince Andrew, Boris came up to ask Natasha for a dance, and then

the aide-de-camp who had opened the ball, and several other young men,

so that, flushed and happy, and passing on her superfluous partners to

Sonya, she did not cease dancing all the evening. She noticed and saw

nothing of what occupied everyone else. Not only did she fail to notice

that the Emperor talked a long time with the French ambassador, and how

particularly gracious he was to a certain lady, or that Prince So-and-so

and So-and-so did and said this and that, and that Helene had great

success and was honored by the special attention of So-and-so, but she

did not even see the Emperor, and only noticed that he had gone because

the ball became livelier after his departure. For one of the merry

cotillions before supper Prince Andrew was again her partner. He

reminded her of their first encounter in the Otradnoe avenue, and how

she had been unable to sleep that moonlight night, and told her how he

had involuntarily overheard her. Natasha blushed at that recollection

and tried to excuse herself, as if there had been something to be

ashamed of in what Prince Andrew had overheard.

Like all men who have grown up in society, Prince Andrew liked meeting

someone there not of the conventional society stamp. And such was

Natasha, with her surprise, her delight, her shyness, and even her

mistakes in speaking French. With her he behaved with special care and

tenderness, sitting beside her and talking of the simplest and most

unimportant matters; he admired her shy grace. In the middle of the

cotillion, having completed one of the figures, Natasha, still out of

breath, was returning to her seat when another dancer chose her. She was

tired and panting and evidently thought of declining, but immediately

put her hand gaily on the man's shoulder, smiling at Prince Andrew.

"I'd be glad to sit beside you and rest: I'm tired; but you see how they

keep asking me, and I'm glad of it, I'm happy and I love everybody, and

you and I understand it all," and much, much more was said in her smile.

When her partner left her Natasha ran across the room to choose two

ladies for the figure.

"If she goes to her cousin first and then to another lady, she will be

my wife," said Prince Andrew to himself quite to his own surprise, as he

watched her. She did go first to her cousin.

"What rubbish sometimes enters one's head!" thought Prince Andrew, "but

what is certain is that that girl is so charming, so original, that she

won't be dancing here a month before she will be married.... Such as she

are rare here," he thought, as Natasha, readjusting a rose that was

slipping on her bodice, settled herself beside him.

When the cotillion was over the old count in his blue coat came up to

the dancers. He invited Prince Andrew to come and see them, and asked

his daughter whether she was enjoying herself. Natasha did not answer at

once but only looked up with a smile that said reproachfully: "How can

you ask such a question?"

"I have never enjoyed myself so much before!" she said, and Prince

Andrew noticed how her thin arms rose quickly as if to embrace her

father and instantly dropped again. Natasha was happier than she had

ever been in her life. She was at that height of bliss when one becomes

completely kind and good and does not believe in the possibility of

evil, unhappiness, or sorrow.

At that ball Pierre for the first time felt humiliated by the position

his wife occupied in court circles. He was gloomy and absent-minded. A

deep furrow ran across his forehead, and standing by a window he stared

over his spectacles seeing no one.

On her way to supper Natasha passed him.

Pierre's gloomy, unhappy look struck her. She stopped in front of him.

She wished to help him, to bestow on him the superabundance of her own

happiness.

"How delightful it is, Count!" said she. "Isn't it?"

Pierre smiled absent-mindedly, evidently not grasping what she said.

"Yes, I am very glad," he said.

"How can people be dissatisfied with anything?" thought Natasha.

"Especially such a capital fellow as Bezukhov!" In Natasha's eyes all

the people at the ball alike were good, kind, and splendid people,

loving one another; none of them capable of injuring another--and so

they ought all to be happy.

CHAPTER XVIII

Next day Prince Andrew thought of the ball, but his mind did not dwell

on it long. "Yes, it was a very brilliant ball," and then... "Yes, that

little Rostova is very charming. There's something fresh, original, un-

Petersburg-like about her that distinguishes her." That was all he

thought about yesterday's ball, and after his morning tea he set to

work.

But either from fatigue or want of sleep he was ill-disposed for work

and could get nothing done. He kept criticizing his own work, as he

often did, and was glad when he heard someone coming.

The visitor was Bitski, who served on various committees, frequented all

the societies in Petersburg, and a passionate devotee of the new ideas

and of Speranski, and a diligent Petersburg newsmonger--one of those men

who choose their opinions like their clothes according to the fashion,

but who for that very reason appear to be the warmest partisans. Hardly

had he got rid of his hat before he ran into Prince Andrew's room with a

preoccupied air and at once began talking. He had just heard particulars

of that morning's sitting of the Council of State opened by the Emperor,

and he spoke of it enthusiastically. The Emperor's speech had been

extraordinary. It had been a speech such as only constitutional monarchs

deliver. "The Sovereign plainly said that the Council and Senate are

estates of the realm, he said that the government must rest not on

authority but on secure bases. The Emperor said that the fiscal system

must be reorganized and the accounts published," recounted Bitski,

emphasizing certain words and opening his eyes significantly.

"Ah, yes! Today's events mark an epoch, the greatest epoch in our

history," he concluded.

Prince Andrew listened to the account of the opening of the Council of

State, which he had so impatiently awaited and to which he had attached

such importance, and was surprised that this event, now that it had

taken place, did not affect him, and even seemed quite insignificant. He

listened with quiet irony to Bitski's enthusiastic account of it. A very

simple thought occurred to him: "What does it matter to me or to Bitski

what the Emperor was pleased to say at the Council? Can all that make me

any happier or better?"

And this simple reflection suddenly destroyed all the interest Prince

Andrew had felt in the impending reforms. He was going to dine that

evening at Speranski's, "with only a few friends," as the host had said

when inviting him. The prospect of that dinner in the intimate home

circle of the man he so admired had greatly interested Prince Andrew,

especially as he had not yet seen Speranski in his domestic

surroundings, but now he felt disinclined to go to it.

At the appointed hour, however, he entered the modest house Speranski

owned in the Taurida Gardens. In the parqueted dining room this small

house, remarkable for its extreme cleanliness (suggesting that of a

monastery), Prince Andrew, who was rather late, found the friendly

gathering of Speranski's intimate acquaintances already assembled at

five o'clock. There were no ladies present except Speranski's little

daughter (long-faced like her father) and her governess. The other

guests were Gervais, Magnitski, and Stolypin. While still in the

anteroom Prince Andrew heard loud voices and a ringing staccato laugh--a

laugh such as one hears on the stage. Someone--it sounded like

Speranski--was distinctly ejaculating ha-ha-ha. Prince Andrew had never

before heard Speranski's famous laugh, and this ringing, high-pitched

laughter from a statesman made a strange impression on him.

He entered the dining room. The whole company were standing between two

windows at a small table laid with hors-d'oeuvres. Speranski, wearing a

gray swallow-tail coat with a star on the breast, and evidently still

the same waistcoat and high white stock he had worn at the meeting of

the Council of State, stood at the table with a beaming countenance. His

guests surrounded him. Magnitski, addressing himself to Speranski, was

relating an anecdote, and Speranski was laughing in advance at what

Magnitski was going to say. When Prince Andrew entered the room

Magnitski's words were again crowned by laughter. Stolypin gave a deep

bass guffaw as he munched a piece of bread and cheese. Gervais laughed

softly with a hissing chuckle, and Speranski in a high-pitched staccato

manner.

Still laughing, Speranski held out his soft white hand to Prince Andrew.

"Very pleased to see you, Prince," he said. "One moment..." he went on,

turning to Magnitski and interrupting his story. "We have agreed that

this is a dinner for recreation, with not a word about business!" and

turning again to the narrator he began to laugh afresh.

Prince Andrew looked at the laughing Speranski with astonishment,

regret, and disillusionment. It seemed to him that this was not

Speranski but someone else. Everything that had formerly appeared

mysterious and fascinating in Speranski suddenly became plain and

unattractive.

At dinner the conversation did not cease for a moment and seemed to

consist of the contents of a book of funny anecdotes. Before Magnitski

had finished his story someone else was anxious to relate something

still funnier. Most of the anecdotes, if not relating to the state

service, related to people in the service. It seemed that in this

company the insignificance of those people was so definitely accepted

that the only possible attitude toward them was one of good humored

ridicule. Speranski related how at the Council that morning a deaf

dignitary, when asked his opinion, replied that he thought so too.

Gervais gave a long account of an official revision, remarkable for the

stupidity of everybody concerned. Stolypin, stuttering, broke into the

conversation and began excitedly talking of the abuses that existed

under the former order of things--threatening to give a serious turn to

the conversation. Magnitski starting quizzing Stolypin about his

vehemence. Gervais intervened with a joke, and the talk reverted to its

former lively tone.

Evidently Speranski liked to rest after his labors and find amusement in

a circle of friends, and his guests, understanding his wish, tried to

enliven him and amuse themselves. But their gaiety seemed to Prince

Andrew mirthless and tiresome. Speranski's high-pitched voice struck him

unpleasantly, and the incessant laughter grated on him like a false

note. Prince Andrew did not laugh and feared that he would be a damper

on the spirits of the company, but no one took any notice of his being

out of harmony with the general mood. They all seemed very gay.

He tried several times to join in the conversation, but his remarks were

tossed aside each time like a cork thrown out of the water, and he could

not jest with them.

There was nothing wrong or unseemly in what they said, it was witty and

might have been funny, but it lacked just that something which is the

salt of mirth, and they were not even aware that such a thing existed.

After dinner Speranski's daughter and her governess rose. He patted the

little girl with his white hand and kissed her. And that gesture, too,

seemed unnatural to Prince Andrew.

The men remained at table over their port--English fashion. In the midst

of a conversation that was started about Napoleon's Spanish affairs,

which they all agreed in approving, Prince Andrew began to express a

contrary opinion. Speranski smiled and, with an evident wish to prevent

the conversation from taking an unpleasant course, told a story that had

no connection with the previous conversation. For a few moments all were

silent.

Having sat some time at table, Speranski corked a bottle of wine and,

remarking, "Nowadays good wine rides in a carriage and pair," passed it

to the servant and got up. All rose and continuing to talk loudly went

into the drawing room. Two letters brought by a courier were handed to

Speranski and he took them to his study. As soon as he had left the room

the general merriment stopped and the guests began to converse sensibly

and quietly with one another.

"Now for the recitation!" said Speranski on returning from his study. "A

wonderful talent!" he said to Prince Andrew, and Magnitski immediately

assumed a pose and began reciting some humorous verses in French which

he had composed about various well-known Petersburg people. He was

interrupted several times by applause. When the verses were finished

Prince Andrew went up to Speranski and took his leave.

"Where are you off to so early?" asked Speranski.

"I promised to go to a reception."

They said no more. Prince Andrew looked closely into those mirrorlike,

impenetrable eyes, and felt that it had been ridiculous of him to have

expected anything from Speranski and from any of his own activities

connected with him, or ever to have attributed importance to what

Speranski was doing. That precise, mirthless laughter rang in Prince

Andrew's ears long after he had left the house.

When he reached home Prince Andrew began thinking of his life in

Petersburg during those last four months as if it were something new. He

recalled his exertions and solicitations, and the history of his project

of army reform, which had been accepted for consideration and which they

were trying to pass over in silence simply because another, a very poor

one, had already been prepared and submitted to the Emperor. He thought

of the meetings of a committee of which Berg was a member. He remembered

how carefully and at what length everything relating to form and

procedure was discussed at those meetings, and how sedulously and

promptly all that related to the gist of the business was evaded. He

recalled his labors on the Legal Code, and how painstakingly he had

translated the articles of the Roman and French codes into Russian, and

he felt ashamed of himself. Then he vividly pictured to himself

Bogucharovo, his occupations in the country, his journey to Ryazan; he

remembered the peasants and Dron the village elder, and mentally

applying to them the Personal Rights he had divided into paragraphs, he

felt astonished that he could have spent so much time on such useless

work.

CHAPTER XIX

Next day Prince Andrew called at a few houses he had not visited before,

and among them at the Rostovs' with whom he had renewed acquaintance at

the ball. Apart from considerations of politeness which demanded the

call, he wanted to see that original, eager girl who had left such a

pleasant impression on his mind, in her own home.

Natasha was one of the first to meet him. She was wearing a dark-blue

house dress in which Prince Andrew thought her even prettier than in her

ball dress. She and all the Rostov family welcomed him as an old friend,

simply and cordially. The whole family, whom he had formerly judged

severely, now seemed to him to consist of excellent, simple, and kindly

people. The old count's hospitality and good nature, which struck one

especially in Petersburg as a pleasant surprise, were such that Prince

Andrew could not refuse to stay to dinner. "Yes," he thought, "they are

capital people, who of course have not the slightest idea what a

treasure they possess in Natasha; but they are kindly folk and form the

best possible setting for this strikingly poetic, charming girl,

overflowing with life!"

In Natasha Prince Andrew was conscious of a strange world completely

alien to him and brimful of joys unknown to him, a different world, that

in the Otradnoe avenue and at the window that moonlight night had

already begun to disconcert him. Now this world disconcerted him no

longer and was no longer alien to him, but he himself having entered it

found in it a new enjoyment.

After dinner Natasha, at Prince Andrew's request, went to the clavichord

and began singing. Prince Andrew stood by a window talking to the ladies

and listened to her. In the midst of a phrase he ceased speaking and

suddenly felt tears choking him, a thing he had thought impossible for

him. He looked at Natasha as she sang, and something new and joyful

stirred in his soul. He felt happy and at the same time sad. He had

absolutely nothing to weep about yet he was ready to weep. What about?

His former love? The little princess? His disillusionments?... His hopes

for the future?... Yes and no. The chief reason was a sudden, vivid

sense of the terrible contrast between something infinitely great and

illimitable within him and that limited and material something that he,

and even she, was. This contrast weighed on and yet cheered him while

she sang.

As soon as Natasha had finished she went up to him and asked how he

liked her voice. She asked this and then became confused, feeling that

she ought not to have asked it. He smiled, looking at her, and said he

liked her singing as he liked everything she did.

Prince Andrew left the Rostovs' late in the evening. He went to bed from

habit, but soon realized that he could not sleep. Having lit his candle

he sat up in bed, then got up, then lay down again not at all troubled

by his sleeplessness: his soul was as fresh and joyful as if he had

stepped out of a stuffy room into God's own fresh air. It did not enter

his head that he was in love with Natasha; he was not thinking about

her, but only picturing her to himself, and in consequence all life

appeared in a new light. "Why do I strive, why do I toil in this narrow,

confined frame, when life, all life with all its joys, is open to me?"

said he to himself. And for the first time for a very long while he

began making happy plans for the future. He decided that he must attend

to his son's education by finding a tutor and putting the boy in his

charge, then he ought to retire from the service and go abroad, and see

England, Switzerland and Italy. "I must use my freedom while I feel so

much strength and youth in me," he said to himself. "Pierre was right

when he said one must believe in the possibility of happiness in order

to be happy, and now I do believe in it. Let the dead bury their dead,

but while one has life one must live and be happy!" thought he.

CHAPTER XX

One morning Colonel Berg, whom Pierre knew as he knew everybody in

Moscow and Petersburg, came to see him. Berg arrived in an immaculate

brand-new uniform, with his hair pomaded and brushed forward over his

temples as the Emperor Alexander wore his hair.

"I have just been to see the countess, your wife. Unfortunately she

could not grant my request, but I hope, Count, I shall be more fortunate

with you," he said with a smile.

"What is it you wish, Colonel? I am at your service."

"I have now quite settled in my new rooms, Count" (Berg said this with

perfect conviction that this information could not but be agreeable),

"and so I wish to arrange just a small party for my own and my wife's

friends." (He smiled still more pleasantly.) "I wished to ask the

countess and you to do me the honor of coming to tea and to supper."

Only Countess Helene, considering the society of such people as the

Bergs beneath her, could be cruel enough to refuse such an invitation.

Berg explained so clearly why he wanted to collect at his house a small

but select company, and why this would give him pleasure, and why though

he grudged spending money on cards or anything harmful, he was prepared

to run into some expense for the sake of good society--that Pierre could

not refuse, and promised to come.

"But don't be late, Count, if I may venture to ask; about ten minutes to

eight, please. We shall make up a rubber. Our general is coming. He is

very good to me. We shall have supper, Count. So you will do me the

favor."

Contrary to his habit of being late, Pierre on that day arrived at the

Bergs' house, not at ten but at fifteen minutes to eight.

Having prepared everything necessary for the party, the Bergs were ready

for their guests' arrival.

In their new, clean, and light study with its small busts and pictures

and new furniture sat Berg and his wife. Berg, closely buttoned up in

his new uniform, sat beside his wife explaining to her that one always

could and should be acquainted with people above one, because only then

does one get satisfaction from acquaintances.

"You can get to know something, you can ask for something. See how I

managed from my first promotion." (Berg measured his life not by years

but by promotions.) "My comrades are still nobodies, while I am only

waiting for a vacancy to command a regiment, and have the happiness to

be your husband." (He rose and kissed Vera's hand, and on the way to her

straightened out a turned-up corner of the carpet.) "And how have I

obtained all this? Chiefly by knowing how to choose my aquaintances. It

goes without saying that one must be conscientious and methodical."

Berg smiled with a sense of his superiority over a weak woman, and

paused, reflecting that this dear wife of his was after all but a weak

woman who could not understand all that constitutes a man's dignity,

what it was ein Mann zu sein. \* Vera at the same time smiling with a

sense of superiority over her good, conscientious husband, who all the

same understood life wrongly, as according to Vera all men did. Berg,

judging by his wife, thought all women weak and foolish. Vera, judging

only by her husband and generalizing from that observation, supposed

that all men, though they understand nothing and are conceited and

selfish, ascribe common sense to themselves alone.

\* To be a man.

Berg rose and embraced his wife carefully, so as not to crush her lace

fichu for which he had paid a good price, kissing her straight on the

lips.

"The only thing is, we mustn't have children too soon," he continued,

following an unconscious sequence of ideas.

"Yes," answered Vera, "I don't at all want that. We must live for

society."

"Princess Yusupova wore one exactly like this," said Berg, pointing to

the fichu with a happy and kindly smile.

Just then Count Bezukhov was announced. Husband and wife glanced at one

another, both smiling with self-satisfaction, and each mentally claiming

the honor of this visit.

"This is what comes of knowing how to make acquaintances," thought Berg.

"This is what comes of knowing how to conduct oneself."

"But please don't interrupt me when I am entertaining the guests," said

Vera, "because I know what interests each of them and what to say to

different people."

Berg smiled again.

"It can't be helped: men must sometimes have masculine conversation,"

said he.

They received Pierre in their small, new drawing-room, where it was

impossible to sit down anywhere without disturbing its symmetry,

neatness, and order; so it was quite comprehensible and not strange that

Berg, having generously offered to disturb the symmetry of an armchair

or of the sofa for his dear guest, but being apparently painfully

undecided on the matter himself, eventually left the visitor to settle

the question of selection. Pierre disturbed the symmetry by moving a

chair for himself, and Berg and Vera immediately began their evening

party, interrupting each other in their efforts to entertain their

guest.

Vera, having decided in her own mind that Pierre ought to be entertained

with conversation about the French embassy, at once began accordingly.

Berg, having decided that masculine conversation was required,

interrupted his wife's remarks and touched on the question of the war

with Austria, and unconsciously jumped from the general subject to

personal considerations as to the proposals made him to take part in the

Austrian campaign and the reasons why he had declined them. Though the

conversation was very incoherent and Vera was angry at the intrusion of

the masculine element, both husband and wife felt with satisfaction

that, even if only one guest was present, their evening had begun very

well and was as like as two peas to every other evening party with its

talk, tea, and lighted candles.

Before long Boris, Berg's old comrade, arrived. There was a shade of

condescension and patronage in his treatment of Berg and Vera. After

Boris came a lady with the colonel, then the general himself, then the

Rostovs, and the party became unquestionably exactly like all other

evening parties. Berg and Vera could not repress their smiles of

satisfaction at the sight of all this movement in their drawing room, at

the sound of the disconnected talk, the rustling of dresses, and the

bowing and scraping. Everything was just as everybody always has it,

especially so the general, who admired the apartment, patted Berg on the

shoulder, and with parental authority superintended the setting out of

the table for boston. The general sat down by Count Ilya Rostov, who was

next to himself the most important guest. The old people sat with the

old, the young with the young, and the hostess at the tea table, on

which stood exactly the same kind of cakes in a silver cake basket as

the Panins had at their party. Everything was just as it was everywhere

else.

CHAPTER XXI

Pierre, as one of the principal guests, had to sit down to boston with

Count Rostov, the general, and the colonel. At the card table he

happened to be directly facing Natasha, and was struck by a curious

change that had come over her since the ball. She was silent, and not

only less pretty than at the ball, but only redeemed from plainness by

her look of gentle indifference to everything around.

"What's the matter with her?" thought Pierre, glancing at her. She was

sitting by her sister at the tea table, and reluctantly, without looking

at him, made some reply to Boris who sat down beside her. After playing

out a whole suit and to his partner's delight taking five tricks,

Pierre, hearing greetings and the steps of someone who had entered the

room while he was picking up his tricks, glanced again at Natasha.

"What has happened to her?" he asked himself with still greater

surprise.

Prince Andrew was standing before her, saying something to her with a

look of tender solicitude. She, having raised her head, was looking up

at him, flushed and evidently trying to master her rapid breathing. And

the bright glow of some inner fire that had been suppressed was again

alight in her. She was completely transformed and from a plain girl had

again become what she had been at the ball.

Prince Andrew went up to Pierre, and the latter noticed a new and

youthful expression in his friend's face.

Pierre changed places several times during the game, sitting now with

his back to Natasha and now facing her, but during the whole of the six

rubbers he watched her and his friend.

"Something very important is happening between them," thought Pierre,

and a feeling that was both joyful and painful agitated him and made him

neglect the game.

After six rubbers the general got up, saying that it was no use playing

like that, and Pierre was released. Natasha on one side was talking with

Sonya and Boris, and Vera with a subtle smile was saying something to

Prince Andrew. Pierre went up to his friend and, asking whether they

were talking secrets, sat down beside them. Vera, having noticed Prince

Andrew's attentions to Natasha, decided that at a party, a real evening

party, subtle allusions to the tender passion were absolutely necessary

and, seizing a moment when Prince Andrew was alone, began a conversation

with him about feelings in general and about her sister. With so

intellectual a guest as she considered Prince Andrew to be, she felt

that she had to employ her diplomatic tact.

When Pierre went up to them he noticed that Vera was being carried away

by her self-satisfied talk, but that Prince Andrew seemed embarrassed, a

thing that rarely happened with him.

"What do you think?" Vera was saying with an arch smile. "You are so

discerning, Prince, and understand people's characters so well at a

glance. What do you think of Natalie? Could she be constant in her

attachments? Could she, like other women" (Vera meant herself), "love a

man once for all and remain true to him forever? That is what I consider

true love. What do you think, Prince?"

"I know your sister too little," replied Prince Andrew, with a sarcastic

smile under which he wished to hide his embarrassment, "to be able to

solve so delicate a question, and then I have noticed that the less

attractive a woman is the more constant she is likely to be," he added,

and looked up at Pierre who was just approaching them.

"Yes, that is true, Prince. In our days," continued Vera--mentioning

"our days" as people of limited intelligence are fond of doing,

imagining that they have discovered and appraised the peculiarities of

"our days" and that human characteristics change with the times--"in our

days a girl has so much freedom that the pleasure of being courted often

stifles real feeling in her. And it must be confessed that Natalie is

very susceptible." This return to the subject of Natalie caused Prince

Andrew to knit his brows with discomfort: he was about to rise, but Vera

continued with a still more subtle smile:

"I think no one has been more courted than she," she went on, "but till

quite lately she never cared seriously for anyone. Now you know, Count,"

she said to Pierre, "even our dear cousin Boris, who, between ourselves,

was very far gone in the land of tenderness..." (alluding to a map of

love much in vogue at that time).

Prince Andrew frowned and remained silent.

"You are friendly with Boris, aren't you?" asked Vera.

"Yes, I know him..."

"I expect he has told you of his childish love for Natasha?"

"Oh, there was childish love?" suddenly asked Prince Andrew, blushing

unexpectedly.

"Yes, you know between cousins intimacy often leads to love. Le

cousinage est un dangereux voisinage. \* Don't you think so?"

\* "Cousinhood is a dangerous neighborhood."

"Oh, undoubtedly!" said Prince Andrew, and with sudden and unnatural

liveliness he began chaffing Pierre about the need to be very careful

with his fifty-year-old Moscow cousins, and in the midst of these

jesting remarks he rose, taking Pierre by the arm, and drew him aside.

"Well?" asked Pierre, seeing his friend's strange animation with

surprise, and noticing the glance he turned on Natasha as he rose.

"I must... I must have a talk with you," said Prince Andrew. "You know

that pair of women's gloves?" (He referred to the masonic gloves given

to a newly initiated Brother to present to the woman he loved.) "I...

but no, I will talk to you later on," and with a strange light in his

eyes and restlessness in his movements, Prince Andrew approached Natasha

and sat down beside her. Pierre saw how Prince Andrew asked her

something and how she flushed as she replied.

But at that moment Berg came to Pierre and began insisting that he

should take part in an argument between the general and the colonel on

the affairs in Spain.

Berg was satisfied and happy. The smile of pleasure never left his face.

The party was very successful and quite like other parties he had seen.

Everything was similar: the ladies' subtle talk, the cards, the general

raising his voice at the card table, and the samovar and the tea cakes;

only one thing was lacking that he had always seen at the evening

parties he wished to imitate. They had not yet had a loud conversation

among the men and a dispute about something important and clever. Now

the general had begun such a discussion and so Berg drew Pierre to it.

CHAPTER XXII

Next day, having been invited by the count, Prince Andrew dined with the

Rostovs and spent the rest of the day there.

Everyone in the house realized for whose sake Prince Andrew came, and

without concealing it he tried to be with Natasha all day. Not only in

the soul of the frightened yet happy and enraptured Natasha, but in the

whole house, there was a feeling of awe at something important that was

bound to happen. The countess looked with sad and sternly serious eyes

at Prince Andrew when he talked to Natasha and timidly started some

artificial conversation about trifles as soon as he looked her way.

Sonya was afraid to leave Natasha and afraid of being in the way when

she was with them. Natasha grew pale, in a panic of expectation, when

she remained alone with him for a moment. Prince Andrew surprised her by

his timidity. She felt that he wanted to say something to her but could

not bring himself to do so.

In the evening, when Prince Andrew had left, the countess went up to

Natasha and whispered: "Well, what?"

"Mamma! For heaven's sake don't ask me anything now! One can't talk

about that," said Natasha.

But all the same that night Natasha, now agitated and now frightened,

lay a long time in her mother's bed gazing straight before her. She told

her how he had complimented her, how he told her he was going abroad,

asked her where they were going to spend the summer, and then how he had

asked her about Boris.

"But such a... such a... never happened to me before!" she said. "Only I

feel afraid in his presence. I am always afraid when I'm with him. What

does that mean? Does it mean that it's the real thing? Yes? Mamma, are

you asleep?"

"No, my love; I am frightened myself," answered her mother. "Now go!"

"All the same I shan't sleep. What silliness, to sleep! Mummy! Mummy!

such a thing never happened to me before," she said, surprised and

alarmed at the feeling she was aware of in herself. "And could we ever

have thought!..."

It seemed to Natasha that even at the time she first saw Prince Andrew

at Otradnoe she had fallen in love with him. It was as if she feared

this strange, unexpected happiness of meeting again the very man she had

then chosen (she was firmly convinced she had done so) and of finding

him, as it seemed, not indifferent to her.

"And it had to happen that he should come specially to Petersburg while

we are here. And it had to happen that we should meet at that ball. It

is fate. Clearly it is fate that everything led up to this! Already

then, directly I saw him I felt something peculiar."

"What else did he say to you? What are those verses? Read them..." said

her mother, thoughtfully, referring to some verses Prince Andrew had

written in Natasha's album.

"Mamma, one need not be ashamed of his being a widower?"

"Don't, Natasha! Pray to God. 'Marriages are made in heaven,'" said her

mother.

"Darling Mummy, how I love you! How happy I am!" cried Natasha, shedding

tears of joy and excitement and embracing her mother.

At that very time Prince Andrew was sitting with Pierre and telling him

of his love for Natasha and his firm resolve to make her his wife.

That day Countess Helene had a reception at her house. The French

ambassador was there, and a foreign prince of the blood who had of late

become a frequent visitor of hers, and many brilliant ladies and

gentlemen. Pierre, who had come downstairs, walked through the rooms and

struck everyone by his preoccupied, absent-minded, and morose air.

Since the ball he had felt the approach of a fit of nervous depression

and had made desperate efforts to combat it. Since the intimacy of his

wife with the royal prince, Pierre had unexpectedly been made a

gentleman of the bedchamber, and from that time he had begun to feel

oppressed and ashamed in court society, and dark thoughts of the vanity

of all things human came to him oftener than before. At the same time

the feeling he had noticed between his protegee Natasha and Prince

Andrew accentuated his gloom by the contrast between his own position

and his friend's. He tried equally to avoid thinking about his wife, and

about Natasha and Prince Andrew; and again everything seemed to him

insignificant in comparison with eternity; again the question: for what?

presented itself; and he forced himself to work day and night at masonic

labors, hoping to drive away the evil spirit that threatened him. Toward

midnight, after he had left the countess' apartments, he was sitting

upstairs in a shabby dressing gown, copying out the original transaction

of the Scottish lodge of Freemasons at a table in his low room cloudy

with tobacco smoke, when someone came in. It was Prince Andrew.

"Ah, it's you!" said Pierre with a preoccupied, dissatisfied air. "And

I, you see, am hard at it." He pointed to his manuscript book with that

air of escaping from the ills of life with which unhappy people look at

their work.

Prince Andrew, with a beaming, ecstatic expression of renewed life on

his face, paused in front of Pierre and, not noticing his sad look,

smiled at him with the egotism of joy.

"Well, dear heart," said he, "I wanted to tell you about it yesterday

and I have come to do so today. I never experienced anything like it

before. I am in love, my friend!"

Suddenly Pierre heaved a deep sigh and dumped his heavy person down on

the sofa beside Prince Andrew.

"With Natasha Rostova, yes?" said he.

"Yes, yes! Who else should it be? I should never have believed it, but

the feeling is stronger than I. Yesterday I tormented myself and

suffered, but I would not exchange even that torment for anything in the

world, I have not lived till now. At last I live, but I can't live

without her! But can she love me?... I am too old for her.... Why don't

you speak?"

"I? I? What did I tell you?" said Pierre suddenly, rising and beginning

to pace up and down the room. "I always thought it.... That girl is such

a treasure... she is a rare girl.... My dear friend, I entreat you,

don't philosophize, don't doubt, marry, marry, marry.... And I am sure

there will not be a happier man than you."

"But what of her?"

"She loves you."

"Don't talk rubbish..." said Prince Andrew, smiling and looking into

Pierre's eyes.

"She does, I know," Pierre cried fiercely.

"But do listen," returned Prince Andrew, holding him by the arm. "Do you

know the condition I am in? I must talk about it to someone."

"Well, go on, go on. I am very glad," said Pierre, and his face really

changed, his brow became smooth, and he listened gladly to Prince

Andrew. Prince Andrew seemed, and really was, quite a different, quite a

new man. Where was his spleen, his contempt for life, his

disillusionment? Pierre was the only person to whom he made up his mind

to speak openly; and to him he told all that was in his soul. Now he

boldly and lightly made plans for an extended future, said he could not

sacrifice his own happiness to his father's caprice, and spoke of how he

would either make his father consent to this marriage and love her, or

would do without his consent; then he marveled at the feeling that had

mastered him as at something strange, apart from and independent of

himself.

"I should not have believed anyone who told me that I was capable of

such love," said Prince Andrew. "It is not at all the same feeling that

I knew in the past. The whole world is now for me divided into two

halves: one half is she, and there all is joy, hope, light: the other

half is everything where she is not, and there is all gloom and

darkness...."

"Darkness and gloom," reiterated Pierre: "yes, yes, I understand that."

"I cannot help loving the light, it is not my fault. And I am very

happy! You understand me? I know you are glad for my sake."

"Yes, yes," Pierre assented, looking at his friend with a touched and

sad expression in his eyes. The brighter Prince Andrew's lot appeared to

him, the gloomier seemed his own.

CHAPTER XXIII

Prince Andrew needed his father's consent to his marriage, and to obtain

this he started for the country next day.

His father received his son's communication with external composure, but

inward wrath. He could not comprehend how anyone could wish to alter his

life or introduce anything new into it, when his own life was already

ending. "If only they would let me end my days as I want to," thought

the old man, "then they might do as they please." With his son, however,

he employed the diplomacy he reserved for important occasions and,

adopting a quiet tone, discussed the whole matter.

In the first place the marriage was not a brilliant one as regards

birth, wealth, or rank. Secondly, Prince Andrew was no longer as young

as he had been and his health was poor (the old man laid special stress

on this), while she was very young. Thirdly, he had a son whom it would

be a pity to entrust to a chit of a girl. "Fourthly and finally," the

father said, looking ironically at his son, "I beg you to put it off for

a year: go abroad, take a cure, look out as you wanted to for a German

tutor for Prince Nicholas. Then if your love or passion or obstinacy--as

you please--is still as great, marry! And that's my last word on it.

Mind, the last..." concluded the prince, in a tone which showed that

nothing would make him alter his decision.

Prince Andrew saw clearly that the old man hoped that his feelings, or

his fiancee's, would not stand a year's test, or that he (the old prince

himself) would die before then, and he decided to conform to his

father's wish--to propose, and postpone the wedding for a year.

Three weeks after the last evening he had spent with the Rostovs, Prince

Andrew returned to Petersburg.

Next day after her talk with her mother Natasha expected Bolkonski all

day, but he did not come. On the second and third day it was the same.

Pierre did not come either and Natasha, not knowing that Prince Andrew

had gone to see his father, could not explain his absence to herself.

Three weeks passed in this way. Natasha had no desire to go out anywhere

and wandered from room to room like a shadow, idle and listless; she

wept secretly at night and did not go to her mother in the evenings. She

blushed continually and was irritable. It seemed to her that everybody

knew about her disappointment and was laughing at her and pitying her.

Strong as was her inward grief, this wound to her vanity intensified her

misery.

Once she came to her mother, tried to say something, and suddenly began

to cry. Her tears were those of an offended child who does not know why

it is being punished.

The countess began to soothe Natasha, who after first listening to her

mother's words, suddenly interrupted her:

"Leave off, Mamma! I don't think, and don't want to think about it! He

just came and then left off, left off..."

Her voice trembled, and she again nearly cried, but recovered and went

on quietly:

"And I don't at all want to get married. And I am afraid of him; I have

now become quite calm, quite calm."

The day after this conversation Natasha put on the old dress which she

knew had the peculiar property of conducing to cheerfulness in the

mornings, and that day she returned to the old way of life which she had

abandoned since the ball. Having finished her morning tea she went to

the ballroom, which she particularly liked for its loud resonance, and

began singing her solfeggio. When she had finished her first exercise

she stood still in the middle of the room and sang a musical phrase that

particularly pleased her. She listened joyfully (as though she had not

expected it) to the charm of the notes reverberating, filling the whole

empty ballroom, and slowly dying away; and all at once she felt

cheerful. "What's the good of making so much of it? Things are nice as

it is," she said to herself, and she began walking up and down the room,

not stepping simply on the resounding parquet but treading with each

step from the heel to the toe (she had on a new and favorite pair of

shoes) and listening to the regular tap of the heel and creak of the toe

as gladly as she had to the sounds of her own voice. Passing a mirror

she glanced into it. "There, that's me!" the expression of her face

seemed to say as she caught sight of herself. "Well, and very nice too!

I need nobody."

A footman wanted to come in to clear away something in the room but she

would not let him, and having closed the door behind him continued her

walk. That morning she had returned to her favorite mood--love of, and

delight in, herself. "How charming that Natasha is!" she said again,

speaking as some third, collective, male person. "Pretty, a good voice,

young, and in nobody's way if only they leave her in peace." But however

much they left her in peace she could not now be at peace, and

immediately felt this.

In the hall the porch door opened, and someone asked, "At home?" and

then footsteps were heard. Natasha was looking at the mirror, but did

not see herself. She listened to the sounds in the hall. When she saw

herself, her face was pale. It was he. She knew this for certain, though

she hardly heard his voice through the closed doors.

Pale and agitated, Natasha ran into the drawing room.

"Mamma! Bolkonski has come!" she said. "Mamma, it is awful, it is

unbearable! I don't want... to be tormented? What am I to do?..."

Before the countess could answer, Prince Andrew entered the room with an

agitated and serious face. As soon as he saw Natasha his face

brightened. He kissed the countess' hand and Natasha's, and sat down

beside the sofa.

"It is long since we had the pleasure..." began the countess, but Prince

Andrew interrupted her by answering her intended question, obviously in

haste to say what he had to.

"I have not been to see you all this time because I have been at my

father's. I had to talk over a very important matter with him. I only

got back last night," he said glancing at Natasha; "I want to have a

talk with you, Countess," he added after a moment's pause.

The countess lowered her eyes, sighing deeply.

"I am at your disposal," she murmured.

Natasha knew that she ought to go away, but was unable to do so:

something gripped her throat, and regardless of manners she stared

straight at Prince Andrew with wide-open eyes.

"At once? This instant!... No, it can't be!" she thought.

Again he glanced at her, and that glance convinced her that she was not

mistaken. Yes, at once, that very instant, her fate would be decided.

"Go, Natasha! I will call you," said the countess in a whisper.

Natasha glanced with frightened imploring eyes at Prince Andrew and at

her mother and went out.

"I have come, Countess, to ask for your daughter's hand," said Prince

Andrew.

The countess' face flushed hotly, but she said nothing.

"Your offer..." she began at last sedately. He remained silent, looking

into her eyes. "Your offer..." (she grew confused) "is agreeable to us,

and I accept your offer. I am glad. And my husband... I hope... but it

will depend on her...."

"I will speak to her when I have your consent.... Do you give it to me?"

said Prince Andrew.

"Yes," replied the countess. She held out her hand to him, and with a

mixed feeling of estrangement and tenderness pressed her lips to his

forehead as he stooped to kiss her hand. She wished to love him as a

son, but felt that to her he was a stranger and a terrifying man. "I am

sure my husband will consent," said the countess, "but your father..."

"My father, to whom I have told my plans, has made it an express

condition of his consent that the wedding is not to take place for a

year. And I wished to tell you of that," said Prince Andrew.

"It is true that Natasha is still young, but--so long as that?..."

"It is unavoidable," said Prince Andrew with a sigh.

"I will send her to you," said the countess, and left the room.

"Lord have mercy upon us!" she repeated while seeking her daughter.

Sonya said that Natasha was in her bedroom. Natasha was sitting on the

bed, pale and dry eyed, and was gazing at the icons and whispering

something as she rapidly crossed herself. Seeing her mother she jumped

up and flew to her.

"Well, Mamma?... Well?..."

"Go, go to him. He is asking for your hand," said the countess, coldly

it seemed to Natasha. "Go... go," said the mother, sadly and

reproachfully, with a deep sigh, as her daughter ran away.

Natasha never remembered how she entered the drawing room. When she came

in and saw him she paused. "Is it possible that this stranger has now

become everything to me?" she asked herself, and immediately answered,

"Yes, everything! He alone is now dearer to me than everything in the

world." Prince Andrew came up to her with downcast eyes.

"I have loved you from the very first moment I saw you. May I hope?"

He looked at her and was struck by the serious impassioned expression of

her face. Her face said: "Why ask? Why doubt what you cannot but know?

Why speak, when words cannot express what one feels?"

She drew near to him and stopped. He took her hand and kissed it.

"Do you love me?"

"Yes, yes!" Natasha murmured as if in vexation. Then she sighed loudly

and, catching her breath more and more quickly, began to sob.

"What is it? What's the matter?"

"Oh, I am so happy!" she replied, smiled through her tears, bent over

closer to him, paused for an instant as if asking herself whether she

might, and then kissed him.

Prince Andrew held her hands, looked into her eyes, and did not find in

his heart his former love for her. Something in him had suddenly

changed; there was no longer the former poetic and mystic charm of

desire, but there was pity for her feminine and childish weakness, fear

at her devotion and trustfulness, and an oppressive yet joyful sense of

the duty that now bound him to her forever. The present feeling, though

not so bright and poetic as the former, was stronger and more serious.

"Did your mother tell you that it cannot be for a year?" asked Prince

Andrew, still looking into her eyes.

"Is it possible that I--the 'chit of a girl,' as everybody called me,"

thought Natasha--"is it possible that I am now to be the wife and the

equal of this strange, dear, clever man whom even my father looks up to?

Can it be true? Can it be true that there can be no more playing with

life, that now I am grown up, that on me now lies a responsibility for

my every word and deed? Yes, but what did he ask me?"

"No," she replied, but she had not understood his question.

"Forgive me!" he said. "But you are so young, and I have already been

through so much in life. I am afraid for you, you do not yet know

yourself."

Natasha listened with concentrated attention, trying but failing to take

in the meaning of his words.

"Hard as this year which delays my happiness will be," continued Prince

Andrew, "it will give you time to be sure of yourself. I ask you to make

me happy in a year, but you are free: our engagement shall remain a

secret, and should you find that you do not love me, or should you come

to love..." said Prince Andrew with an unnatural smile.

"Why do you say that?" Natasha interrupted him. "You know that from the

very day you first came to Otradnoe I have loved you," she cried, quite

convinced that she spoke the truth.

"In a year you will learn to know yourself...."

"A whole year!" Natasha repeated suddenly, only now realizing that the

marriage was to be postponed for a year. "But why a year? Why a

year?..."

Prince Andrew began to explain to her the reasons for this delay.

Natasha did not hear him.

"And can't it be helped?" she asked. Prince Andrew did not reply, but

his face expressed the impossibility of altering that decision.

"It's awful! Oh, it's awful! awful!" Natasha suddenly cried, and again

burst into sobs. "I shall die, waiting a year: it's impossible, it's

awful!" She looked into her lover's face and saw in it a look of

commiseration and perplexity.

"No, no! I'll do anything!" she said, suddenly checking her tears. "I am

so happy."

The father and mother came into the room and gave the betrothed couple

their blessing.

From that day Prince Andrew began to frequent the Rostovs' as Natasha's

affianced lover.

CHAPTER XXIV

No betrothal ceremony took place and Natasha's engagement to Bolkonski

was not announced; Prince Andrew insisted on that. He said that as he

was responsible for the delay he ought to bear the whole burden of it;

that he had given his word and bound himself forever, but that he did

not wish to bind Natasha and gave her perfect freedom. If after six

months she felt that she did not love him she would have full right to

reject him. Naturally neither Natasha nor her parents wished to hear of

this, but Prince Andrew was firm. He came every day to the Rostovs', but

did not behave to Natasha as an affianced lover: he did not use the

familiar thou, but said you to her, and kissed only her hand. After

their engagement, quite different, intimate, and natural relations

sprang up between them. It was as if they had not known each other till

now. Both liked to recall how they had regarded each other when as yet

they were nothing to one another; they felt themselves now quite

different beings: then they were artificial, now natural and sincere. At

first the family felt some constraint in intercourse with Prince Andrew;

he seemed a man from another world, and for a long time Natasha trained

the family to get used to him, proudly assuring them all that he only

appeared to be different, but was really just like all of them, and that

she was not afraid of him and no one else ought to be. After a few days

they grew accustomed to him, and without restraint in his presence

pursued their usual way of life, in which he took his part. He could

talk about rural economy with the count, fashions with the countess and

Natasha, and about albums and fancywork with Sonya. Sometimes the

household both among themselves and in his presence expressed their

wonder at how it had all happened, and at the evident omens there had

been of it: Prince Andrew's coming to Otradnoe and their coming to

Petersburg, and the likeness between Natasha and Prince Andrew which her

nurse had noticed on his first visit, and Andrew's encounter with

Nicholas in 1805, and many other incidents betokening that it had to be.

In the house that poetic dullness and quiet reigned which always

accompanies the presence of a betrothed couple. Often when all sitting

together everyone kept silent. Sometimes the others would get up and go

away and the couple, left alone, still remained silent. They rarely

spoke of their future life. Prince Andrew was afraid and ashamed to

speak of it. Natasha shared this as she did all his feelings, which she

constantly divined. Once she began questioning him about his son. Prince

Andrew blushed, as he often did now--Natasha particularly liked it in

him--and said that his son would not live with them.

"Why not?" asked Natasha in a frightened tone.

"I cannot take him away from his grandfather, and besides..."

"How I should have loved him!" said Natasha, immediately guessing his

thought; "but I know you wish to avoid any pretext for finding fault

with us."

Sometimes the old count would come up, kiss Prince Andrew, and ask his

advice about Petya's education or Nicholas' service. The old countess

sighed as she looked at them; Sonya was always getting frightened lest

she should be in the way and tried to find excuses for leaving them

alone, even when they did not wish it. When Prince Andrew spoke (he

could tell a story very well), Natasha listened to him with pride; when

she spoke she noticed with fear and joy that he gazed attentively and

scrutinizingly at her. She asked herself in perplexity: "What does he

look for in me? He is trying to discover something by looking at me!

What if what he seeks in me is not there?" Sometimes she fell into one

of the mad, merry moods characteristic of her, and then she particularly

loved to hear and see how Prince Andrew laughed. He seldom laughed, but

when he did he abandoned himself entirely to his laughter, and after

such a laugh she always felt nearer to him. Natasha would have been

completely happy if the thought of the separation awaiting her and

drawing near had not terrified her, just as the mere thought of it made

him turn pale and cold.

On the eve of his departure from Petersburg Prince Andrew brought with

him Pierre, who had not been to the Rostovs' once since the ball. Pierre

seemed disconcerted and embarrassed. He was talking to the countess, and

Natasha sat down beside a little chess table with Sonya, thereby

inviting Prince Andrew to come too. He did so.

"You have known Bezukhov a long time?" he asked. "Do you like him?"

"Yes, he's a dear, but very absurd."

And as usual when speaking of Pierre, she began to tell anecdotes of his

absent-mindedness, some of which had even been invented about him.

"Do you know I have entrusted him with our secret? I have known him from

childhood. He has a heart of gold. I beg you, Natalie," Prince Andrew

said with sudden seriousness--"I am going away and heaven knows what may

happen. You may cease to... all right, I know I am not to say that. Only

this, then: whatever may happen to you when I am not here..."

"What can happen?"

"Whatever trouble may come," Prince Andrew continued, "I beg you,

Mademoiselle Sophie, whatever may happen, to turn to him alone for

advice and help! He is a most absent-minded and absurd fellow, but he

has a heart of gold."

Neither her father, nor her mother, nor Sonya, nor Prince Andrew himself

could have foreseen how the separation from her lover would act on

Natasha. Flushed and agitated she went about the house all that day,

dry-eyed, occupied with most trivial matters as if not understanding

what awaited her. She did not even cry when, on taking leave, he kissed

her hand for the last time. "Don't go!" she said in a tone that made him

wonder whether he really ought not to stay and which he remembered long

afterwards. Nor did she cry when he was gone; but for several days she

sat in her room dry-eyed, taking no interest in anything and only saying

now and then, "Oh, why did he go away?"

But a fortnight after his departure, to the surprise of those around

her, she recovered from her mental sickness just as suddenly and became

her old self again, but with a change in her moral physiognomy, as a

child gets up after a long illness with a changed expression of face.

CHAPTER XXV

During that year after his son's departure, Prince Nicholas Bolkonski's

health and temper became much worse. He grew still more irritable, and

it was Princess Mary who generally bore the brunt of his frequent fits

of unprovoked anger. He seemed carefully to seek out her tender spots so

as to torture her mentally as harshly as possible. Princess Mary had two

passions and consequently two joys--her nephew, little Nicholas, and

religion--and these were the favorite subjects of the prince's attacks

and ridicule. Whatever was spoken of he would bring round to the

superstitiousness of old maids, or the petting and spoiling of children.

"You want to make him"--little Nicholas--"into an old maid like

yourself! A pity! Prince Andrew wants a son and not an old maid," he

would say. Or, turning to Mademoiselle Bourienne, he would ask her in

Princess Mary's presence how she liked our village priests and icons and

would joke about them.

He continually hurt Princess Mary's feelings and tormented her, but it

cost her no effort to forgive him. Could he be to blame toward her, or

could her father, whom she knew loved her in spite of it all, be unjust?

And what is justice? The princess never thought of that proud word

"justice." All the complex laws of man centered for her in one clear and

simple law--the law of love and self-sacrifice taught us by Him who

lovingly suffered for mankind though He Himself was God. What had she to

do with the justice or injustice of other people? She had to endure and

love, and that she did.

During the winter Prince Andrew had come to Bald Hills and had been gay,

gentle, and more affectionate than Princess Mary had known him for a

long time past. She felt that something had happened to him, but he said

nothing to her about his love. Before he left he had a long talk with

his father about something, and Princess Mary noticed that before his

departure they were dissatisfied with one another.

Soon after Prince Andrew had gone, Princess Mary wrote to her friend

Julie Karagina in Petersburg, whom she had dreamed (as all girls dream)

of marrying to her brother, and who was at that time in mourning for her

own brother, killed in Turkey.

Sorrow, it seems, is our common lot, my dear, tender friend Julie.

Your loss is so terrible that I can only explain it to myself as a

special providence of God who, loving you, wishes to try you and your

excellent mother. Oh, my friend! Religion, and religion alone, can--I

will not say comfort us--but save us from despair. Religion alone can

explain to us what without its help man cannot comprehend: why, for what

cause, kind and noble beings able to find happiness in life--not merely

harming no one but necessary to the happiness of others--are called away

to God, while cruel, useless, harmful persons, or such as are a burden

to themselves and to others, are left living. The first death I saw, and

one I shall never forget--that of my dear sister-in-law--left that

impression on me. Just as you ask destiny why your splendid brother had

to die, so I asked why that angel Lise, who not only never wronged

anyone, but in whose soul there were never any unkind thoughts, had to

die. And what do you think, dear friend? Five years have passed since

then, and already I, with my petty understanding, begin to see clearly

why she had to die, and in what way that death was but an expression of

the infinite goodness of the Creator, whose every action, though

generally incomprehensible to us, is but a manifestation of His infinite

love for His creatures. Perhaps, I often think, she was too angelically

innocent to have the strength to perform all a mother's duties. As a

young wife she was irreproachable; perhaps she could not have been so as

a mother. As it is, not only has she left us, and particularly Prince

Andrew, with the purest regrets and memories, but probably she will

there receive a place I dare not hope for myself. But not to speak of

her alone, that early and terrible death has had the most beneficent

influence on me and on my brother in spite of all our grief. Then, at

the moment of our loss, these thoughts could not occur to me; I should

then have dismissed them with horror, but now they are very clear and

certain. I write all this to you, dear friend, only to convince you of

the Gospel truth which has become for me a principle of life: not a

single hair of our heads will fall without His will. And His will is

governed only by infinite love for us, and so whatever befalls us is for

our good.

You ask whether we shall spend next winter in Moscow. In spite of my

wish to see you, I do not think so and do not want to do so. You will be

surprised to hear that the reason for this is Buonaparte! The case is

this: my father's health is growing noticeably worse, he cannot stand

any contradiction and is becoming irritable. This irritability is, as

you know, chiefly directed to political questions. He cannot endure the

notion that Buonaparte is negotiating on equal terms with all the

sovereigns of Europe and particularly with our own, the grandson of the

Great Catherine! As you know, I am quite indifferent to politics, but

from my father's remarks and his talks with Michael Ivanovich I know all

that goes on in the world and especially about the honors conferred on

Buonaparte, who only at Bald Hills in the whole world, it seems, is not

accepted as a great man, still less as Emperor of France. And my father

cannot stand this. It seems to me that it is chiefly because of his

political views that my father is reluctant to speak of going to Moscow;

for he foresees the encounters that would result from his way of

expressing his views regardless of anybody. All the benefit he might

derive from a course of treatment he would lose as a result of the

disputes about Buonaparte which would be inevitable. In any case it will

be decided very shortly.

Our family life goes on in the old way except for my brother Andrew's

absence. He, as I wrote you before, has changed very much of late. After

his sorrow he only this year quite recovered his spirits. He has again

become as I used to know him when a child: kind, affectionate, with that

heart of gold to which I know no equal. He has realized, it seems to me,

that life is not over for him. But together with this mental change he

has grown physically much weaker. He has become thinner and more

nervous. I am anxious about him and glad he is taking this trip abroad

which the doctors recommended long ago. I hope it will cure him. You

write that in Petersburg he is spoken of as one of the most active,

cultivated, and capable of the young men. Forgive my vanity as a

relation, but I never doubted it. The good he has done to everybody

here, from his peasants up to the gentry, is incalculable. On his

arrival in Petersburg he received only his due. I always wonder at the

way rumors fly from Petersburg to Moscow, especially such false ones as

that you write about--I mean the report of my brother's betrothal to the

little Rostova. I do not think my brother will ever marry again, and

certainly not her; and this is why: first, I know that though he rarely

speaks about the wife he has lost, the grief of that loss has gone too

deep in his heart for him ever to decide to give her a successor and our

little angel a stepmother. Secondly because, as far as I know, that girl

is not the kind of girl who could please Prince Andrew. I do not think

he would choose her for a wife, and frankly I do not wish it. But I am

running on too long and am at the end of my second sheet. Good-bye, my

dear friend. May God keep you in His holy and mighty care. My dear

friend, Mademoiselle Bourienne, sends you kisses.

MARY

CHAPTER XXVI

In the middle of the summer Princess Mary received an unexpected letter

from Prince Andrew in Switzerland in which he gave her strange and

surprising news. He informed her of his engagement to Natasha Rostova.

The whole letter breathed loving rapture for his betrothed and tender

and confiding affection for his sister. He wrote that he had never loved

as he did now and that only now did he understand and know what life

was. He asked his sister to forgive him for not having told her of his

resolve when he had last visited Bald Hills, though he had spoken of it

to his father. He had not done so for fear Princess Mary should ask her

father to give his consent, irritating him and having to bear the brunt

of his displeasure without attaining her object. "Besides," he wrote,

"the matter was not then so definitely settled as it is now. My father

then insisted on a delay of a year and now already six months, half of

that period, have passed, and my resolution is firmer than ever. If the

doctors did not keep me here at the spas I should be back in Russia, but

as it is I have to postpone my return for three months. You know me and

my relations with Father. I want nothing from him. I have been and

always shall be independent; but to go against his will and arouse his

anger, now that he may perhaps remain with us such a short time, would

destroy half my happiness. I am now writing to him about the same

question, and beg you to choose a good moment to hand him the letter and

to let me know how he looks at the whole matter and whether there is

hope that he may consent to reduce the term by four months."

After long hesitations, doubts, and prayers, Princess Mary gave the

letter to her father. The next day the old prince said to her quietly:

"Write and tell your brother to wait till I am dead.... It won't be

long--I shall soon set him free."

The princess was about to reply, but her father would not let her speak

and, raising his voice more and more, cried:

"Marry, marry, my boy!... A good family!... Clever people, eh? Rich, eh?

Yes, a nice stepmother little Nicholas will have! Write and tell him

that he may marry tomorrow if he likes. She will be little Nicholas'

stepmother and I'll marry Bourienne!... Ha, ha, ha! He mustn't be

without a stepmother either! Only one thing, no more women are wanted in

my house--let him marry and live by himself. Perhaps you will go and

live with him too?" he added, turning to Princess Mary. "Go in heaven's

name! Go out into the frost... the frost... the frost!"

After this outburst the prince did not speak any more about the matter.

But repressed vexation at his son's poor-spirited behavior found

expression in his treatment of his daughter. To his former pretexts for

irony a fresh one was now added--allusions to stepmothers and

amiabilities to Mademoiselle Bourienne.

"Why shouldn't I marry her?" he asked his daughter. "She'll make a

splendid princess!"

And latterly, to her surprise and bewilderment, Princess Mary noticed

that her father was really associating more and more with the

Frenchwoman. She wrote to Prince Andrew about the reception of his

letter, but comforted him with hopes of reconciling their father to the

idea.

Little Nicholas and his education, her brother Andrew, and religion were

Princess Mary's joys and consolations; but besides that, since everyone

must have personal hopes, Princess Mary in the profoundest depths of her

heart had a hidden dream and hope that supplied the chief consolation of

her life. This comforting dream and hope were given her by God's folk--

the half-witted and other pilgrims who visited her without the prince's

knowledge. The longer she lived, the more experience and observation she

had of life, the greater was her wonder at the short-sightedness of men

who seek enjoyment and happiness here on earth: toiling, suffering,

struggling, and harming one another, to obtain that impossible,

visionary, sinful happiness. Prince Andrew had loved his wife, she died,

but that was not enough: he wanted to bind his happiness to another

woman. Her father objected to this because he wanted a more

distinguished and wealthier match for Andrew. And they all struggled and

suffered and tormented one another and injured their souls, their

eternal souls, for the attainment of benefits which endure but for an

instant. Not only do we know this ourselves, but Christ, the Son of God,

came down to earth and told us that this life is but for a moment and is

a probation; yet we cling to it and think to find happiness in it. "How

is it that no one realizes this?" thought Princess Mary. "No one except

these despised God's folk who, wallet on back, come to me by the back

door, afraid of being seen by the prince, not for fear of ill-usage by

him but for fear of causing him to sin. To leave family, home, and all

the cares of worldly welfare, in order without clinging to anything to

wander in hempen rags from place to place under an assumed name, doing

no one any harm but praying for all--for those who drive one away as

well as for those who protect one: higher than that life and truth there

is no life or truth!"

There was one pilgrim, a quiet pockmarked little woman of fifty called

Theodosia, who for over thirty years had gone about barefoot and worn

heavy chains. Princess Mary was particularly fond of her. Once, when in

a room with a lamp dimly lit before the icon Theodosia was talking of

her life, the thought that Theodosia alone had found the true path of

life suddenly came to Princess Mary with such force that she resolved to

become a pilgrim herself. When Theodosia had gone to sleep Princess Mary

thought about this for a long time, and at last made up her mind that,

strange as it might seem, she must go on a pilgrimage. She disclosed

this thought to no one but to her confessor, Father Akinfi, the monk,

and he approved of her intention. Under guise of a present for the

pilgrims, Princess Mary prepared a pilgrim's complete costume for

herself: a coarse smock, bast shoes, a rough coat, and a black kerchief.

Often, approaching the chest of drawers containing this secret treasure,

Princess Mary paused, uncertain whether the time had not already come to

put her project into execution.

Often, listening to the pilgrims' tales, she was so stimulated by their

simple speech, mechanical to them but to her so full of deep meaning,

that several times she was on the point of abandoning everything and

running away from home. In imagination she already pictured herself by

Theodosia's side, dressed in coarse rags, walking with a staff, a wallet

on her back, along the dusty road, directing her wanderings from one

saint's shrine to another, free from envy, earthly love, or desire, and

reaching at last the place where there is no more sorrow or sighing, but

eternal joy and bliss.

"I shall come to a place and pray there, and before having time to get

used to it or getting to love it, I shall go farther. I will go on till

my legs fail, and I'll lie down and die somewhere, and shall at last

reach that eternal, quiet haven, where there is neither sorrow nor

sighing..." thought Princess Mary.

But afterwards, when she saw her father and especially little Koko

(Nicholas), her resolve weakened. She wept quietly, and felt that she

was a sinner who loved her father and little nephew more than God.

BOOK SEVEN: 1810 - 11

CHAPTER I

The Bible legend tells us that the absence of labor--idleness--was a

condition of the first man's blessedness before the Fall. Fallen man has

retained a love of idleness, but the curse weighs on the race not only

because we have to seek our bread in the sweat of our brows, but because

our moral nature is such that we cannot be both idle and at ease. An

inner voice tells us we are in the wrong if we are idle. If man could

find a state in which he felt that though idle he was fulfilling his

duty, he would have found one of the conditions of man's primitive

blessedness. And such a state of obligatory and irreproachable idleness

is the lot of a whole class--the military. The chief attraction of

military service has consisted and will consist in this compulsory and

irreproachable idleness.

Nicholas Rostov experienced this blissful condition to the full when,

after 1807, he continued to serve in the Pavlograd regiment, in which he

already commanded the squadron he had taken over from Denisov.

Rostov had become a bluff, good-natured fellow, whom his Moscow

acquaintances would have considered rather bad form, but who was liked

and respected by his comrades, subordinates, and superiors, and was well

contented with his life. Of late, in 1809, he found in letters from home

more frequent complaints from his mother that their affairs were falling

into greater and greater disorder, and that it was time for him to come

back to gladden and comfort his old parents.

Reading these letters, Nicholas felt a dread of their wanting to take

him away from surroundings in which, protected from all the

entanglements of life, he was living so calmly and quietly. He felt that

sooner or later he would have to re-enter that whirlpool of life, with

its embarrassments and affairs to be straightened out, its accounts with

stewards, quarrels, and intrigues, its ties, society, and with Sonya's

love and his promise to her. It was all dreadfully difficult and

complicated; and he replied to his mother in cold, formal letters in

French, beginning: "My dear Mamma," and ending: "Your obedient son,"

which said nothing of when he would return. In 1810 he received letters

from his parents, in which they told him of Natasha's engagement to

Bolkonski, and that the wedding would be in a year's time because the

old prince made difficulties. This letter grieved and mortified

Nicholas. In the first place he was sorry that Natasha, for whom he

cared more than for anyone else in the family, should be lost to the

home; and secondly, from his hussar point of view, he regretted not to

have been there to show that fellow Bolkonski that connection with him

was no such great honor after all, and that if he loved Natasha he might

dispense with permission from his dotard father. For a moment he

hesitated whether he should not apply for leave in order to see Natasha

before she was married, but then came the maneuvers, and considerations

about Sonya and about the confusion of their affairs, and Nicholas again

put it off. But in the spring of that year, he received a letter from

his mother, written without his father's knowledge, and that letter

persuaded him to return. She wrote that if he did not come and take

matters in hand, their whole property would be sold by auction and they

would all have to go begging. The count was so weak, and trusted Mitenka

so much, and was so good-natured, that everybody took advantage of him

and things were going from bad to worse. "For God's sake, I implore you,

come at once if you do not wish to make me and the whole family

wretched," wrote the countess.

This letter touched Nicholas. He had that common sense of a matter-of-

fact man which showed him what he ought to do.

The right thing now was, if not to retire from the service, at any rate

to go home on leave. Why he had to go he did not know; but after his

after-dinner nap he gave orders to saddle Mars, an extremely vicious

gray stallion that had not been ridden for a long time, and when he

returned with the horse all in a lather, he informed Lavrushka

(Denisov's servant who had remained with him) and his comrades who

turned up in the evening that he was applying for leave and was going

home. Difficult and strange as it was for him to reflect that he would

go away without having heard from the staff--and this interested him

extremely--whether he was promoted to a captaincy or would receive the

Order of St. Anne for the last maneuvers; strange as it was to think

that he would go away without having sold his three roans to the Polish

Count Golukhovski, who was bargaining for the horses Rostov had betted

he would sell for two thousand rubles; incomprehensible as it seemed

that the ball the hussars were giving in honor of the Polish

Mademoiselle Przazdziecka (out of rivalry to the uhlans who had given

one in honor of their Polish Mademoiselle Borzozowska) would take place

without him--he knew he must go away from this good, bright world to

somewhere where everything was stupid and confused. A week later he

obtained his leave. His hussar comrades--not only those of his own

regiment, but the whole brigade--gave Rostov a dinner to which the

subscription was fifteen rubles a head, and at which there were two

bands and two choirs of singers. Rostov danced the Trepak with Major

Basov; the tipsy officers tossed, embraced, and dropped Rostov; the

soldiers of the third squadron tossed him too, and shouted "hurrah!" and

then they put him in his sleigh and escorted him as far as the first

post station.

During the first half of the journey--from Kremenchug to Kiev--all

Rostov's thoughts, as is usual in such cases, were behind him, with the

squadron; but when he had gone more than halfway he began to forget his

three roans and Dozhoyveyko, his quartermaster, and to wonder anxiously

how things would be at Otradnoe and what he would find there. Thoughts

of home grew stronger the nearer he approached it--far stronger, as

though this feeling of his was subject to the law by which the force of

attraction is in inverse proportion to the square of the distance. At

the last post station before Otradnoe he gave the driver a three-ruble

tip, and on arriving he ran breathlessly, like a boy, up the steps of

his home.

After the rapture of meeting, and after that odd feeling of unsatisfied

expectation--the feeling that "everything is just the same, so why did I

hurry?"--Nicholas began to settle down in his old home world. His father

and mother were much the same, only a little older. What was new in them

was a certain uneasiness and occasional discord, which there used not to

be, and which, as Nicholas soon found out, was due to the bad state of

their affairs. Sonya was nearly twenty; she had stopped growing prettier

and promised nothing more than she was already, but that was enough. She

exhaled happiness and love from the time Nicholas returned, and the

faithful, unalterable love of this girl had a gladdening effect on him.

Petya and Natasha surprised Nicholas most. Petya was a big handsome boy

of thirteen, merry, witty, and mischievous, with a voice that was

already breaking. As for Natasha, for a long while Nicholas wondered and

laughed whenever he looked at her.

"You're not the same at all," he said.

"How? Am I uglier?"

"On the contrary, but what dignity? A princess!" he whispered to her.

"Yes, yes, yes!" cried Natasha, joyfully.

She told him about her romance with Prince Andrew and of his visit to

Otradnoe and showed him his last letter.

"Well, are you glad?" Natasha asked. "I am so tranquil and happy now."

"Very glad," answered Nicholas. "He is an excellent fellow.... And are

you very much in love?"

"How shall I put it?" replied Natasha. "I was in love with Boris, with

my teacher, and with Denisov, but this is quite different. I feel at

peace and settled. I know that no better man than he exists, and I am

calm and contented now. Not at all as before."

Nicholas expressed his disapproval of the postponement of the marriage

for a year; but Natasha attacked her brother with exasperation, proving

to him that it could not be otherwise, and that it would be a bad thing

to enter a family against the father's will, and that she herself wished

it so.

"You don't at all understand," she said.

Nicholas was silent and agreed with her.

Her brother often wondered as he looked at her. She did not seem at all

like a girl in love and parted from her affianced husband. She was even-

tempered and calm and quite as cheerful as of old. This amazed Nicholas

and even made him regard Bolkonski's courtship skeptically. He could not

believe that her fate was sealed, especially as he had not seen her with

Prince Andrew. It always seemed to him that there was something not

quite right about this intended marriage.

"Why this delay? Why no betrothal?" he thought. Once, when he had

touched on this topic with his mother, he discovered, to his surprise

and somewhat to his satisfaction, that in the depth of her soul she too

had doubts about this marriage.

"You see he writes," said she, showing her son a letter of Prince

Andrew's, with that latent grudge a mother always has in regard to a

daughter's future married happiness, "he writes that he won't come

before December. What can be keeping him? Illness, probably! His health

is very delicate. Don't tell Natasha. And don't attach importance to her

being so bright: that's because she's living through the last days of

her girlhood, but I know what she is like every time we receive a letter

from him! However, God grant that everything turns out well!" (She

always ended with these words.) "He is an excellent man!"

CHAPTER II

After reaching home Nicholas was at first serious and even dull. He was

worried by the impending necessity of interfering in the stupid business

matters for which his mother had called him home. To throw off this

burden as quickly as possible, on the third day after his arrival he

went, angry and scowling and without answering questions as to where he

was going, to Mitenka's lodge and demanded an account of everything. But

what an account of everything might be Nicholas knew even less than the

frightened and bewildered Mitenka. The conversation and the examination

of the accounts with Mitenka did not last long. The village elder, a

peasant delegate, and the village clerk, who were waiting in the

passage, heard with fear and delight first the young count's voice

roaring and snapping and rising louder and louder, and then words of

abuse, dreadful words, ejaculated one after the other.

"Robber!... Ungrateful wretch!... I'll hack the dog to pieces! I'm not

my father!... Robbing us!..." and so on.

Then with no less fear and delight they saw how the young count, red in

the face and with bloodshot eyes, dragged Mitenka out by the scruff of

the neck and applied his foot and knee to his behind with great agility

at convenient moments between the words, shouting, "Be off! Never let me

see your face here again, you villain!"

Mitenka flew headlong down the six steps and ran away into the

shrubbery. (This shrubbery was a well-known haven of refuge for culprits

at Otradnoe. Mitenka himself, returning tipsy from the town, used to

hide there, and many of the residents at Otradnoe, hiding from Mitenka,

knew of its protective qualities.)

Mitenka's wife and sisters-in-law thrust their heads and frightened

faces out of the door of a room where a bright samovar was boiling and

where the steward's high bedstead stood with its patchwork quilt.

The young count paid no heed to them, but, breathing hard, passed by

with resolute strides and went into the house.

The countess, who heard at once from the maids what had happened at the

lodge, was calmed by the thought that now their affairs would certainly

improve, but on the other hand felt anxious as to the effect this

excitement might have on her son. She went several times to his door on

tiptoe and listened, as he lighted one pipe after another.

Next day the old count called his son aside and, with an embarrassed

smile, said to him:

"But you know, my dear boy, it's a pity you got excited! Mitenka has

told me all about it."

"I knew," thought Nicholas, "that I should never understand anything in

this crazy world."

"You were angry that he had not entered those 700 rubles. But they were

carried forward--and you did not look at the other page."

"Papa, he is a blackguard and a thief! I know he is! And what I have

done, I have done; but, if you like, I won't speak to him again."

"No, my dear boy" (the count, too, felt embarrassed. He knew he had

mismanaged his wife's property and was to blame toward his children, but

he did not know how to remedy it). "No, I beg you to attend to the

business. I am old. I..."

"No, Papa. Forgive me if I have caused you unpleasantness. I understand

it all less than you do."

"Devil take all these peasants, and money matters, and carryings forward

from page to page," he thought. "I used to understand what a 'corner'

and the stakes at cards meant, but carrying forward to another page I

don't understand at all," said he to himself, and after that he did not

meddle in business affairs. But once the countess called her son and

informed him that she had a promissory note from Anna Mikhaylovna for

two thousand rubles, and asked him what he thought of doing with it.

"This," answered Nicholas. "You say it rests with me. Well, I don't like

Anna Mikhaylovna and I don't like Boris, but they were our friends and

poor. Well then, this!" and he tore up the note, and by so doing caused

the old countess to weep tears of joy. After that, young Rostov took no

further part in any business affairs, but devoted himself with

passionate enthusiasm to what was to him a new pursuit--the chase--for

which his father kept a large establishment.

CHAPTER III

The weather was already growing wintry and morning frosts congealed an

earth saturated by autumn rains. The verdure had thickened and its

bright green stood out sharply against the brownish strips of winter rye

trodden down by the cattle, and against the pale-yellow stubble of the

spring buckwheat. The wooded ravines and the copses, which at the end of

August had still been green islands amid black fields and stubble, had

become golden and bright-red islands amid the green winter rye. The

hares had already half changed their summer coats, the fox cubs were

beginning to scatter, and the young wolves were bigger than dogs. It was

the best time of the year for the chase. The hounds of that ardent young

sportsman Rostov had not merely reached hard winter condition, but were

so jaded that at a meeting of the huntsmen it was decided to give them a

three days' rest and then, on the sixteenth of September, to go on a

distant expedition, starting from the oak grove where there was an

undisturbed litter of wolf cubs.

All that day the hounds remained at home. It was frosty and the air was

sharp, but toward evening the sky became overcast and it began to thaw.

On the fifteenth, when young Rostov, in his dressing gown, looked out of

the window, he saw it was an unsurpassable morning for hunting: it was

as if the sky were melting and sinking to the earth without any wind.

The only motion in the air was that of the dripping, microscopic

particles of drizzling mist. The bare twigs in the garden were hung with

transparent drops which fell on the freshly fallen leaves. The earth in

the kitchen garden looked wet and black and glistened like poppy seed

and at a short distance merged into the dull, moist veil of mist.

Nicholas went out into the wet and muddy porch. There was a smell of

decaying leaves and of dog. Milka, a black-spotted, broad-haunched bitch

with prominent black eyes, got up on seeing her master, stretched her

hind legs, lay down like a hare, and then suddenly jumped up and licked

him right on his nose and mustache. Another borzoi, a dog, catching

sight of his master from the garden path, arched his back and, rushing

headlong toward the porch with lifted tail, began rubbing himself

against his legs.

"O-hoy!" came at that moment, that inimitable huntsman's call which

unites the deepest bass with the shrillest tenor, and round the corner

came Daniel the head huntsman and head kennelman, a gray, wrinkled old

man with hair cut straight over his forehead, Ukrainian fashion, a long

bent whip in his hand, and that look of independence and scorn of

everything that is only seen in huntsmen. He doffed his Circassian cap

to his master and looked at him scornfully. This scorn was not offensive

to his master. Nicholas knew that this Daniel, disdainful of everybody

and who considered himself above them, was all the same his serf and

huntsman.

"Daniel!" Nicholas said timidly, conscious at the sight of the weather,

the hounds, and the huntsman that he was being carried away by that

irresistible passion for sport which makes a man forget all his previous

resolutions, as a lover forgets in the presence of his mistress.

"What orders, your excellency?" said the huntsman in his deep bass, deep

as a proto-deacon's and hoarse with hallooing--and two flashing black

eyes gazed from under his brows at his master, who was silent. "Can you

resist it?" those eyes seemed to be asking.

"It's a good day, eh? For a hunt and a gallop, eh?" asked Nicholas,

scratching Milka behind the ears.

Daniel did not answer, but winked instead.

"I sent Uvarka at dawn to listen," his bass boomed out after a minute's

pause. "He says she's moved them into the Otradnoe enclosure. They were

howling there." (This meant that the she-wolf, about whom they both

knew, had moved with her cubs to the Otradnoe copse, a small place a

mile and a half from the house.)

"We ought to go, don't you think so?" said Nicholas. "Come to me with

Uvarka."

"As you please."

"Then put off feeding them."

"Yes, sir."

Five minutes later Daniel and Uvarka were standing in Nicholas' big

study. Though Daniel was not a big man, to see him in a room was like

seeing a horse or a bear on the floor among the furniture and

surroundings of human life. Daniel himself felt this, and as usual stood

just inside the door, trying to speak softly and not move, for fear of

breaking something in the master's apartment, and he hastened to say all

that was necessary so as to get from under that ceiling, out into the

open under the sky once more.

Having finished his inquiries and extorted from Daniel an opinion that

the hounds were fit (Daniel himself wished to go hunting), Nicholas

ordered the horses to be saddled. But just as Daniel was about to go

Natasha came in with rapid steps, not having done up her hair or

finished dressing and with her old nurse's big shawl wrapped round her.

Petya ran in at the same time.

"You are going?" asked Natasha. "I knew you would! Sonya said you

wouldn't go, but I knew that today is the sort of day when you couldn't

help going."

"Yes, we are going," replied Nicholas reluctantly, for today, as he

intended to hunt seriously, he did not want to take Natasha and Petya.

"We are going, but only wolf hunting: it would be dull for you."

"You know it is my greatest pleasure," said Natasha. "It's not fair; you

are going by yourself, are having the horses saddled and said nothing to

us about it."

"'No barrier bars a Russian's path'--we'll go!" shouted Petya.

"But you can't. Mamma said you mustn't," said Nicholas to Natasha.

"Yes, I'll go. I shall certainly go," said Natasha decisively. "Daniel,

tell them to saddle for us, and Michael must come with my dogs," she

added to the huntsman.

It seemed to Daniel irksome and improper to be in a room at all, but to

have anything to do with a young lady seemed to him impossible. He cast

down his eyes and hurried out as if it were none of his business,

careful as he went not to inflict any accidental injury on the young

lady.

CHAPTER IV

The old count, who had always kept up an enormous hunting establishment

but had now handed it all completely over to his son's care, being in

very good spirits on this fifteenth of September, prepared to go out

with the others.

In an hour's time the whole hunting party was at the porch. Nicholas,

with a stern and serious air which showed that now was no time for

attending to trifles, went past Natasha and Petya who were trying to

tell him something. He had a look at all the details of the hunt, sent a

pack of hounds and huntsmen on ahead to find the quarry, mounted his

chestnut Donets, and whistling to his own leash of borzois, set off

across the threshing ground to a field leading to the Otradnoe wood. The

old count's horse, a sorrel gelding called Viflyanka, was led by the

groom in attendance on him, while the count himself was to drive in a

small trap straight to a spot reserved for him.

They were taking fifty-four hounds, with six hunt attendants and

whippers-in. Besides the family, there were eight borzoi kennelmen and

more than forty borzois, so that, with the borzois on the leash

belonging to members of the family, there were about a hundred and

thirty dogs and twenty horsemen.

Each dog knew its master and its call. Each man in the hunt knew his

business, his place, what he had to do. As soon as they had passed the

fence they all spread out evenly and quietly, without noise or talk,

along the road and field leading to the Otradnoe covert.

The horses stepped over the field as over a thick carpet, now and then

splashing into puddles as they crossed a road. The misty sky still

seemed to descend evenly and imperceptibly toward the earth, the air was

still, warm, and silent. Occasionally the whistle of a huntsman, the

snort of a horse, the crack of a whip, or the whine of a straggling

hound could be heard.

When they had gone a little less than a mile, five more riders with dogs

appeared out of the mist, approaching the Rostovs. In front rode a

fresh-looking, handsome old man with a large gray mustache.

"Good morning, Uncle!" said Nicholas, when the old man drew near.

"That's it. Come on!... I was sure of it," began "Uncle." (He was a

distant relative of the Rostovs', a man of small means, and their

neighbor.) "I knew you wouldn't be able to resist it and it's a good

thing you're going. That's it! Come on!" (This was "Uncle's" favorite

expression.) "Take the covert at once, for my Girchik says the Ilagins

are at Korniki with their hounds. That's it. Come on!... They'll take

the cubs from under your very nose."

"That's where I'm going. Shall we join up our packs?" asked Nicholas.

The hounds were joined into one pack, and "Uncle" and Nicholas rode on

side by side. Natasha, muffled up in shawls which did not hide her eager

face and shining eyes, galloped up to them. She was followed by Petya

who always kept close to her, by Michael, a huntsman, and by a groom

appointed to look after her. Petya, who was laughing, whipped and pulled

at his horse. Natasha sat easily and confidently on her black Arabchik

and reined him in without effort with a firm hand.

"Uncle" looked round disapprovingly at Petya and Natasha. He did not

like to combine frivolity with the serious business of hunting.

"Good morning, Uncle! We are going too!" shouted Petya.

"Good morning, good morning! But don't go overriding the hounds," said

"Uncle" sternly.

"Nicholas, what a fine dog Trunila is! He knew me," said Natasha,

referring to her favorite hound.

"In the first place, Trunila is not a 'dog,' but a harrier," thought

Nicholas, and looked sternly at his sister, trying to make her feel the

distance that ought to separate them at that moment. Natasha understood

it.

"You mustn't think we'll be in anyone's way, Uncle," she said. "We'll go

to our places and won't budge."

"A good thing too, little countess," said "Uncle," "only mind you don't

fall off your horse," he added, "because--that's it, come on!--you've

nothing to hold on to."

The oasis of the Otradnoe covert came in sight a few hundred yards off,

the huntsmen were already nearing it. Rostov, having finally settled

with "Uncle" where they should set on the hounds, and having shown

Natasha where she was to stand--a spot where nothing could possibly run

out--went round above the ravine.

"Well, nephew, you're going for a big wolf," said "Uncle." "Mind and

don't let her slip!"

"That's as may happen," answered Rostov. "Karay, here!" he shouted,

answering "Uncle's" remark by this call to his borzoi. Karay was a

shaggy old dog with a hanging jowl, famous for having tackled a big wolf

unaided. They all took up their places.

The old count, knowing his son's ardor in the hunt, hurried so as not to

be late, and the huntsmen had not yet reached their places when Count

Ilya Rostov, cheerful, flushed, and with quivering cheeks, drove up with

his black horses over the winter rye to the place reserved for him,

where a wolf might come out. Having straightened his coat and fastened

on his hunting knives and horn, he mounted his good, sleek, well-fed,

and comfortable horse, Viflyanka, which was turning gray, like himself.

His horses and trap were sent home. Count Ilya Rostov, though not at

heart a keen sportsman, knew the rules of the hunt well, and rode to the

bushy edge of the road where he was to stand, arranged his reins,

settled himself in the saddle, and, feeling that he was ready, looked

about with a smile.

Beside him was Simon Chekmar, his personal attendant, an old horseman

now somewhat stiff in the saddle. Chekmar held in leash three formidable

wolfhounds, who had, however, grown fat like their master and his horse.

Two wise old dogs lay down unleashed. Some hundred paces farther along

the edge of the wood stood Mitka, the count's other groom, a daring

horseman and keen rider to hounds. Before the hunt, by old custom, the

count had drunk a silver cupful of mulled brandy, taken a snack, and

washed it down with half a bottle of his favorite Bordeaux.

He was somewhat flushed with the wine and the drive. His eyes were

rather moist and glittered more than usual, and as he sat in his saddle,

wrapped up in his fur coat, he looked like a child taken out for an

outing.

The thin, hollow-cheeked Chekmar, having got everything ready, kept

glancing at his master with whom he had lived on the best of terms for

thirty years, and understanding the mood he was in expected a pleasant

chat. A third person rode up circumspectly through the wood (it was

plain that he had had a lesson) and stopped behind the count. This

person was a gray-bearded old man in a woman's cloak, with a tall peaked

cap on his head. He was the buffoon, who went by a woman's name,

Nastasya Ivanovna.

"Well, Nastasya Ivanovna!" whispered the count, winking at him. "If you

scare away the beast, Daniel'll give it you!"

"I know a thing or two myself!" said Nastasya Ivanovna.

"Hush!" whispered the count and turned to Simon. "Have you seen the

young countess?" he asked. "Where is she?"

"With young Count Peter, by the Zharov rank grass," answered Simon,

smiling. "Though she's a lady, she's very fond of hunting."

"And you're surprised at the way she rides, Simon, eh?" said the count.

"She's as good as many a man!"

"Of course! It's marvelous. So bold, so easy!"

"And Nicholas? Where is he? By the Lyadov upland, isn't he?"

"Yes, sir. He knows where to stand. He understands the matter so well

that Daniel and I are often quite astounded," said Simon, well knowing

what would please his master.

"Rides well, eh? And how well he looks on his horse, eh?"

"A perfect picture! How he chased a fox out of the rank grass by the

Zavarzinsk thicket the other day! Leaped a fearful place; what a sight

when they rushed from the covert... the horse worth a thousand rubles

and the rider beyond all price! Yes, one would have to search far to

find another as smart."

"To search far..." repeated the count, evidently sorry Simon had not

said more. "To search far," he said, turning back the skirt of his coat

to get at his snuffbox.

"The other day when he came out from Mass in full uniform, Michael

Sidorych..." Simon did not finish, for on the still air he had

distinctly caught the music of the hunt with only two or three hounds

giving tongue. He bent down his head and listened, shaking a warning

finger at his master. "They are on the scent of the cubs..." he

whispered, "straight to the Lyadov uplands."

The count, forgetting to smooth out the smile on his face, looked into

the distance straight before him, down the narrow open space, holding

the snuffbox in his hand but not taking any. After the cry of the hounds

came the deep tones of the wolf call from Daniel's hunting horn; the

pack joined the first three hounds and they could be heard in full cry,

with that peculiar lift in the note that indicates that they are after a

wolf. The whippers-in no longer set on the hounds, but changed to the

cry of ulyulyu, and above the others rose Daniel's voice, now a deep

bass, now piercingly shrill. His voice seemed to fill the whole wood and

carried far beyond out into the open field.

After listening a few moments in silence, the count and his attendant

convinced themselves that the hounds had separated into two packs: the

sound of the larger pack, eagerly giving tongue, began to die away in

the distance, the other pack rushed by the wood past the count, and it

was with this that Daniel's voice was heard calling ulyulyu. The sounds

of both packs mingled and broke apart again, but both were becoming more

distant.

Simon sighed and stooped to straighten the leash a young borzoi had

entangled; the count too sighed and, noticing the snuffbox in his hand,

opened it and took a pinch. "Back!" cried Simon to a borzoi that was

pushing forward out of the wood. The count started and dropped the

snuffbox. Nastasya Ivanovna dismounted to pick it up. The count and

Simon were looking at him.

Then, unexpectedly, as often happens, the sound of the hunt suddenly

approached, as if the hounds in full cry and Daniel ulyulyuing were just

in front of them.

The count turned and saw on his right Mitka staring at him with eyes

starting out of his head, raising his cap and pointing before him to the

other side.

"Look out!" he shouted, in a voice plainly showing that he had long

fretted to utter that word, and letting the borzois slip he galloped

toward the count.

The count and Simon galloped out of the wood and saw on their left a

wolf which, softly swaying from side to side, was coming at a quiet lope

farther to the left to the very place where they were standing. The

angry borzois whined and getting free of the leash rushed past the

horses' feet at the wolf.

The wolf paused, turned its heavy forehead toward the dogs awkwardly,

like a man suffering from the quinsy, and, still slightly swaying from

side to side, gave a couple of leaps and with a swish of its tail

disappeared into the skirt of the wood. At the same instant, with a cry

like a wail, first one hound, then another, and then another, sprang

helter-skelter from the wood opposite and the whole pack rushed across

the field toward the very spot where the wolf had disappeared. The hazel

bushes parted behind the hounds and Daniel's chestnut horse appeared,

dark with sweat. On its long back sat Daniel, hunched forward, capless,

his disheveled gray hair hanging over his flushed, perspiring face.

"Ulyulyulyu! ulyulyu!..." he cried. When he caught sight of the count

his eyes flashed lightning.

"Blast you!" he shouted, holding up his whip threateningly at the count.

"You've let the wolf go!... What sportsmen!" and as if scorning to say

more to the frightened and shamefaced count, he lashed the heaving

flanks of his sweating chestnut gelding with all the anger the count had

aroused and flew off after the hounds. The count, like a punished

schoolboy, looked round, trying by a smile to win Simon's sympathy for

his plight. But Simon was no longer there. He was galloping round by the

bushes while the field was coming up on both sides, all trying to head

the wolf, but it vanished into the wood before they could do so.

CHAPTER V

Nicholas Rostov meanwhile remained at his post, waiting for the wolf. By

the way the hunt approached and receded, by the cries of the dogs whose

notes were familiar to him, by the way the voices of the huntsmen

approached, receded, and rose, he realized what was happening at the

copse. He knew that young and old wolves were there, that the hounds had

separated into two packs, that somewhere a wolf was being chased, and

that something had gone wrong. He expected the wolf to come his way any

moment. He made thousands of different conjectures as to where and from

what side the beast would come and how he would set upon it. Hope

alternated with despair. Several times he addressed a prayer to God that

the wolf should come his way. He prayed with that passionate and

shamefaced feeling with which men pray at moments of great excitement

arising from trivial causes. "What would it be to Thee to do this for

me?" he said to God. "I know Thou art great, and that it is a sin to ask

this of Thee, but for God's sake do let the old wolf come my way and let

Karay spring at it--in sight of 'Uncle' who is watching from over there-

-and seize it by the throat in a death grip!" A thousand times during

that half-hour Rostov cast eager and restless glances over the edge of

the wood, with the two scraggy oaks rising above the aspen undergrowth

and the gully with its water-worn side and "Uncle's" cap just visible

above the bush on his right.

"No, I shan't have such luck," thought Rostov, "yet what wouldn't it be

worth! It is not to be! Everywhere, at cards and in war, I am always

unlucky." Memories of Austerlitz and of Dolokhov flashed rapidly and

clearly through his mind. "Only once in my life to get an old wolf, I

want only that!" thought he, straining eyes and ears and looking to the

left and then to the right and listening to the slightest variation of

note in the cries of the dogs.

Again he looked to the right and saw something running toward him across

the deserted field. "No, it can't be!" thought Rostov, taking a deep

breath, as a man does at the coming of something long hoped for. The

height of happiness was reached--and so simply, without warning, or

noise, or display, that Rostov could not believe his eyes and remained

in doubt for over a second. The wolf ran forward and jumped heavily over

a gully that lay in her path. She was an old animal with a gray back and

big reddish belly. She ran without hurry, evidently feeling sure that no

one saw her. Rostov, holding his breath, looked round at the borzois.

They stood or lay not seeing the wolf or understanding the situation.

Old Karay had turned his head and was angrily searching for fleas,

baring his yellow teeth and snapping at his hind legs.

"Ulyulyulyu!" whispered Rostov, pouting his lips. The borzois jumped up,

jerking the rings of the leashes and pricking their ears. Karay finished

scratching his hindquarters and, cocking his ears, got up with quivering

tail from which tufts of matted hair hung down.

"Shall I loose them or not?" Nicholas asked himself as the wolf

approached him coming from the copse. Suddenly the wolf's whole

physiognomy changed: she shuddered, seeing what she had probably never

seen before--human eyes fixed upon her--and turning her head a little

toward Rostov, she paused.

"Back or forward? Eh, no matter, forward..." the wolf seemed to say to

herself, and she moved forward without again looking round and with a

quiet, long, easy yet resolute lope.

"Ulyulyu!" cried Nicholas, in a voice not his own, and of its own accord

his good horse darted headlong downhill, leaping over gullies to head

off the wolf, and the borzois passed it, running faster still. Nicholas

did not hear his own cry nor feel that he was galloping, nor see the

borzois, nor the ground over which he went: he saw only the wolf, who,

increasing her speed, bounded on in the same direction along the hollow.

The first to come into view was Milka, with her black markings and

powerful quarters, gaining upon the wolf. Nearer and nearer... now she

was ahead of it; but the wolf turned its head to face her, and instead

of putting on speed as she usually did Milka suddenly raised her tail

and stiffened her forelegs.

"Ulyulyulyulyu!" shouted Nicholas.

The reddish Lyubim rushed forward from behind Milka, sprang impetuously

at the wolf, and seized it by its hindquarters, but immediately jumped

aside in terror. The wolf crouched, gnashed her teeth, and again rose

and bounded forward, followed at the distance of a couple of feet by all

the borzois, who did not get any closer to her.

"She'll get away! No, it's impossible!" thought Nicholas, still shouting

with a hoarse voice.

"Karay, ulyulyu!..." he shouted, looking round for the old borzoi who

was now his only hope. Karay, with all the strength age had left him,

stretched himself to the utmost and, watching the wolf, galloped heavily

aside to intercept it. But the quickness of the wolf's lope and the

borzoi's slower pace made it plain that Karay had miscalculated.

Nicholas could already see not far in front of him the wood where the

wolf would certainly escape should she reach it. But, coming toward him,

he saw hounds and a huntsman galloping almost straight at the wolf.

There was still hope. A long, yellowish young borzoi, one Nicholas did

not know, from another leash, rushed impetuously at the wolf from in

front and almost knocked her over. But the wolf jumped up more quickly

than anyone could have expected and, gnashing her teeth, flew at the

yellowish borzoi, which, with a piercing yelp, fell with its head on the

ground, bleeding from a gash in its side.

"Karay? Old fellow!..." wailed Nicholas.

Thanks to the delay caused by this crossing of the wolf's path, the old

dog with its felted hair hanging from its thigh was within five paces of

it. As if aware of her danger, the wolf turned her eyes on Karay, tucked

her tail yet further between her legs, and increased her speed. But here

Nicholas only saw that something happened to Karay--the borzoi was

suddenly on the wolf, and they rolled together down into a gully just in

front of them.

That instant, when Nicholas saw the wolf struggling in the gully with

the dogs, while from under them could be seen her gray hair and

outstretched hind leg and her frightened choking head, with her ears

laid back (Karay was pinning her by the throat), was the happiest moment

of his life. With his hand on his saddlebow, he was ready to dismount

and stab the wolf, when she suddenly thrust her head up from among that

mass of dogs, and then her forepaws were on the edge of the gully. She

clicked her teeth (Karay no longer had her by the throat), leaped with a

movement of her hind legs out of the gully, and having disengaged

herself from the dogs, with tail tucked in again, went forward. Karay,

his hair bristling, and probably bruised or wounded, climbed with

difficulty out of the gully.

"Oh my God! Why?" Nicholas cried in despair.

"Uncle's" huntsman was galloping from the other side across the wolf's

path and his borzois once more stopped the animal's advance. She was

again hemmed in.

Nicholas and his attendant, with "Uncle" and his huntsman, were all

riding round the wolf, crying "ulyulyu!" shouting and preparing to

dismount each moment that the wolf crouched back, and starting forward

again every time she shook herself and moved toward the wood where she

would be safe.

Already, at the beginning of this chase, Daniel, hearing the ulyulyuing,

had rushed out from the wood. He saw Karay seize the wolf, and checked

his horse, supposing the affair to be over. But when he saw that the

horsemen did not dismount and that the wolf shook herself and ran for

safety, Daniel set his chestnut galloping, not at the wolf but straight

toward the wood, just as Karay had run to cut the animal off. As a

result of this, he galloped up to the wolf just when she had been

stopped a second time by "Uncle's" borzois.

Daniel galloped up silently, holding a naked dagger in his left hand and

thrashing the laboring sides of his chestnut horse with his whip as if

it were a flail.

Nicholas neither saw nor heard Daniel until the chestnut, breathing

heavily, panted past him, and he heard the fall of a body and saw Daniel

lying on the wolf's back among the dogs, trying to seize her by the

ears. It was evident to the dogs, the hunters, and to the wolf herself

that all was now over. The terrified wolf pressed back her ears and

tried to rise, but the borzois stuck to her. Daniel rose a little, took

a step, and with his whole weight, as if lying down to rest, fell on the

wolf, seizing her by the ears. Nicholas was about to stab her, but

Daniel whispered, "Don't! We'll gag her!" and, changing his position,

set his foot on the wolf's neck. A stick was thrust between her jaws and

she was fastened with a leash, as if bridled, her legs were bound

together, and Daniel rolled her over once or twice from side to side.

With happy, exhausted faces, they laid the old wolf, alive, on a shying

and snorting horse and, accompanied by the dogs yelping at her, took her

to the place where they were all to meet. The hounds had killed two of

the cubs and the borzois three. The huntsmen assembled with their booty

and their stories, and all came to look at the wolf, which, with her

broad-browed head hanging down and the bitten stick between her jaws,

gazed with great glassy eyes at this crowd of dogs and men surrounding

her. When she was touched, she jerked her bound legs and looked wildly

yet simply at everybody. Old Count Rostov also rode up and touched the

wolf.

"Oh, what a formidable one!" said he. "A formidable one, eh?" he asked

Daniel, who was standing near.

"Yes, your excellency," answered Daniel, quickly doffing his cap.

The count remembered the wolf he had let slip and his encounter with

Daniel.

"Ah, but you are a crusty fellow, friend!" said the count.

For sole reply Daniel gave him a shy, childlike, meek, and amiable

smile.

CHAPTER VI

The old count went home, and Natasha and Petya promised to return very

soon, but as it was still early the hunt went farther. At midday they

put the hounds into a ravine thickly overgrown with young trees.

Nicholas standing in a fallow field could see all his whips.

Facing him lay a field of winter rye, there his own huntsman stood alone

in a hollow behind a hazel bush. The hounds had scarcely been loosed

before Nicholas heard one he knew, Voltorn, giving tongue at intervals;

other hounds joined in, now pausing and now again giving tongue. A

moment later he heard a cry from the wooded ravine that a fox had been

found, and the whole pack, joining together, rushed along the ravine

toward the ryefield and away from Nicholas.

He saw the whips in their red caps galloping along the edge of the

ravine, he even saw the hounds, and was expecting a fox to show itself

at any moment on the ryefield opposite.

The huntsman standing in the hollow moved and loosed his borzois, and

Nicholas saw a queer, short-legged red fox with a fine brush going hard

across the field. The borzois bore down on it.... Now they drew close to

the fox which began to dodge between the field in sharper and sharper

curves, trailing its brush, when suddenly a strange white borzoi dashed

in followed by a black one, and everything was in confusion; the borzois

formed a star-shaped figure, scarcely swaying their bodies and with

tails turned away from the center of the group. Two huntsmen galloped up

to the dogs; one in a red cap, the other, a stranger, in a green coat.

"What's this?" thought Nicholas. "Where's that huntsman from? He is not

'Uncle's' man."

The huntsmen got the fox, but stayed there a long time without strapping

it to the saddle. Their horses, bridled and with high saddles, stood

near them and there too the dogs were lying. The huntsmen waved their

arms and did something to the fox. Then from that spot came the sound of

a horn, with the signal agreed on in case of a fight.

"That's Ilagin's huntsman having a row with our Ivan," said Nicholas'

groom.

Nicholas sent the man to call Natasha and Petya to him, and rode at a

footpace to the place where the whips were getting the hounds together.

Several of the field galloped to the spot where the fight was going on.

Nicholas dismounted, and with Natasha and Petya, who had ridden up,

stopped near the hounds, waiting to see how the matter would end. Out of

the bushes came the huntsman who had been fighting and rode toward his

young master, with the fox tied to his crupper. While still at a

distance he took off his cap and tried to speak respectfully, but he was

pale and breathless and his face was angry. One of his eyes was black,

but he probably was not even aware of it.

"What has happened?" asked Nicholas.

"A likely thing, killing a fox our dogs had hunted! And it was my gray

bitch that caught it! Go to law, indeed!... He snatches at the fox! I

gave him one with the fox. Here it is on my saddle! Do you want a taste

of this?..." said the huntsman, pointing to his dagger and probably

imagining himself still speaking to his foe.

Nicholas, not stopping to talk to the man, asked his sister and Petya to

wait for him and rode to the spot where the enemy's, Ilagin's, hunting

party was.

The victorious huntsman rode off to join the field, and there,

surrounded by inquiring sympathizers, recounted his exploits.

The facts were that Ilagin, with whom the Rostovs had a quarrel and were

at law, hunted over places that belonged by custom to the Rostovs, and

had now, as if purposely, sent his men to the very woods the Rostovs

were hunting and let his man snatch a fox their dogs had chased.

Nicholas, though he had never seen Ilagin, with his usual absence of

moderation in judgment, hated him cordially from reports of his

arbitrariness and violence, and regarded him as his bitterest foe. He

rode in angry agitation toward him, firmly grasping his whip and fully

prepared to take the most resolute and desperate steps to punish his

enemy.

Hardly had he passed an angle of the wood before a stout gentleman in a

beaver cap came riding toward him on a handsome raven-black horse,

accompanied by two hunt servants.

Instead of an enemy, Nicholas found in Ilagin a stately and courteous

gentleman who was particularly anxious to make the young count's

acquaintance. Having ridden up to Nicholas, Ilagin raised his beaver cap

and said he much regretted what had occurred and would have the man

punished who had allowed himself to seize a fox hunted by someone else's

borzois. He hoped to become better acquainted with the count and invited

him to draw his covert.

Natasha, afraid that her brother would do something dreadful, had

followed him in some excitement. Seeing the enemies exchanging friendly

greetings, she rode up to them. Ilagin lifted his beaver cap still

higher to Natasha and said, with a pleasant smile, that the young

countess resembled Diana in her passion for the chase as well as in her

beauty, of which he had heard much.

To expiate his huntsman's offense, Ilagin pressed the Rostovs to come to

an upland of his about a mile away which he usually kept for himself and

which, he said, swarmed with hares. Nicholas agreed, and the hunt, now

doubled, moved on.

The way to Iligin's upland was across the fields. The hunt servants fell

into line. The masters rode together. "Uncle," Rostov, and Ilagin kept

stealthily glancing at one another's dogs, trying not to be observed by

their companions and searching uneasily for rivals to their own borzois.

Rostov was particularly struck by the beauty of a small, pure-bred, red-

spotted bitch on Ilagin's leash, slender but with muscles like steel, a

delicate muzzle, and prominent black eyes. He had heard of the swiftness

of Ilagin's borzois, and in that beautiful bitch saw a rival to his own

Milka.

In the middle of a sober conversation begun by Ilagin about the year's

harvest, Nicholas pointed to the red-spotted bitch.

"A fine little bitch, that!" said he in a careless tone. "Is she swift?"

"That one? Yes, she's a good dog, gets what she's after," answered

Ilagin indifferently, of the red-spotted bitch Erza, for which, a year

before, he had given a neighbor three families of house serfs. "So in

your parts, too, the harvest is nothing to boast of, Count?" he went on,

continuing the conversation they had begun. And considering it polite to

return the young count's compliment, Ilagin looked at his borzois and

picked out Milka who attracted his attention by her breadth. "That

black-spotted one of yours is fine--well shaped!" said he.

"Yes, she's fast enough," replied Nicholas, and thought: "If only a

full-grown hare would cross the field now I'd show you what sort of

borzoi she is," and turning to his groom, he said he would give a ruble

to anyone who found a hare.

"I don't understand," continued Ilagin, "how some sportsmen can be so

jealous about game and dogs. For myself, I can tell you, Count, I enjoy

riding in company such as this... what could be better?" (he again

raised his cap to Natasha) "but as for counting skins and what one

takes, I don't care about that."

"Of course not!"

"Or being upset because someone else's borzoi and not mine catches

something. All I care about is to enjoy seeing the chase, is it not so,

Count? For I consider that..."

"A-tu!" came the long-drawn cry of one of the borzoi whippers-in, who

had halted. He stood on a knoll in the stubble, holding his whip aloft,

and again repeated his long-drawn cry, "A-tu!" (This call and the

uplifted whip meant that he saw a sitting hare.)

"Ah, he has found one, I think," said Ilagin carelessly. "Yes, we must

ride up.... Shall we both course it?" answered Nicholas, seeing in Erza

and "Uncle's" red Rugay two rivals he had never yet had a chance of

pitting against his own borzois. "And suppose they outdo my Milka at

once!" he thought as he rode with "Uncle" and Ilagin toward the hare.

"A full-grown one?" asked Ilagin as he approached the whip who had

sighted the hare--and not without agitation he looked round and whistled

to Erza.

"And you, Michael Nikanorovich?" he said, addressing "Uncle."

The latter was riding with a sullen expression on his face.

"How can I join in? Why, you've given a village for each of your

borzois! That's it, come on! Yours are worth thousands. Try yours

against one another, you two, and I'll look on!"

"Rugay, hey, hey!" he shouted. "Rugayushka!" he added, involuntarily by

this diminutive expressing his affection and the hopes he placed on this

red borzoi. Natasha saw and felt the agitation the two elderly men and

her brother were trying to conceal, and was herself excited by it.

The huntsman stood halfway up the knoll holding up his whip and the

gentlefolk rode up to him at a footpace; the hounds that were far off on

the horizon turned away from the hare, and the whips, but not the

gentlefolk, also moved away. All were moving slowly and sedately.

"How is it pointing?" asked Nicholas, riding a hundred paces toward the

whip who had sighted the hare.

But before the whip could reply, the hare, scenting the frost coming

next morning, was unable to rest and leaped up. The pack on leash rushed

downhill in full cry after the hare, and from all sides the borzois that

were not on leash darted after the hounds and the hare. All the hunt,

who had been moving slowly, shouted, "Stop!" calling in the hounds,

while the borzoi whips, with a cry of "A-tu!" galloped across the field

setting the borzois on the hare. The tranquil Ilagin, Nicholas, Natasha,

and "Uncle" flew, reckless of where and how they went, seeing only the

borzois and the hare and fearing only to lose sight even for an instant

of the chase. The hare they had started was a strong and swift one. When

he jumped up he did not run at once, but pricked his ears listening to

the shouting and trampling that resounded from all sides at once. He

took a dozen bounds, not very quickly, letting the borzois gain on him,

and, finally having chosen his direction and realized his danger, laid

back his ears and rushed off headlong. He had been lying in the stubble,

but in front of him was the autumn sowing where the ground was soft. The

two borzois of the huntsman who had sighted him, having been the

nearest, were the first to see and pursue him, but they had not gone far

before Ilagin's red-spotted Erza passed them, got within a length, flew

at the hare with terrible swiftness aiming at his scut, and, thinking

she had seized him, rolled over like a ball. The hare arched his back

and bounded off yet more swiftly. From behind Erza rushed the broad-

haunched, black-spotted Milka and began rapidly gaining on the hare.

"Milashka, dear!" rose Nicholas' triumphant cry. It looked as if Milka

would immediately pounce on the hare, but she overtook him and flew

past. The hare had squatted. Again the beautiful Erza reached him, but

when close to the hare's scut paused as if measuring the distance, so as

not to make a mistake this time but seize his hind leg.

"Erza, darling!" Ilagin wailed in a voice unlike his own. Erza did not

hearken to his appeal. At the very moment when she would have seized her

prey, the hare moved and darted along the balk between the winter rye

and the stubble. Again Erza and Milka were abreast, running like a pair

of carriage horses, and began to overtake the hare, but it was easier

for the hare to run on the balk and the borzois did not overtake him so

quickly.

"Rugay, Rugayushka! That's it, come on!" came a third voice just then,

and "Uncle's" red borzoi, straining and curving its back, caught up with

the two foremost borzois, pushed ahead of them regardless of the

terrible strain, put on speed close to the hare, knocked it off the balk

onto the ryefield, again put on speed still more viciously, sinking to

his knees in the muddy field, and all one could see was how, muddying

his back, he rolled over with the hare. A ring of borzois surrounded

him. A moment later everyone had drawn up round the crowd of dogs. Only

the delighted "Uncle" dismounted, and cut off a pad, shaking the hare

for the blood to drip off, and anxiously glancing round with restless

eyes while his arms and legs twitched. He spoke without himself knowing

whom to or what about. "That's it, come on! That's a dog!... There, it

has beaten them all, the thousand-ruble as well as the one-ruble

borzois. That's it, come on!" said he, panting and looking wrathfully

around as if he were abusing someone, as if they were all his enemies

and had insulted him, and only now had he at last succeeded in

justifying himself. "There are your thousand-ruble ones.... That's it,

come on!..."

"Rugay, here's a pad for you!" he said, throwing down the hare's muddy

pad. "You've deserved it, that's it, come on!"

"She'd tired herself out, she'd run it down three times by herself,"

said Nicholas, also not listening to anyone and regardless of whether he

were heard or not.

"But what is there in running across it like that?" said Ilagin's groom.

"Once she had missed it and turned it away, any mongrel could take it,"

Ilagin was saying at the same time, breathless from his gallop and his

excitement. At the same moment Natasha, without drawing breath, screamed

joyously, ecstatically, and so piercingly that it set everyone's ear

tingling. By that shriek she expressed what the others expressed by all

talking at once, and it was so strange that she must herself have been

ashamed of so wild a cry and everyone else would have been amazed at it

at any other time. "Uncle" himself twisted up the hare, threw it neatly

and smartly across his horse's back as if by that gesture he meant to

rebuke everybody, and, with an air of not wishing to speak to anyone,

mounted his bay and rode off. The others all followed, dispirited and

shamefaced, and only much later were they able to regain their former

affectation of indifference. For a long time they continued to look at

red Rugay who, his arched back spattered with mud and clanking the ring

of his leash, walked along just behind "Uncle's" horse with the serene

air of a conqueror.

"Well, I am like any other dog as long as it's not a question of

coursing. But when it is, then look out!" his appearance seemed to

Nicholas to be saying.

When, much later, "Uncle" rode up to Nicholas and began talking to him,

he felt flattered that, after what had happened, "Uncle" deigned to

speak to him.

CHAPTER VII

Toward evening Ilagin took leave of Nicholas, who found that they were

so far from home that he accepted "Uncle's" offer that the hunting party

should spend the night in his little village of Mikhaylovna.

"And if you put up at my house that will be better still. That's it,

come on!" said "Uncle." "You see it's damp weather, and you could rest,

and the little countess could be driven home in a trap."

"Uncle's" offer was accepted. A huntsman was sent to Otradnoe for a

trap, while Nicholas rode with Natasha and Petya to "Uncle's" house.

Some five male domestic serfs, big and little, rushed out to the front

porch to meet their master. A score of women serfs, old and young, as

well as children, popped out from the back entrance to have a look at

the hunters who were arriving. The presence of Natasha--a woman, a lady,

and on horseback--raised the curiosity of the serfs to such a degree

that many of them came up to her, stared her in the face, and unabashed

by her presence made remarks about her as though she were some prodigy

on show and not a human being able to hear or understand what was said

about her.

"Arinka! Look, she sits sideways! There she sits and her skirt

dangles.... See, she's got a little hunting horn!"

"Goodness gracious! See her knife?..."

"Isn't she a Tartar!"

"How is it you didn't go head over heels?" asked the boldest of all,

addressing Natasha directly.

"Uncle" dismounted at the porch of his little wooden house which stood

in the midst of an overgrown garden and, after a glance at his

retainers, shouted authoritatively that the superfluous ones should take

themselves off and that all necessary preparations should be made to

receive the guests and the visitors.

The serfs all dispersed. "Uncle" lifted Natasha off her horse and taking

her hand led her up the rickety wooden steps of the porch. The house,

with its bare, unplastered log walls, was not overclean--it did not seem

that those living in it aimed at keeping it spotless--but neither was it

noticeably neglected. In the entry there was a smell of fresh apples,

and wolf and fox skins hung about.

"Uncle" led the visitors through the anteroom into a small hall with a

folding table and red chairs, then into the drawing room with a round

birchwood table and a sofa, and finally into his private room where

there was a tattered sofa, a worn carpet, and portraits of Suvorov, of

the host's father and mother, and of himself in military uniform. The

study smelt strongly of tobacco and dogs. "Uncle" asked his visitors to

sit down and make themselves at home, and then went out of the room.

Rugay, his back still muddy, came into the room and lay down on the

sofa, cleaning himself with his tongue and teeth. Leading from the study

was a passage in which a partition with ragged curtains could be seen.

From behind this came women's laughter and whispers. Natasha, Nicholas,

and Petya took off their wraps and sat down on the sofa. Petya, leaning

on his elbow, fell asleep at once. Natasha and Nicholas were silent.

Their faces glowed, they were hungry and very cheerful. They looked at

one another (now that the hunt was over and they were in the house,

Nicholas no longer considered it necessary to show his manly superiority

over his sister), Natasha gave him a wink, and neither refrained long

from bursting into a peal of ringing laughter even before they had a

pretext ready to account for it.

After a while "Uncle" came in, in a Cossack coat, blue trousers, and

small top boots. And Natasha felt that this costume, the very one she

had regarded with surprise and amusement at Otradnoe, was just the right

thing and not at all worse than a swallow-tail or frock coat. "Uncle"

too was in high spirits and far from being offended by the brother's and

sister's laughter (it could never enter his head that they might be

laughing at his way of life) he himself joined in the merriment.

"That's right, young countess, that's it, come on! I never saw anyone

like her!" said he, offering Nicholas a pipe with a long stem and, with

a practiced motion of three fingers, taking down another that had been

cut short. "She's ridden all day like a man, and is as fresh as ever!"

Soon after "Uncle's" reappearance the door was opened, evidently from

the sound by a barefooted girl, and a stout, rosy, good-looking woman of

about forty, with a double chin and full red lips, entered carrying a

large loaded tray. With hospitable dignity and cordiality in her glance

and in every motion, she looked at the visitors and, with a pleasant

smile, bowed respectfully. In spite of her exceptional stoutness, which

caused her to protrude her chest and stomach and throw back her head,

this woman (who was "Uncle's" housekeeper) trod very lightly. She went

to the table, set down the tray, and with her plump white hands deftly

took from it the bottles and various hors d'oeuvres and dishes and

arranged them on the table. When she had finished, she stepped aside and

stopped at the door with a smile on her face. "Here I am. I am she! Now

do you understand 'Uncle'?" her expression said to Rostov. How could one

help understanding? Not only Nicholas, but even Natasha understood the

meaning of his puckered brow and the happy complacent smile that

slightly puckered his lips when Anisya Fedorovna entered. On the tray

was a bottle of herb wine, different kinds of vodka, pickled mushrooms,

rye cakes made with buttermilk, honey in the comb, still mead and

sparkling mead, apples, nuts (raw and roasted), and nut-and-honey

sweets. Afterwards she brought a freshly roasted chicken, ham, preserves

made with honey, and preserves made with sugar.

All this was the fruit of Anisya Fedorovna's housekeeping, gathered and

prepared by her. The smell and taste of it all had a smack of Anisya

Fedorovna herself: a savor of juiciness, cleanliness, whiteness, and

pleasant smiles.

"Take this, little Lady-Countess!" she kept saying, as she offered

Natasha first one thing and then another.

Natasha ate of everything and thought she had never seen or eaten such

buttermilk cakes, such aromatic jam, such honey-and-nut sweets, or such

a chicken anywhere. Anisya Fedorovna left the room.

After supper, over their cherry brandy, Rostov and "Uncle" talked of

past and future hunts, of Rugay and Ilagin's dogs, while Natasha sat

upright on the sofa and listened with sparkling eyes. She tried several

times to wake Petya that he might eat something, but he only muttered

incoherent words without waking up. Natasha felt so lighthearted and

happy in these novel surroundings that she only feared the trap would

come for her too soon. After a casual pause, such as often occurs when

receiving friends for the first time in one's own house, "Uncle,"

answering a thought that was in his visitors' minds, said:

"This, you see, is how I am finishing my days... Death will come. That's

it, come on! Nothing will remain. Then why harm anyone?"

"Uncle's" face was very significant and even handsome as he said this.

Involuntarily Rostov recalled all the good he had heard about him from

his father and the neighbors. Throughout the whole province "Uncle" had

the reputation of being the most honorable and disinterested of cranks.

They called him in to decide family disputes, chose him as executor,

confided secrets to him, elected him to be a justice and to other posts;

but he always persistently refused public appointments, passing the

autumn and spring in the fields on his bay gelding, sitting at home in

winter, and lying in his overgrown garden in summer.

"Why don't you enter the service, Uncle?"

"I did once, but gave it up. I am not fit for it. That's it, come on! I

can't make head or tail of it. That's for you--I haven't brains enough.

Now, hunting is another matter--that's it, come on! Open the door,

there!" he shouted. "Why have you shut it?"

The door at the end of the passage led to the huntsmen's room, as they

called the room for the hunt servants.

There was a rapid patter of bare feet, and an unseen hand opened the

door into the huntsmen's room, from which came the clear sounds of a

balalayka on which someone, who was evidently a master of the art, was

playing. Natasha had been listening to those strains for some time and

now went out into the passage to hear better.

"That's Mitka, my coachman.... I have got him a good balalayka. I'm fond

of it," said "Uncle."

It was the custom for Mitka to play the balalayka in the huntsmen's room

when "Uncle" returned from the chase. "Uncle" was fond of such music.

"How good! Really very good!" said Nicholas with some unintentional

superciliousness, as if ashamed to confess that the sounds pleased him

very much.

"Very good?" said Natasha reproachfully, noticing her brother's tone.

"Not 'very good' it's simply delicious!"

Just as "Uncle's" pickled mushrooms, honey, and cherry brandy had seemed

to her the best in the world, so also that song, at that moment, seemed

to her the acme of musical delight.

"More, please, more!" cried Natasha at the door as soon as the balalayka

ceased. Mitka tuned up afresh, and recommenced thrumming the balalayka

to the air of My Lady, with trills and variations. "Uncle" sat

listening, slightly smiling, with his head on one side. The air was

repeated a hundred times. The balalayka was retuned several times and

the same notes were thrummed again, but the listeners did not grow weary

of it and wished to hear it again and again. Anisya Fedorovna came in

and leaned her portly person against the doorpost.

"You like listening?" she said to Natasha, with a smile extremely like

"Uncle's." "That's a good player of ours," she added.

"He doesn't play that part right!" said "Uncle" suddenly, with an

energetic gesture. "Here he ought to burst out--that's it, come on!--

ought to burst out."

"Do you play then?" asked Natasha.

"Uncle" did not answer, but smiled.

"Anisya, go and see if the strings of my guitar are all right. I haven't

touched it for a long time. That's it--come on! I've given it up."

Anisya Fedorovna, with her light step, willingly went to fulfill her

errand and brought back the guitar.

Without looking at anyone, "Uncle" blew the dust off it and, tapping the

case with his bony fingers, tuned the guitar and settled himself in his

armchair. He took the guitar a little above the fingerboard, arching his

left elbow with a somewhat theatrical gesture, and, with a wink at

Anisya Fedorovna, struck a single chord, pure and sonorous, and then

quietly, smoothly, and confidently began playing in very slow time, not

My Lady, but the well-known song: Came a maiden down the street. The

tune, played with precision and in exact time, began to thrill in the

hearts of Nicholas and Natasha, arousing in them the same kind of sober

mirth as radiated from Anisya Fedorovna's whole being. Anisya Fedorovna

flushed, and drawing her kerchief over her face went laughing out of the

room. "Uncle" continued to play correctly, carefully, with energetic

firmness, looking with a changed and inspired expression at the spot

where Anisya Fedorovna had just stood. Something seemed to be laughing a

little on one side of his face under his gray mustaches, especially as

the song grew brisker and the time quicker and when, here and there, as

he ran his fingers over the strings, something seemed to snap.

"Lovely, lovely! Go on, Uncle, go on!" shouted Natasha as soon as he had

finished. She jumped up and hugged and kissed him. "Nicholas, Nicholas!"

she said, turning to her brother, as if asking him: "What is it moves me

so?"

Nicholas too was greatly pleased by "Uncle's" playing, and "Uncle"

played the piece over again. Anisya Fedorovna's smiling face reappeared

in the doorway and behind hers other faces...

Fetching water clear and sweet, Stop, dear maiden, I entreat--

played "Uncle" once more, running his fingers skillfully over the

strings, and then he stopped short and jerked his shoulders.

"Go on, Uncle dear," Natasha wailed in an imploring tone as if her life

depended on it.

"Uncle" rose, and it was as if there were two men in him: one of them

smiled seriously at the merry fellow, while the merry fellow struck a

naive and precise attitude preparatory to a folk dance.

"Now then, niece!" he exclaimed, waving to Natasha the hand that had

just struck a chord.

Natasha threw off the shawl from her shoulders, ran forward to face

"Uncle," and setting her arms akimbo also made a motion with her

shoulders and struck an attitude.

Where, how, and when had this young countess, educated by an emigree

French governess, imbibed from the Russian air she breathed that spirit

and obtained that manner which the pas de chale \* would, one would have

supposed, long ago have effaced? But the spirit and the movements were

those inimitable and unteachable Russian ones that "Uncle" had expected

of her. As soon as she had struck her pose, and smiled triumphantly,

proudly, and with sly merriment, the fear that had at first seized

Nicholas and the others that she might not do the right thing was at an

end, and they were already admiring her.

\* The French shawl dance.

She did the right thing with such precision, such complete precision,

that Anisya Fedorovna, who had at once handed her the handkerchief she

needed for the dance, had tears in her eyes, though she laughed as she

watched this slim, graceful countess, reared in silks and velvets and so

different from herself, who yet was able to understand all that was in

Anisya and in Anisya's father and mother and aunt, and in every Russian

man and woman.

"Well, little countess; that's it--come on!" cried "Uncle," with a

joyous laugh, having finished the dance. "Well done, niece! Now a fine

young fellow must be found as husband for you. That's it--come on!"

"He's chosen already," said Nicholas smiling.

"Oh?" said "Uncle" in surprise, looking inquiringly at Natasha, who

nodded her head with a happy smile.

"And such a one!" she said. But as soon as she had said it a new train

of thoughts and feelings arose in her. "What did Nicholas' smile mean

when he said 'chosen already'? Is he glad of it or not? It is as if he

thought my Bolkonski would not approve of or understand our gaiety. But

he would understand it all. Where is he now?" she thought, and her face

suddenly became serious. But this lasted only a second. "Don't dare to

think about it," she said to herself, and sat down again smilingly

beside "Uncle," begging him to play something more.

"Uncle" played another song and a valse; then after a pause he cleared

his throat and sang his favorite hunting song:

As 'twas growing dark last night Fell the snow so soft and light...

"Uncle" sang as peasants sing, with full and naive conviction that the

whole meaning of a song lies in the words and that the tune comes of

itself, and that apart from the words there is no tune, which exists

only to give measure to the words. As a result of this the unconsidered

tune, like the song of a bird, was extraordinarily good. Natasha was in

ecstasies over "Uncle's" singing. She resolved to give up learning the

harp and to play only the guitar. She asked "Uncle" for his guitar and

at once found the chords of the song.

After nine o'clock two traps and three mounted men, who had been sent to

look for them, arrived to fetch Natasha and Petya. The count and

countess did not know where they were and were very anxious, said one of

the men.

Petya was carried out like a log and laid in the larger of the two

traps. Natasha and Nicholas got into the other. "Uncle" wrapped Natasha

up warmly and took leave of her with quite a new tenderness. He

accompanied them on foot as far as the bridge that could not be crossed,

so that they had to go round by the ford, and he sent huntsmen to ride

in front with lanterns.

"Good-bye, dear niece," his voice called out of the darkness--not the

voice Natasha had known previously, but the one that had sung As 'twas

growing dark last night.

In the village through which they passed there were red lights and a

cheerful smell of smoke.

"What a darling Uncle is!" said Natasha, when they had come out onto the

highroad.

"Yes," returned Nicholas. "You're not cold?"

"No. I'm quite, quite all right. I feel so comfortable!" answered

Natasha, almost perplexed by her feelings. They remained silent a long

while. The night was dark and damp. They could not see the horses, but

only heard them splashing through the unseen mud.

What was passing in that receptive childlike soul that so eagerly caught

and assimilated all the diverse impressions of life? How did they all

find place in her? But she was very happy. As they were nearing home she

suddenly struck up the air of As 'twas growing dark last night--the tune

of which she had all the way been trying to get and had at last caught.

"Got it?" said Nicholas.

"What were you thinking about just now, Nicholas?" inquired Natasha.

They were fond of asking one another that question.

"I?" said Nicholas, trying to remember. "Well, you see, first I thought

that Rugay, the red hound, was like Uncle, and that if he were a man he

would always keep Uncle near him, if not for his riding, then for his

manner. What a good fellow Uncle is! Don't you think so?... Well, and

you?"

"I? Wait a bit, wait.... Yes, first I thought that we are driving along

and imagining that we are going home, but that heaven knows where we are

really going in the darkness, and that we shall arrive and suddenly find

that we are not in Otradnoe, but in Fairyland. And then I thought... No,

nothing else."

"I know, I expect you thought of him," said Nicholas, smiling as Natasha

knew by the sound of his voice.

"No," said Natasha, though she had in reality been thinking about Prince

Andrew at the same time as of the rest, and of how he would have liked

"Uncle." "And then I was saying to myself all the way, 'How well Anisya

carried herself, how well!'" And Nicholas heard her spontaneous, happy,

ringing laughter. "And do you know," she suddenly said, "I know that I

shall never again be as happy and tranquil as I am now."

"Rubbish, nonsense, humbug!" exclaimed Nicholas, and he thought: "How

charming this Natasha of mine is! I have no other friend like her and

never shall have. Why should she marry? We might always drive about

together!"

"What a darling this Nicholas of mine is!" thought Natasha.

"Ah, there are still lights in the drawing-room!" she said, pointing to

the windows of the house that gleamed invitingly in the moist velvety

darkness of the night.

CHAPTER VIII

Count Ilya Rostov had resigned the position of Marshal of the Nobility

because it involved him in too much expense, but still his affairs did

not improve. Natasha and Nicholas often noticed their parents conferring

together anxiously and privately and heard suggestions of selling the

fine ancestral Rostov house and estate near Moscow. It was not necessary

to entertain so freely as when the count had been Marshal, and life at

Otradnoe was quieter than in former years, but still the enormous house

and its lodges were full of people and more than twenty sat down to

table every day. These were all their own people who had settled down in

the house almost as members of the family, or persons who were, it

seemed, obliged to live in the count's house. Such were Dimmler the

musician and his wife, Vogel the dancing master and his family, Belova,

an old maiden lady, an inmate of the house, and many others such as

Petya's tutors, the girls' former governess, and other people who simply

found it preferable and more advantageous to live in the count's house

than at home. They had not as many visitors as before, but the old

habits of life without which the count and countess could not conceive

of existence remained unchanged. There was still the hunting

establishment which Nicholas had even enlarged, the same fifty horses

and fifteen grooms in the stables, the same expensive presents and

dinner parties to the whole district on name days; there were still the

count's games of whist and boston, at which--spreading out his cards so

that everybody could see them--he let himself be plundered of hundreds

of rubles every day by his neighbors, who looked upon an opportunity to

play a rubber with Count Rostov as a most profitable source of income.

The count moved in his affairs as in a huge net, trying not to believe

that he was entangled but becoming more and more so at every step, and

feeling too feeble to break the meshes or to set to work carefully and

patiently to disentangle them. The countess, with her loving heart, felt

that her children were being ruined, that it was not the count's fault

for he could not help being what he was--that (though he tried to hide

it) he himself suffered from the consciousness of his own and his

children's ruin, and she tried to find means of remedying the position.

From her feminine point of view she could see only one solution, namely,

for Nicholas to marry a rich heiress. She felt this to be their last

hope and that if Nicholas refused the match she had found for him, she

would have to abandon the hope of ever getting matters right. This match

was with Julie Karagina, the daughter of excellent and virtuous parents,

a girl the Rostovs had known from childhood, and who had now become a

wealthy heiress through the death of the last of her brothers.

The countess had written direct to Julie's mother in Moscow suggesting a

marriage between their children and had received a favorable answer from

her. Karagina had replied that for her part she was agreeable, and

everything depend on her daughter's inclination. She invited Nicholas to

come to Moscow.

Several times the countess, with tears in her eyes, told her son that

now both her daughters were settled, her only wish was to see him

married. She said she could lie down in her grave peacefully if that

were accomplished. Then she told him that she knew of a splendid girl

and tried to discover what he thought about marriage.

At other times she praised Julie to him and advised him to go to Moscow

during the holidays to amuse himself. Nicholas guessed what his mother's

remarks were leading to and during one of these conversations induced

her to speak quite frankly. She told him that her only hope of getting

their affairs disentangled now lay in his marrying Julie Karagina.

"But, Mamma, suppose I loved a girl who has no fortune, would you expect

me to sacrifice my feelings and my honor for the sake of money?" he

asked his mother, not realizing the cruelty of his question and only

wishing to show his noble-mindedness.

"No, you have not understood me," said his mother, not knowing how to

justify herself. "You have not understood me, Nikolenka. It is your

happiness I wish for," she added, feeling that she was telling an

untruth and was becoming entangled. She began to cry.

"Mamma, don't cry! Only tell me that you wish it, and you know I will

give my life, anything, to put you at ease," said Nicholas. "I would

sacrifice anything for you--even my feelings."

But the countess did not want the question put like that: she did not

want a sacrifice from her son, she herself wished to make a sacrifice

for him.

"No, you have not understood me, don't let us talk about it," she

replied, wiping away her tears.

"Maybe I do love a poor girl," said Nicholas to himself. "Am I to

sacrifice my feelings and my honor for money? I wonder how Mamma could

speak so to me. Because Sonya is poor I must not love her," he thought,

"must not respond to her faithful, devoted love? Yet I should certainly

be happier with her than with some doll-like Julie. I can always

sacrifice my feelings for my family's welfare," he said to himself, "but

I can't coerce my feelings. If I love Sonya, that feeling is for me

stronger and higher than all else."

Nicholas did not go to Moscow, and the countess did not renew the

conversation with him about marriage. She saw with sorrow, and sometimes

with exasperation, symptoms of a growing attachment between her son and

the portionless Sonya. Though she blamed herself for it, she could not

refrain from grumbling at and worrying Sonya, often pulling her up

without reason, addressing her stiffly as "my dear," and using the

formal "you" instead of the intimate "thou" in speaking to her. The

kindhearted countess was the more vexed with Sonya because that poor,

dark-eyed niece of hers was so meek, so kind, so devotedly grateful to

her benefactors, and so faithfully, unchangingly, and unselfishly in

love with Nicholas, that there were no grounds for finding fault with

her.

Nicholas was spending the last of his leave at home. A fourth letter had

come from Prince Andrew, from Rome, in which he wrote that he would have

been on his way back to Russia long ago had not his wound unexpectedly

reopened in the warm climate, which obliged him to defer his return till

the beginning of the new year. Natasha was still as much in love with

her betrothed, found the same comfort in that love, and was still as

ready to throw herself into all the pleasures of life as before; but at

the end of the fourth month of their separation she began to have fits

of depression which she could not master. She felt sorry for herself:

sorry that she was being wasted all this time and of no use to anyone--

while she felt herself so capable of loving and being loved.

Things were not cheerful in the Rostovs' home.

CHAPTER IX

Christmas came and except for the ceremonial Mass, the solemn and

wearisome Christmas congratulations from neighbors and servants, and the

new dresses everyone put on, there were no special festivities, though

the calm frost of twenty degrees Reaumur, the dazzling sunshine by day,

and the starlight of the winter nights seemed to call for some special

celebration of the season.

On the third day of Christmas week, after the midday dinner, all the

inmates of the house dispersed to various rooms. It was the dullest time

of the day. Nicholas, who had been visiting some neighbors that morning,

was asleep on the sitting-room sofa. The old count was resting in his

study. Sonya sat in the drawing room at the round table, copying a

design for embroidery. The countess was playing patience. Nastasya

Ivanovna the buffoon sat with a sad face at the window with two old

ladies. Natasha came into the room, went up to Sonya, glanced at what

she was doing, and then went up to her mother and stood without

speaking.

"Why are you wandering about like an outcast?" asked her mother. "What

do you want?"

"Him... I want him... now, this minute! I want him!" said Natasha, with

glittering eyes and no sign of a smile.

The countess lifted her head and looked attentively at her daughter.

"Don't look at me, Mamma! Don't look; I shall cry directly."

"Sit down with me a little," said the countess.

"Mamma, I want him. Why should I be wasted like this, Mamma?"

Her voice broke, tears gushed from her eyes, and she turned quickly to

hide them and left the room.

She passed into the sitting room, stood there thinking awhile, and then

went into the maids' room. There an old maidservant was grumbling at a

young girl who stood panting, having just run in through the cold from

the serfs' quarters.

"Stop playing--there's a time for everything," said the old woman.

"Let her alone, Kondratevna," said Natasha. "Go, Mavrushka, go."

Having released Mavrushka, Natasha crossed the dancing hall and went to

the vestibule. There an old footman and two young ones were playing

cards. They broke off and rose as she entered.

"What can I do with them?" thought Natasha.

"Oh, Nikita, please go... where can I send him?... Yes, go to the yard

and fetch a fowl, please, a cock, and you, Misha, bring me some oats."

"Just a few oats?" said Misha, cheerfully and readily.

"Go, go quickly," the old man urged him.

"And you, Theodore, get me a piece of chalk."

On her way past the butler's pantry she told them to set a samovar,

though it was not at all the time for tea.

Foka, the butler, was the most ill-tempered person in the house. Natasha

liked to test her power over him. He distrusted the order and asked

whether the samovar was really wanted.

"Oh dear, what a young lady!" said Foka, pretending to frown at Natasha.

No one in the house sent people about or gave them as much trouble as

Natasha did. She could not see people unconcernedly, but had to send

them on some errand. She seemed to be trying whether any of them would

get angry or sulky with her; but the serfs fulfilled no one's orders so

readily as they did hers. "What can I do, where can I go?" thought she,

as she went slowly along the passage.

"Nastasya Ivanovna, what sort of children shall I have?" she asked the

buffoon, who was coming toward her in a woman's jacket.

"Why, fleas, crickets, grasshoppers," answered the buffoon.

"O Lord, O Lord, it's always the same! Oh, where am I to go? What am I

to do with myself?" And tapping with her heels, she ran quickly upstairs

to see Vogel and his wife who lived on the upper story.

Two governesses were sitting with the Vogels at a table, on which were

plates of raisins, walnuts, and almonds. The governesses were discussing

whether it was cheaper to live in Moscow or Odessa. Natasha sat down,

listened to their talk with a serious and thoughtful air, and then got

up again.

"The island of Madagascar," she said, "Ma-da-gas-car," she repeated,

articulating each syllable distinctly, and, not replying to Madame

Schoss who asked her what she was saying, she went out of the room.

Her brother Petya was upstairs too; with the man in attendance on him he

was preparing fireworks to let off that night.

"Petya! Petya!" she called to him. "Carry me downstairs."

Petya ran up and offered her his back. She jumped on it, putting her

arms round his neck, and he pranced along with her.

"No, don't... the island of Madagascar!" she said, and jumping off his

back she went downstairs.

Having as it were reviewed her kingdom, tested her power, and made sure

that everyone was submissive, but that all the same it was dull, Natasha

betook herself to the ballroom, picked up her guitar, sat down in a dark

corner behind a bookcase, and began to run her fingers over the strings

in the bass, picking out a passage she recalled from an opera she had

heard in Petersburg with Prince Andrew. What she drew from the guitar

would have had no meaning for other listeners, but in her imagination a

whole series of reminiscences arose from those sounds. She sat behind

the bookcase with her eyes fixed on a streak of light escaping from the

pantry door and listened to herself and pondered. She was in a mood for

brooding on the past.

Sonya passed to the pantry with a glass in her hand. Natasha glanced at

her and at the crack in the pantry door, and it seemed to her that she

remembered the light falling through that crack once before and Sonya

passing with a glass in her hand. "Yes it was exactly the same," thought

Natasha.

"Sonya, what is this?" she cried, twanging a thick string.

"Oh, you are there!" said Sonya with a start, and came near and

listened. "I don't know. A storm?" she ventured timidly, afraid of being

wrong.

"There! That's just how she started and just how she came up smiling

timidly when all this happened before," thought Natasha, "and in just

the same way I thought there was something lacking in her."

"No, it's the chorus from The Water-Carrier, listen!" and Natasha sang

the air of the chorus so that Sonya should catch it. "Where were you

going?" she asked.

"To change the water in this glass. I am just finishing the design."

"You always find something to do, but I can't," said Natasha. "And

where's Nicholas?"

"Asleep, I think."

"Sonya, go and wake him," said Natasha. "Tell him I want him to come and

sing."

She sat awhile, wondering what the meaning of it all having happened

before could be, and without solving this problem, or at all regretting

not having done so, she again passed in fancy to the time when she was

with him and he was looking at her with a lover's eyes.

"Oh, if only he would come quicker! I am so afraid it will never be!

And, worst of all, I am growing old--that's the thing! There won't then

be in me what there is now. But perhaps he'll come today, will come

immediately. Perhaps he has come and is sitting in the drawing room.

Perhaps he came yesterday and I have forgotten it." She rose, put down

the guitar, and went to the drawing room.

All the domestic circle, tutors, governesses, and guests, were already

at the tea table. The servants stood round the table--but Prince Andrew

was not there and life was going on as before.

"Ah, here she is!" said the old count, when he saw Natasha enter. "Well,

sit down by me." But Natasha stayed by her mother and glanced round as

if looking for something.

"Mamma!" she muttered, "give him to me, give him, Mamma, quickly,

quickly!" and she again had difficulty in repressing her sobs.

She sat down at the table and listened to the conversation between the

elders and Nicholas, who had also come to the table. "My God, my God!

The same faces, the same talk, Papa holding his cup and blowing in the

same way!" thought Natasha, feeling with horror a sense of repulsion

rising up in her for the whole household, because they were always the

same.

After tea, Nicholas, Sonya, and Natasha went to the sitting room, to

their favorite corner where their most intimate talks always began.

CHAPTER X

"Does it ever happen to you," said Natasha to her brother, when they

settled down in the sitting room, "does it ever happen to you to feel as

if there were nothing more to come--nothing; that everything good is

past? And to feel not exactly dull, but sad?"

"I should think so!" he replied. "I have felt like that when everything

was all right and everyone was cheerful. The thought has come into my

mind that I was already tired of it all, and that we must all die. Once

in the regiment I had not gone to some merrymaking where there was

music... and suddenly I felt so depressed..."

"Oh yes, I know, I know, I know!" Natasha interrupted him. "When I was

quite little that used to be so with me. Do you remember when I was

punished once about some plums? You were all dancing, and I sat sobbing

in the schoolroom? I shall never forget it: I felt sad and sorry for

everyone, for myself, and for everyone. And I was innocent--that was the

chief thing," said Natasha. "Do you remember?"

"I remember," answered Nicholas. "I remember that I came to you

afterwards and wanted to comfort you, but do you know, I felt ashamed

to. We were terribly absurd. I had a funny doll then and wanted to give

it to you. Do you remember?"

"And do you remember," Natasha asked with a pensive smile, "how once,

long, long ago, when we were quite little, Uncle called us into the

study--that was in the old house--and it was dark--we went in and

suddenly there stood..."

"A Negro," chimed in Nicholas with a smile of delight. "Of course I

remember. Even now I don't know whether there really was a Negro, or if

we only dreamed it or were told about him."

"He was gray, you remember, and had white teeth, and stood and looked at

us..."

"Sonya, do you remember?" asked Nicholas.

"Yes, yes, I do remember something too," Sonya answered timidly.

"You know I have asked Papa and Mamma about that Negro," said Natasha,

"and they say there was no Negro at all. But you see, you remember!"

"Of course I do, I remember his teeth as if I had just seen them."

"How strange it is! It's as if it were a dream! I like that."

"And do you remember how we rolled hard-boiled eggs in the ballroom, and

suddenly two old women began spinning round on the carpet? Was that real

or not? Do you remember what fun it was?"

"Yes, and you remember how Papa in his blue overcoat fired a gun in the

porch?"

So they went through their memories, smiling with pleasure: not the sad

memories of old age, but poetic, youthful ones--those impressions of

one's most distant past in which dreams and realities blend--and they

laughed with quiet enjoyment.

Sonya, as always, did not quite keep pace with them, though they shared

the same reminiscences.

Much that they remembered had slipped from her mind, and what she

recalled did not arouse the same poetic feeling as they experienced. She

simply enjoyed their pleasure and tried to fit in with it.

She only really took part when they recalled Sonya's first arrival. She

told them how afraid she had been of Nicholas because he had on a corded

jacket and her nurse had told her that she, too, would be sewn up with

cords.

"And I remember their telling me that you had been born under a

cabbage," said Natasha, "and I remember that I dared not disbelieve it

then, but knew that it was not true, and I felt so uncomfortable."

While they were talking a maid thrust her head in at the other door of

the sitting room.

"They have brought the cock, Miss," she said in a whisper.

"It isn't wanted, Petya. Tell them to take it away," replied Natasha.

In the middle of their talk in the sitting room, Dimmler came in and

went up to the harp that stood there in a corner. He took off its cloth

covering, and the harp gave out a jarring sound.

"Mr. Dimmler, please play my favorite nocturne by Field," came the old

countess' voice from the drawing room.

Dimmler struck a chord and, turning to Natasha, Nicholas, and Sonya,

remarked: "How quiet you young people are!"

"Yes, we're philosophizing," said Natasha, glancing round for a moment

and then continuing the conversation. They were now discussing dreams.

Dimmler began to play; Natasha went on tiptoe noiselessly to the table,

took up a candle, carried it out, and returned, seating herself quietly

in her former place. It was dark in the room especially where they were

sitting on the sofa, but through the big windows the silvery light of

the full moon fell on the floor. Dimmler had finished the piece but

still sat softly running his fingers over the strings, evidently

uncertain whether to stop or to play something else.

"Do you know," said Natasha in a whisper, moving closer to Nicholas and

Sonya, "that when one goes on and on recalling memories, one at last

begins to remember what happened before one was in the world..."

"That is metempsychosis," said Sonya, who had always learned well, and

remembered everything. "The Egyptians believed that our souls have lived

in animals, and will go back into animals again."

"No, I don't believe we ever were in animals," said Natasha, still in a

whisper though the music had ceased. "But I am certain that we were

angels somewhere there, and have been here, and that is why we

remember...."

"May I join you?" said Dimmler who had come up quietly, and he sat down

by them.

"If we have been angels, why have we fallen lower?" said Nicholas. "No,

that can't be!"

"Not lower, who said we were lower?... How do I know what I was before?"

Natasha rejoined with conviction. "The soul is immortal--well then, if I

shall always live I must have lived before, lived for a whole eternity."

"Yes, but it is hard for us to imagine eternity," remarked Dimmler, who

had joined the young folk with a mildly condescending smile but now

spoke as quietly and seriously as they.

"Why is it hard to imagine eternity?" said Natasha. "It is now today,

and it will be tomorrow, and always; and there was yesterday, and the

day before..."

"Natasha! Now it's your turn. Sing me something," they heard the

countess say. "Why are you sitting there like conspirators?"

"Mamma, I don't at all want to," replied Natasha, but all the same she

rose.

None of them, not even the middle-aged Dimmler, wanted to break off

their conversation and quit that corner in the sitting room, but Natasha

got up and Nicholas sat down at the clavichord. Standing as usual in the

middle of the hall and choosing the place where the resonance was best,

Natasha began to sing her mother's favorite song.

She had said she did not want to sing, but it was long since she had

sung, and long before she again sang, as she did that evening. The

count, from his study where he was talking to Mitenka, heard her and,

like a schoolboy in a hurry to run out to play, blundered in his talk

while giving orders to the steward, and at last stopped, while Mitenka

stood in front of him also listening and smiling. Nicholas did not take

his eyes off his sister and drew breath in time with her. Sonya, as she

listened, thought of the immense difference there was between herself

and her friend, and how impossible it was for her to be anything like as

bewitching as her cousin. The old countess sat with a blissful yet sad

smile and with tears in her eyes, occasionally shaking her head. She

thought of Natasha and of her own youth, and of how there was something

unnatural and dreadful in this impending marriage of Natasha and Prince

Andrew.

Dimmler, who had seated himself beside the countess, listened with

closed eyes.

"Ah, Countess," he said at last, "that's a European talent, she has

nothing to learn--what softness, tenderness, and strength...."

"Ah, how afraid I am for her, how afraid I am!" said the countess, not

realizing to whom she was speaking. Her maternal instinct told her that

Natasha had too much of something, and that because of this she would

not be happy. Before Natasha had finished singing, fourteen-year-old

Petya rushed in delightedly, to say that some mummers had arrived.

Natasha stopped abruptly.

"Idiot!" she screamed at her brother and, running to a chair, threw

herself on it, sobbing so violently that she could not stop for a long

time.

"It's nothing, Mamma, really it's nothing; only Petya startled me," she

said, trying to smile, but her tears still flowed and sobs still choked

her.

The mummers (some of the house serfs) dressed up as bears, Turks,

innkeepers, and ladies--frightening and funny--bringing in with them the

cold from outside and a feeling of gaiety, crowded, at first timidly,

into the anteroom, then hiding behind one another they pushed into the

ballroom where, shyly at first and then more and more merrily and

heartily, they started singing, dancing, and playing Christmas games.

The countess, when she had identified them and laughed at their

costumes, went into the drawing room. The count sat in the ballroom,

smiling radiantly and applauding the players. The young people had

disappeared.

Half an hour later there appeared among the other mummers in the

ballroom an old lady in a hooped skirt--this was Nicholas. A Turkish

girl was Petya. A clown was Dimmler. An hussar was Natasha, and a

Circassian was Sonya with burnt-cork mustache and eyebrows.

After the condescending surprise, nonrecognition, and praise, from those

who were not themselves dressed up, the young people decided that their

costumes were so good that they ought to be shown elsewhere.

Nicholas, who, as the roads were in splendid condition, wanted to take

them all for a drive in his troyka, proposed to take with them about a

dozen of the serf mummers and drive to "Uncle's."

"No, why disturb the old fellow?" said the countess. "Besides, you

wouldn't have room to turn round there. If you must go, go to the

Melyukovs'."

Melyukova was a widow, who, with her family and their tutors and

governesses, lived three miles from the Rostovs.

"That's right, my dear," chimed in the old count, thoroughly aroused.

"I'll dress up at once and go with them. I'll make Pashette open her

eyes."

But the countess would not agree to his going; he had had a bad leg all

these last days. It was decided that the count must not go, but that if

Louisa Ivanovna (Madame Schoss) would go with them, the young ladies

might go to the Melyukovs', Sonya, generally so timid and shy, more

urgently than anyone begging Louisa Ivanovna not to refuse.

Sonya's costume was the best of all. Her mustache and eyebrows were

extraordinarily becoming. Everyone told her she looked very handsome,

and she was in a spirited and energetic mood unusual with her. Some

inner voice told her that now or never her fate would be decided, and in

her male attire she seemed quite a different person. Louisa Ivanovna

consented to go, and in half an hour four troyka sleighs with large and

small bells, their runners squeaking and whistling over the frozen snow,

drove up to the porch.

Natasha was foremost in setting a merry holiday tone, which, passing

from one to another, grew stronger and reached its climax when they all

came out into the frost and got into the sleighs, talking, calling to

one another, laughing, and shouting.

Two of the troykas were the usual household sleighs, the third was the

old count's with a trotter from the Orlov stud as shaft horse, the

fourth was Nicholas' own with a short shaggy black shaft horse.

Nicholas, in his old lady's dress over which he had belted his hussar

overcoat, stood in the middle of the sleigh, reins in hand.

It was so light that he could see the moonlight reflected from the metal

harness disks and from the eyes of the horses, who looked round in alarm

at the noisy party under the shadow of the porch roof.

Natasha, Sonya, Madame Schoss, and two maids got into Nicholas' sleigh;

Dimmler, his wife, and Petya, into the old count's, and the rest of the

mummers seated themselves in the other two sleighs.

"You go ahead, Zakhar!" shouted Nicholas to his father's coachman,

wishing for a chance to race past him.

The old count's troyka, with Dimmler and his party, started forward,

squeaking on its runners as though freezing to the snow, its deep-toned

bell clanging. The side horses, pressing against the shafts of the

middle horse, sank in the snow, which was dry and glittered like sugar,

and threw it up.

Nicholas set off, following the first sleigh; behind him the others

moved noisily, their runners squeaking. At first they drove at a steady

trot along the narrow road. While they drove past the garden the shadows

of the bare trees often fell across the road and hid the brilliant

moonlight, but as soon as they were past the fence, the snowy plain

bathed in moonlight and motionless spread out before them glittering

like diamonds and dappled with bluish shadows. Bang, bang! went the

first sleigh over a cradle hole in the snow of the road, and each of the

other sleighs jolted in the same way, and rudely breaking the frost-

bound stillness, the troykas began to speed along the road, one after

the other.

"A hare's track, a lot of tracks!" rang out Natasha's voice through the

frost-bound air.

"How light it is, Nicholas!" came Sonya's voice.

Nicholas glanced round at Sonya, and bent down to see her face closer.

Quite a new, sweet face with black eyebrows and mustaches peeped up at

him from her sable furs--so close and yet so distant--in the moonlight.

"That used to be Sonya," thought he, and looked at her closer and

smiled.

"What is it, Nicholas?"

"Nothing," said he and turned again to the horses.

When they came out onto the beaten highroad--polished by sleigh runners

and cut up by rough-shod hoofs, the marks of which were visible in the

moonlight--the horses began to tug at the reins of their own accord and

increased their pace. The near side horse, arching his head and breaking

into a short canter, tugged at his traces. The shaft horse swayed from

side to side, moving his ears as if asking: "Isn't it time to begin

now?" In front, already far ahead the deep bell of the sleigh ringing

farther and farther off, the black horses driven by Zakhar could be

clearly seen against the white snow. From that sleigh one could hear the

shouts, laughter, and voices of the mummers.

"Gee up, my darlings!" shouted Nicholas, pulling the reins to one side

and flourishing the whip.

It was only by the keener wind that met them and the jerks given by the

side horses who pulled harder--ever increasing their gallop--that one

noticed how fast the troyka was flying. Nicholas looked back. With

screams squeals, and waving of whips that caused even the shaft horses

to gallop--the other sleighs followed. The shaft horse swung steadily

beneath the bow over its head, with no thought of slackening pace and

ready to put on speed when required.

Nicholas overtook the first sleigh. They were driving downhill and

coming out upon a broad trodden track across a meadow, near a river.

"Where are we?" thought he. "It's the Kosoy meadow, I suppose. But no--

this is something new I've never seen before. This isn't the Kosoy

meadow nor the Demkin hill, and heaven only knows what it is! It is

something new and enchanted. Well, whatever it may be..." And shouting

to his horses, he began to pass the first sleigh.

Zakhar held back his horses and turned his face, which was already

covered with hoarfrost to his eyebrows.

Nicholas gave the horses the rein, and Zakhar, stretching out his arms,

clucked his tongue and let his horses go.

"Now, look out, master!" he cried.

Faster still the two troykas flew side by side, and faster moved the

feet of the galloping side horses. Nicholas began to draw ahead. Zakhar,

while still keeping his arms extended, raised one hand with the reins.

"No you won't, master!" he shouted.

Nicholas put all his horses to a gallop and passed Zakhar. The horses

showered the fine dry snow on the faces of those in the sleigh--beside

them sounded quick ringing bells and they caught confused glimpses of

swiftly moving legs and the shadows of the troyka they were passing. The

whistling sound of the runners on the snow and the voices of girls

shrieking were heard from different sides.

Again checking his horses, Nicholas looked around him. They were still

surrounded by the magic plain bathed in moonlight and spangled with

stars.

"Zakhar is shouting that I should turn to the left, but why to the

left?" thought Nicholas. "Are we getting to the Melyukovs'? Is this

Melyukovka? Heaven only knows where we are going, and heaven knows what

is happening to us--but it is very strange and pleasant whatever it is."

And he looked round in the sleigh.

"Look, his mustache and eyelashes are all white!" said one of the

strange, pretty, unfamiliar people--the one with fine eyebrows and

mustache.

"I think this used to be Natasha," thought Nicholas, "and that was

Madame Schoss, but perhaps it's not, and this Circassian with the

mustache I don't know, but I love her."

"Aren't you cold?" he asked.

They did not answer but began to laugh. Dimmler from the sleigh behind

shouted something--probably something funny--but they could not make out

what he said.

"Yes, yes!" some voices answered, laughing.

"But here was a fairy forest with black moving shadows, and a glitter of

diamonds and a flight of marble steps and the silver roofs of fairy

buildings and the shrill yells of some animals. And if this is really

Melyukovka, it is still stranger that we drove heaven knows where and

have come to Melyukovka," thought Nicholas.

It really was Melyukovka, and maids and footmen with merry faces came

running, out to the porch carrying candles.

"Who is it?" asked someone in the porch.

"The mummers from the count's. I know by the horses," replied some

voices.

CHAPTER XI

Pelageya Danilovna Melyukova, a broadly built, energetic woman wearing

spectacles, sat in the drawing room in a loose dress, surrounded by her

daughters whom she was trying to keep from feeling dull. They were

quietly dropping melted wax into snow and looking at the shadows the wax

figures would throw on the wall, when they heard the steps and voices of

new arrivals in the vestibule.

Hussars, ladies, witches, clowns, and bears, after clearing their

throats and wiping the hoarfrost from their faces in the vestibule, came

into the ballroom where candles were hurriedly lighted. The clown--

Dimmler--and the lady--Nicholas--started a dance. Surrounded by the

screaming children the mummers, covering their faces and disguising

their voices, bowed to their hostess and arranged themselves about the

room.

"Dear me! there's no recognizing them! And Natasha! See whom she looks

like! She really reminds me of somebody. But Herr Dimmler--isn't he

good! I didn't know him! And how he dances. Dear me, there's a

Circassian. Really, how becoming it is to dear Sonya. And who is that?

Well, you have cheered us up! Nikita and Vanya--clear away the tables!

And we were sitting so quietly. Ha, ha, ha!... The hussar, the hussar!

Just like a boy! And the legs!... I can't look at him..." different

voices were saying.

Natasha, the young Melyukovs' favorite, disappeared with them into the

back rooms where a cork and various dressing gowns and male garments

were called for and received from the footman by bare girlish arms from

behind the door. Ten minutes later, all the young Melyukovs joined the

mummers.

Pelageya Danilovna, having given orders to clear the rooms for the

visitors and arranged about refreshments for the gentry and the serfs,

went about among the mummers without removing her spectacles, peering

into their faces with a suppressed smile and failing to recognize any of

them. It was not merely Dimmler and the Rostovs she failed to recognize,

she did not even recognize her own daughters, or her late husband's,

dressing gowns and uniforms, which they had put on.

"And who is this?" she asked her governess, peering into the face of her

own daughter dressed up as a Kazan-Tartar. "I suppose it is one of the

Rostovs! Well, Mr. Hussar, and what regiment do you serve in?" she asked

Natasha. "Here, hand some fruit jelly to the Turk!" she ordered the

butler who was handing things round. "That's not forbidden by his law."

Sometimes, as she looked at the strange but amusing capers cut by the

dancers, who--having decided once for all that being disguised, no one

would recognize them--were not at all shy, Pelageya Danilovna hid her

face in her handkerchief, and her whole stout body shook with

irrepressible, kindly, elderly laughter.

"My little Sasha! Look at Sasha!" she said.

After Russian country dances and chorus dances, Pelageya Danilovna made

the serfs and gentry join in one large circle: a ring, a string, and a

silver ruble were fetched and they all played games together.

In an hour, all the costumes were crumpled and disordered. The corked

eyebrows and mustaches were smeared over the perspiring, flushed, and

merry faces. Pelageya Danilovna began to recognize the mummers, admired

their cleverly contrived costumes, and particularly how they suited the

young ladies, and she thanked them all for having entertained her so

well. The visitors were invited to supper in the drawing room, and the

serfs had something served to them in the ballroom.

"Now to tell one's fortune in the empty bathhouse is frightening!" said

an old maid who lived with the Melyukovs, during supper.

"Why?" said the eldest Melyukov girl.

"You wouldn't go, it takes courage..."

"I'll go," said Sonya.

"Tell what happened to the young lady!" said the second Melyukov girl.

"Well," began the old maid, "a young lady once went out, took a cock,

laid the table for two, all properly, and sat down. After sitting a

while, she suddenly hears someone coming... a sleigh drives up with

harness bells; she hears him coming! He comes in, just in the shape of a

man, like an officer--comes in and sits down to table with her."

"Ah! ah!" screamed Natasha, rolling her eyes with horror.

"Yes? And how... did he speak?"

"Yes, like a man. Everything quite all right, and he began persuading

her; and she should have kept him talking till cockcrow, but she got

frightened, just got frightened and hid her face in her hands. Then he

caught her up. It was lucky the maids ran in just then..."

"Now, why frighten them?" said Pelageya Danilovna.

"Mamma, you used to try your fate yourself..." said her daughter.

"And how does one do it in a barn?" inquired Sonya.

"Well, say you went to the barn now, and listened. It depends on what

you hear; hammering and knocking--that's bad; but a sound of shifting

grain is good and one sometimes hears that, too."

"Mamma, tell us what happened to you in the barn."

Pelageya Danilovna smiled.

"Oh, I've forgotten..." she replied. "But none of you would go?"

"Yes, I will; Pelageya Danilovna, let me! I'll go," said Sonya.

"Well, why not, if you're not afraid?"

"Louisa Ivanovna, may I?" asked Sonya.

Whether they were playing the ring and string game or the ruble game or

talking as now, Nicholas did not leave Sonya's side, and gazed at her

with quite new eyes. It seemed to him that it was only today, thanks to

that burnt-cork mustache, that he had fully learned to know her. And

really, that evening, Sonya was brighter, more animated, and prettier

than Nicholas had ever seen her before.

"So that's what she is like; what a fool I have been!" he thought gazing

at her sparkling eyes, and under the mustache a happy rapturous smile

dimpled her cheeks, a smile he had never seen before.

"I'm not afraid of anything," said Sonya. "May I go at once?" She got

up.

They told her where the barn was and how she should stand and listen,

and they handed her a fur cloak. She threw this over her head and

shoulders and glanced at Nicholas.

"What a darling that girl is!" thought he. "And what have I been

thinking of till now?"

Sonya went out into the passage to go to the barn. Nicholas went hastily

to the front porch, saying he felt too hot. The crowd of people really

had made the house stuffy.

Outside, there was the same cold stillness and the same moon, but even

brighter than before. The light was so strong and the snow sparkled with

so many stars that one did not wish to look up at the sky and the real

stars were unnoticed. The sky was black and dreary, while the earth was

gay.

"I am a fool, a fool! what have I been waiting for?" thought Nicholas,

and running out from the porch he went round the corner of the house and

along the path that led to the back porch. He knew Sonya would pass that

way. Halfway lay some snow-covered piles of firewood and across and

along them a network of shadows from the bare old lime trees fell on the

snow and on the path. This path led to the barn. The log walls of the

barn and its snow-covered roof, that looked as if hewn out of some

precious stone, sparkled in the moonlight. A tree in the garden snapped

with the frost, and then all was again perfectly silent. His bosom

seemed to inhale not air but the strength of eternal youth and gladness.

From the back porch came the sound of feet descending the steps, the

bottom step upon which snow had fallen gave a ringing creak and he heard

the voice of an old maidservant saying, "Straight, straight, along the

path, Miss. Only, don't look back."

"I am not afraid," answered Sonya's voice, and along the path toward

Nicholas came the crunching, whistling sound of Sonya's feet in her thin

shoes.

Sonya came along, wrapped in her cloak. She was only a couple of paces

away when she saw him, and to her too he was not the Nicholas she had

known and always slightly feared. He was in a woman's dress, with

tousled hair and a happy smile new to Sonya. She ran rapidly toward him.

"Quite different and yet the same," thought Nicholas, looking at her

face all lit up by the moonlight. He slipped his arms under the cloak

that covered her head, embraced her, pressed her to him, and kissed her

on the lips that wore a mustache and had a smell of burnt cork. Sonya

kissed him full on the lips, and disengaging her little hands pressed

them to his cheeks.

"Sonya!... Nicholas!"... was all they said. They ran to the barn and

then back again, re-entering, he by the front and she by the back porch.

CHAPTER XII

When they all drove back from Pelageya Danilovna's, Natasha, who always

saw and noticed everything, arranged that she and Madame Schoss should

go back in the sleigh with Dimmler, and Sonya with Nicholas and the

maids.

On the way back Nicholas drove at a steady pace instead of racing and

kept peering by that fantastic all-transforming light into Sonya's face

and searching beneath the eyebrows and mustache for his former and his

present Sonya from whom he had resolved never to be parted again. He

looked and recognizing in her both the old and the new Sonya, and being

reminded by the smell of burnt cork of the sensation of her kiss,

inhaled the frosty air with a full breast and, looking at the ground

flying beneath him and at the sparkling sky, felt himself again in

fairyland.

"Sonya, is it well with thee?" he asked from time to time.

"Yes!" she replied. "And with thee?"

When halfway home Nicholas handed the reins to the coachman and ran for

a moment to Natasha's sleigh and stood on its wing.

"Natasha!" he whispered in French, "do you know I have made up my mind

about Sonya?"

"Have you told her?" asked Natasha, suddenly beaming all over with joy.

"Oh, how strange you are with that mustache and those eyebrows!...

Natasha--are you glad?"

"I am so glad, so glad! I was beginning to be vexed with you. I did not

tell you, but you have been treating her badly. What a heart she has,

Nicholas! I am horrid sometimes, but I was ashamed to be happy while

Sonya was not," continued Natasha. "Now I am so glad! Well, run back to

her."

"No, wait a bit.... Oh, how funny you look!" cried Nicholas, peering

into her face and finding in his sister too something new, unusual, and

bewitchingly tender that he had not seen in her before. "Natasha, it's

magical, isn't it?"

"Yes," she replied. "You have done splendidly."

"Had I seen her before as she is now," thought Nicholas, "I should long

ago have asked her what to do and have done whatever she told me, and

all would have been well."

"So you are glad and I have done right?"

"Oh, quite right! I had a quarrel with Mamma some time ago about it.

Mamma said she was angling for you. How could she say such a thing! I

nearly stormed at Mamma. I will never let anyone say anything bad of

Sonya, for there is nothing but good in her."

"Then it's all right?" said Nicholas, again scrutinizing the expression

of his sister's face to see if she was in earnest. Then he jumped down

and, his boots scrunching the snow, ran back to his sleigh. The same

happy, smiling Circassian, with mustache and beaming eyes looking up

from under a sable hood, was still sitting there, and that Circassian

was Sonya, and that Sonya was certainly his future happy and loving

wife.

When they reached home and had told their mother how they had spent the

evening at the Melyukovs', the girls went to their bedroom. When they

had undressed, but without washing off the cork mustaches, they sat a

long time talking of their happiness. They talked of how they would live

when they were married, how their husbands would be friends, and how

happy they would be. On Natasha's table stood two looking glasses which

Dunyasha had prepared beforehand.

"Only when will all that be? I am afraid never.... It would be too

good!" said Natasha, rising and going to the looking glasses.

"Sit down, Natasha; perhaps you'll see him," said Sonya.

Natasha lit the candles, one on each side of one of the looking glasses,

and sat down.

"I see someone with a mustache," said Natasha, seeing her own face.

"You mustn't laugh, Miss," said Dunyasha.

With Sonya's help and the maid's, Natasha got the glass she held into

the right position opposite the other; her face assumed a serious

expression and she sat silent. She sat a long time looking at the

receding line of candles reflected in the glasses and expecting (from

tales she had heard) to see a coffin, or him, Prince Andrew, in that

last dim, indistinctly outlined square. But ready as she was to take the

smallest speck for the image of a man or of a coffin, she saw nothing.

She began blinking rapidly and moved away from the looking glasses.

"Why is it others see things and I don't?" she said. "You sit down now,

Sonya. You absolutely must, tonight! Do it for me.... Today I feel so

frightened!"

Sonya sat down before the glasses, got the right position, and began

looking.

"Now, Miss Sonya is sure to see something," whispered Dunyasha; "while

you do nothing but laugh."

Sonya heard this and Natasha's whisper:

"I know she will. She saw something last year."

For about three minutes all were silent.

"Of course she will!" whispered Natasha, but did not finish... suddenly

Sonya pushed away the glass she was holding and covered her eyes with

her hand.

"Oh, Natasha!" she cried.

"Did you see? Did you? What was it?" exclaimed Natasha, holding up the

looking glass.

Sonya had not seen anything, she was just wanting to blink and to get up

when she heard Natasha say, "Of course she will!" She did not wish to

disappoint either Dunyasha or Natasha, but it was hard to sit still. She

did not herself know how or why the exclamation escaped her when she

covered her eyes.

"You saw him?" urged Natasha, seizing her hand.

"Yes. Wait a bit... I... saw him," Sonya could not help saying, not yet

knowing whom Natasha meant by him, Nicholas or Prince Andrew.

"But why shouldn't I say I saw something? Others do see! Besides who can

tell whether I saw anything or not?" flashed through Sonya's mind.

"Yes, I saw him," she said.

"How? Standing or lying?"

"No, I saw... At first there was nothing, then I saw him lying down."

"Andrew lying? Is he ill?" asked Natasha, her frightened eyes fixed on

her friend.

"No, on the contrary, on the contrary! His face was cheerful, and he

turned to me." And when saying this she herself fancied she had really

seen what she described.

"Well, and then, Sonya?..."

"After that, I could not make out what there was; something blue and

red..."

"Sonya! When will he come back? When shall I see him! O, God, how afraid

I am for him and for myself and about everything!..." Natasha began, and

without replying to Sonya's words of comfort she got into bed, and long

after her candle was out lay open-eyed and motionless, gazing at the

moonlight through the frosty windowpanes.

CHAPTER XIII

Soon after the Christmas holidays Nicholas told his mother of his love

for Sonya and of his firm resolve to marry her. The countess, who had

long noticed what was going on between them and was expecting this

declaration, listened to him in silence and then told her son that he

might marry whom he pleased, but that neither she nor his father would

give their blessing to such a marriage. Nicholas, for the first time,

felt that his mother was displeased with him and that, despite her love

for him, she would not give way. Coldly, without looking at her son, she

sent for her husband and, when he came, tried briefly and coldly to

inform him of the facts, in her son's presence, but unable to restrain

herself she burst into tears of vexation and left the room. The old

count began irresolutely to admonish Nicholas and beg him to abandon his

purpose. Nicholas replied that he could not go back on his word, and his

father, sighing and evidently disconcerted, very soon became silent and

went in to the countess. In all his encounters with his son, the count

was always conscious of his own guilt toward him for having wasted the

family fortune, and so he could not be angry with him for refusing to

marry an heiress and choosing the dowerless Sonya. On this occasion, he

was only more vividly conscious of the fact that if his affairs had not

been in disorder, no better wife for Nicholas than Sonya could have been

wished for, and that no one but himself with his Mitenka and his

uncomfortable habits was to blame for the condition of the family

finances.

The father and mother did not speak of the matter to their son again,

but a few days later the countess sent for Sonya and, with a cruelty

neither of them expected, reproached her niece for trying to catch

Nicholas and for ingratitude. Sonya listened silently with downcast eyes

to the countess' cruel words, without understanding what was required of

her. She was ready to sacrifice everything for her benefactors. Self-

sacrifice was her most cherished idea but in this case she could not see

what she ought to sacrifice, or for whom. She could not help loving the

countess and the whole Rostov family, but neither could she help loving

Nicholas and knowing that his happiness depended on that love. She was

silent and sad and did not reply. Nicholas felt the situation to be

intolerable and went to have an explanation with his mother. He first

implored her to forgive him and Sonya and consent to their marriage,

then he threatened that if she molested Sonya he would at once marry her

secretly.

The countess, with a coldness her son had never seen in her before,

replied that he was of age, that Prince Andrew was marrying without his

father's consent, and he could do the same, but that she would never

receive that intriguer as her daughter.

Exploding at the word intriguer, Nicholas, raising his voice, told his

mother he had never expected her to try to force him to sell his

feelings, but if that were so, he would say for the last time.... But he

had no time to utter the decisive word which the expression of his face

caused his mother to await with terror, and which would perhaps have

forever remained a cruel memory to them both. He had not time to say it,

for Natasha, with a pale and set face, entered the room from the door at

which she had been listening.

"Nicholas, you are talking nonsense! Be quiet, be quiet, be quiet, I

tell you!..." she almost screamed, so as to drown his voice.

"Mamma darling, it's not at all so... my poor, sweet darling," she said

to her mother, who conscious that they had been on the brink of a

rupture gazed at her son with terror, but in the obstinacy and

excitement of the conflict could not and would not give way.

"Nicholas, I'll explain to you. Go away! Listen, Mamma darling," said

Natasha.

Her words were incoherent, but they attained the purpose at which she

was aiming.

The countess, sobbing heavily, hid her face on her daughter's breast,

while Nicholas rose, clutching his head, and left the room.

Natasha set to work to effect a reconciliation, and so far succeeded

that Nicholas received a promise from his mother that Sonya should not

be troubled, while he on his side promised not to undertake anything

without his parents' knowledge.

Firmly resolved, after putting his affairs in order in the regiment, to

retire from the army and return and marry Sonya, Nicholas, serious,

sorrowful, and at variance with his parents, but, as it seemed to him,

passionately in love, left at the beginning of January to rejoin his

regiment.

After Nicholas had gone things in the Rostov household were more

depressing than ever, and the countess fell ill from mental agitation.

Sonya was unhappy at the separation from Nicholas and still more so on

account of the hostile tone the countess could not help adopting toward

her. The count was more perturbed than ever by the condition of his

affairs, which called for some decisive action. Their town house and

estate near Moscow had inevitably to be sold, and for this they had to

go to Moscow. But the countess' health obliged them to delay their

departure from day to day.

Natasha, who had borne the first period of separation from her betrothed

lightly and even cheerfully, now grew more agitated and impatient every

day. The thought that her best days, which she would have employed in

loving him, were being vainly wasted, with no advantage to anyone,

tormented her incessantly. His letters for the most part irritated her.

It hurt her to think that while she lived only in the thought of him, he

was living a real life, seeing new places and new people that interested

him. The more interesting his letters were the more vexed she felt. Her

letters to him, far from giving her any comfort, seemed to her a

wearisome and artificial obligation. She could not write, because she

could not conceive the possibility of expressing sincerely in a letter

even a thousandth part of what she expressed by voice, smile, and

glance. She wrote to him formal, monotonous, and dry letters, to which

she attached no importance herself, and in the rough copies of which the

countess corrected her mistakes in spelling.

There was still no improvement in the countess' health, but it was

impossible to defer the journey to Moscow any longer. Natasha's

trousseau had to be ordered and the house sold. Moreover, Prince Andrew

was expected in Moscow, where old Prince Bolkonski was spending the

winter, and Natasha felt sure he had already arrived.

So the countess remained in the country, and the count, taking Sonya and

Natasha with him, went to Moscow at the end of January.

BOOK EIGHT: 1811 - 12

CHAPTER I

After Prince Andrew's engagement to Natasha, Pierre without any apparent

cause suddenly felt it impossible to go on living as before. Firmly

convinced as he was of the truths revealed to him by his benefactor, and

happy as he had been in perfecting his inner man, to which he had

devoted himself with such ardor--all the zest of such a life vanished

after the engagement of Andrew and Natasha and the death of Joseph

Alexeevich, the news of which reached him almost at the same time. Only

the skeleton of life remained: his house, a brilliant wife who now

enjoyed the favors of a very important personage, acquaintance with all

Petersburg, and his court service with its dull formalities. And this

life suddenly seemed to Pierre unexpectedly loathsome. He ceased keeping

a diary, avoided the company of the Brothers, began going to the club

again, drank a great deal, and came once more in touch with the bachelor

sets, leading such a life that the Countess Helene thought it necessary

to speak severely to him about it. Pierre felt that she was right, and

to avoid compromising her went away to Moscow.

In Moscow as soon as he entered his huge house in which the faded and

fading princesses still lived, with its enormous retinue; as soon as,

driving through the town, he saw the Iberian shrine with innumerable

tapers burning before the golden covers of the icons, the Kremlin Square

with its snow undisturbed by vehicles, the sleigh drivers and hovels of

the Sivtsev Vrazhok, those old Moscovites who desired nothing, hurried

nowhere, and were ending their days leisurely; when he saw those old

Moscow ladies, the Moscow balls, and the English Club, he felt himself

at home in a quiet haven. In Moscow he felt at peace, at home, warm and

dirty as in an old dressing gown.

Moscow society, from the old women down to the children, received Pierre

like a long-expected guest whose place was always ready awaiting him.

For Moscow society Pierre was the nicest, kindest, most intellectual,

merriest, and most magnanimous of cranks, a heedless, genial nobleman of

the old Russian type. His purse was always empty because it was open to

everyone.

Benefit performances, poor pictures, statues, benevolent societies,

gypsy choirs, schools, subscription dinners, sprees, Freemasons,

churches, and books--no one and nothing met with a refusal from him, and

had it not been for two friends who had borrowed large sums from him and

taken him under their protection, he would have given everything away.

There was never a dinner or soiree at the club without him. As soon as

he sank into his place on the sofa after two bottles of Margaux he was

surrounded, and talking, disputing, and joking began. When there were

quarrels, his kindly smile and well-timed jests reconciled the

antagonists. The masonic dinners were dull and dreary when he was not

there.

When after a bachelor supper he rose with his amiable and kindly smile,

yielding to the entreaties of the festive company to drive off somewhere

with them, shouts of delight and triumph arose among the young men. At

balls he danced if a partner was needed. Young ladies, married and

unmarried, liked him because without making love to any of them, he was

equally amiable to all, especially after supper. "Il est charmant; il

n'a pas de sexe," \* they said of him.

\* "He is charming; he has no sex."

Pierre was one of those retired gentlemen-in-waiting of whom there were

hundreds good-humoredly ending their days in Moscow.

How horrified he would have been seven years before, when he first

arrived from abroad, had he been told that there was no need for him to

seek or plan anything, that his rut had long been shaped, eternally

predetermined, and that wriggle as he might, he would be what all in his

position were. He could not have believed it! Had he not at one time

longed with all his heart to establish a republic in Russia; then

himself to be a Napoleon; then to be a philosopher; and then a

strategist and the conqueror of Napoleon? Had he not seen the

possibility of, and passionately desired, the regeneration of the sinful

human race, and his own progress to the highest degree of perfection?

Had he not established schools and hospitals and liberated his serfs?

But instead of all that--here he was, the wealthy husband of an

unfaithful wife, a retired gentleman-in-waiting, fond of eating and

drinking and, as he unbuttoned his waistcoat, of abusing the government

a bit, a member of the Moscow English Club, and a universal favorite in

Moscow society. For a long time he could not reconcile himself to the

idea that he was one of those same retired Moscow gentlemen-in-waiting

he had so despised seven years before.

Sometimes he consoled himself with the thought that he was only living

this life temporarily; but then he was shocked by the thought of how

many, like himself, had entered that life and that club temporarily,

with all their teeth and hair, and had only left it when not a single

tooth or hair remained.

In moments of pride, when he thought of his position it seemed to him

that he was quite different and distinct from those other retired

gentlemen-in-waiting he had formerly despised: they were empty, stupid,

contented fellows, satisfied with their position, "while I am still

discontented and want to do something for mankind. But perhaps all these

comrades of mine struggled just like me and sought something new, a path

in life of their own, and like me were brought by force of

circumstances, society, and race--by that elemental force against which

man is powerless--to the condition I am in," said he to himself in

moments of humility; and after living some time in Moscow he no longer

despised, but began to grow fond of, to respect, and to pity his

comrades in destiny, as he pitied himself.

Pierre no longer suffered moments of despair, hypochondria, and disgust

with life, but the malady that had formerly found expression in such

acute attacks was driven inwards and never left him for a moment. "What

for? Why? What is going on in the world?" he would ask himself in

perplexity several times a day, involuntarily beginning to reflect anew

on the meaning of the phenomena of life; but knowing by experience that

there were no answers to these questions he made haste to turn away from

them, and took up a book, or hurried off to the club or to Apollon

Nikolaevich's, to exchange the gossip of the town.

"Helene, who has never cared for anything but her own body and is one of

the stupidest women in the world," thought Pierre, "is regarded by

people as the acme of intelligence and refinement, and they pay homage

to her. Napoleon Bonaparte was despised by all as long as he was great,

but now that he has become a wretched comedian the Emperor Francis wants

to offer him his daughter in an illegal marriage. The Spaniards, through

the Catholic clergy, offer praise to God for their victory over the

French on the fourteenth of June, and the French, also through the

Catholic clergy, offer praise because on that same fourteenth of June

they defeated the Spaniards. My brother Masons swear by the blood that

they are ready to sacrifice everything for their neighbor, but they do

not give a ruble each to the collections for the poor, and they

intrigue, the Astraea Lodge against the Manna Seekers, and fuss about an

authentic Scotch carpet and a charter that nobody needs, and the meaning

of which the very man who wrote it does not understand. We all profess

the Christian law of forgiveness of injuries and love of our neighbors,

the law in honor of which we have built in Moscow forty times forty

churches--but yesterday a deserter was knouted to death and a minister

of that same law of love and forgiveness, a priest, gave the soldier a

cross to kiss before his execution." So thought Pierre, and the whole of

this general deception which everyone accepts, accustomed as he was to

it, astonished him each time as if it were something new. "I understand

the deception and confusion," he thought, "but how am I to tell them all

that I see? I have tried, and have always found that they too in the

depths of their souls understand it as I do, and only try not to see it.

So it appears that it must be so! But I--what is to become of me?"

thought he. He had the unfortunate capacity many men, especially

Russians, have of seeing and believing in the possibility of goodness

and truth, but of seeing the evil and falsehood of life too clearly to

be able to take a serious part in it. Every sphere of work was

connected, in his eyes, with evil and deception. Whatever he tried to

be, whatever he engaged in, the evil and falsehood of it repulsed him

and blocked every path of activity. Yet he had to live and to find

occupation. It was too dreadful to be under the burden of these

insoluble problems, so he abandoned himself to any distraction in order

to forget them. He frequented every kind of society, drank much, bought

pictures, engaged in building, and above all--read.

He read, and read everything that came to hand. On coming home, while

his valets were still taking off his things, he picked up a book and

began to read. From reading he passed to sleeping, from sleeping to

gossip in drawing rooms of the club, from gossip to carousals and women;

from carousals back to gossip, reading, and wine. Drinking became more

and more a physical and also a moral necessity. Though the doctors

warned him that with his corpulence wine was dangerous for him, he drank

a great deal. He was only quite at ease when having poured several

glasses of wine mechanically into his large mouth he felt a pleasant

warmth in his body, an amiability toward all his fellows, and a

readiness to respond superficially to every idea without probing it

deeply. Only after emptying a bottle or two did he feel dimly that the

terribly tangled skein of life which previously had terrified him was

not as dreadful as he had thought. He was always conscious of some

aspect of that skein, as with a buzzing in his head after dinner or

supper he chatted or listened to conversation or read. But under the

influence of wine he said to himself: "It doesn't matter. I'll get it

unraveled. I have a solution ready, but have no time now--I'll think it

all out later on!" But the later on never came.

In the morning, on an empty stomach, all the old questions appeared as

insoluble and terrible as ever, and Pierre hastily picked up a book, and

if anyone came to see him he was glad.

Sometimes he remembered how he had heard that soldiers in war when

entrenched under the enemy's fire, if they have nothing to do, try hard

to find some occupation the more easily to bear the danger. To Pierre

all men seemed like those soldiers, seeking refuge from life: some in

ambition, some in cards, some in framing laws, some in women, some in

toys, some in horses, some in politics, some in sport, some in wine, and

some in governmental affairs. "Nothing is trivial, and nothing is

important, it's all the same--only to save oneself from it as best one

can," thought Pierre. "Only not to see it, that dreadful it!"

CHAPTER II

At the beginning of winter Prince Nicholas Bolkonski and his daughter

moved to Moscow. At that time enthusiasm for the Emperor Alexander's

regime had weakened and a patriotic and anti-French tendency prevailed

there, and this, together with his past and his intellect and his

originality, at once made Prince Nicholas Bolkonski an object of

particular respect to the Moscovites and the center of the Moscow

opposition to the government.

The prince had aged very much that year. He showed marked signs of

senility by a tendency to fall asleep, forgetfulness of quite recent

events, remembrance of remote ones, and the childish vanity with which

he accepted the role of head of the Moscow opposition. In spite of this

the old man inspired in all his visitors alike a feeling of respectful

veneration--especially of an evening when he came in to tea in his old-

fashioned coat and powdered wig and, aroused by anyone, told his abrupt

stories of the past, or uttered yet more abrupt and scathing criticisms

of the present. For them all, that old-fashioned house with its gigantic

mirrors, pre-Revolution furniture, powdered footmen, and the stern

shrewd old man (himself a relic of the past century) with his gentle

daughter and the pretty Frenchwoman who were reverently devoted to him

presented a majestic and agreeable spectacle. But the visitors did not

reflect that besides the couple of hours during which they saw their

host, there were also twenty-two hours in the day during which the

private and intimate life of the house continued.

Latterly that private life had become very trying for Princess Mary.

There in Moscow she was deprived of her greatest pleasures--talks with

the pilgrims and the solitude which refreshed her at Bald Hills--and she

had none of the advantages and pleasures of city life. She did not go

out into society; everyone knew that her father would not let her go

anywhere without him, and his failing health prevented his going out

himself, so that she was not invited to dinners and evening parties. She

had quite abandoned the hope of getting married. She saw the coldness

and malevolence with which the old prince received and dismissed the

young men, possible suitors, who sometimes appeared at their house. She

had no friends: during this visit to Moscow she had been disappointed in

the two who had been nearest to her. Mademoiselle Bourienne, with whom

she had never been able to be quite frank, had now become unpleasant to

her, and for various reasons Princess Mary avoided her. Julie, with whom

she had corresponded for the last five years, was in Moscow, but proved

to be quite alien to her when they met. Just then Julie, who by the

death of her brothers had become one of the richest heiresses in Moscow,

was in the full whirl of society pleasures. She was surrounded by young

men who, she fancied, had suddenly learned to appreciate her worth.

Julie was at that stage in the life of a society woman when she feels

that her last chance of marrying has come and that her fate must be

decided now or never. On Thursdays Princess Mary remembered with a

mournful smile that she now had no one to write to, since Julie--whose

presence gave her no pleasure was here and they met every week. Like the

old emigre who declined to marry the lady with whom he had spent his

evenings for years, she regretted Julie's presence and having no one to

write to. In Moscow Princess Mary had no one to talk to, no one to whom

to confide her sorrow, and much sorrow fell to her lot just then. The

time for Prince Andrew's return and marriage was approaching, but his

request to her to prepare his father for it had not been carried out; in

fact, it seemed as if matters were quite hopeless, for at every mention

of the young Countess Rostova the old prince (who apart from that was

usually in a bad temper) lost control of himself. Another lately added

sorrow arose from the lessons she gave her six year-old nephew. To her

consternation she detected in herself in relation to little Nicholas

some symptoms of her father's irritability. However often she told

herself that she must not get irritable when teaching her nephew, almost

every time that, pointer in hand, she sat down to show him the French

alphabet, she so longed to pour her own knowledge quickly and easily

into the child--who was already afraid that Auntie might at any moment

get angry--that at his slightest inattention she trembled, became

flustered and heated, raised her voice, and sometimes pulled him by the

arm and put him in the corner. Having put him in the corner she would

herself begin to cry over her cruel, evil nature, and little Nicholas,

following her example, would sob, and without permission would leave his

corner, come to her, pull her wet hands from her face, and comfort her.

But what distressed the princess most of all was her father's

irritability, which was always directed against her and had of late

amounted to cruelty. Had he forced her to prostrate herself to the

ground all night, had he beaten her or made her fetch wood or water, it

would never have entered her mind to think her position hard; but this

loving despot--the more cruel because he loved her and for that reason

tormented himself and her--knew how not merely to hurt and humiliate her

deliberately, but to show her that she was always to blame for

everything. Of late he had exhibited a new trait that tormented Princess

Mary more than anything else; this was his ever-increasing intimacy with

Mademoiselle Bourienne. The idea that at the first moment of receiving

the news of his son's intentions had occurred to him in jest--that if

Andrew got married he himself would marry Bourienne--had evidently

pleased him, and latterly he had persistently, and as it seemed to

Princess Mary merely to offend her, shown special endearments to the

companion and expressed his dissatisfaction with his daughter by

demonstrations of love of Bourienne.

One day in Moscow in Princess Mary's presence (she thought her father

did it purposely when she was there) the old prince kissed Mademoiselle

Bourienne's hand and, drawing her to him, embraced her affectionately.

Princess Mary flushed and ran out of the room. A few minutes later

Mademoiselle Bourienne came into Princess Mary's room smiling and making

cheerful remarks in her agreeable voice. Princess Mary hastily wiped

away her tears, went resolutely up to Mademoiselle Bourienne, and

evidently unconscious of what she was doing began shouting in angry

haste at the Frenchwoman, her voice breaking: "It's horrible, vile,

inhuman, to take advantage of the weakness..." She did not finish.

"Leave my room," she exclaimed, and burst into sobs.

Next day the prince did not say a word to his daughter, but she noticed

that at dinner he gave orders that Mademoiselle Bourienne should be

served first. After dinner, when the footman handed coffee and from

habit began with the princess, the prince suddenly grew furious, threw

his stick at Philip, and instantly gave instructions to have him

conscripted for the army.

"He doesn't obey... I said it twice... and he doesn't obey! She is the

first person in this house; she's my best friend," cried the prince.

"And if you allow yourself," he screamed in a fury, addressing Princess

Mary for the first time, "to forget yourself again before her as you

dared to do yesterday, I will show you who is master in this house. Go!

Don't let me set eyes on you; beg her pardon!"

Princess Mary asked Mademoiselle Bourienne's pardon, and also her

father's pardon for herself and for Philip the footman, who had begged

for her intervention.

At such moments something like a pride of sacrifice gathered in her

soul. And suddenly that father whom she had judged would look for his

spectacles in her presence, fumbling near them and not seeing them, or

would forget something that had just occurred, or take a false step with

his failing legs and turn to see if anyone had noticed his feebleness,

or, worst of all, at dinner when there were no visitors to excite him

would suddenly fall asleep, letting his napkin drop and his shaking head

sink over his plate. "He is old and feeble, and I dare to condemn him!"

she thought at such moments, with a feeling of revulsion against

herself.

CHAPTER III

In 1811 there was living in Moscow a French doctor--Metivier--who had

rapidly become the fashion. He was enormously tall, handsome, amiable as

Frenchmen are, and was, as all Moscow said, an extraordinarily clever

doctor. He was received in the best houses not merely as a doctor, but

as an equal.

Prince Nicholas had always ridiculed medicine, but latterly on

Mademoiselle Bourienne's advice had allowed this doctor to visit him and

had grown accustomed to him. Metivier came to see the prince about twice

a week.

On December 6--St. Nicholas' Day and the prince's name day--all Moscow

came to the prince's front door but he gave orders to admit no one and

to invite to dinner only a small number, a list of whom he gave to

Princess Mary.

Metivier, who came in the morning with his felicitations, considered it

proper in his quality of doctor de forcer la consigne, \* as he told

Princess Mary, and went in to see the prince. It happened that on that

morning of his name day the prince was in one of his worst moods. He had

been going about the house all the morning finding fault with everyone

and pretending not to understand what was said to him and not to be

understood himself. Princess Mary well knew this mood of quiet absorbed

querulousness, which generally culminated in a burst of rage, and she

went about all that morning as though facing a cocked and loaded gun and

awaited the inevitable explosion. Until the doctor's arrival the morning

had passed off safely. After admitting the doctor, Princess Mary sat

down with a book in the drawing room near the door through which she

could hear all that passed in the study.

\* To force the guard.

At first she heard only Metivier's voice, then her father's, then both

voices began speaking at the same time, the door was flung open, and on

the threshold appeared the handsome figure of the terrified Metivier

with his shock of black hair, and the prince in his dressing gown and

fez, his face distorted with fury and the pupils of his eyes rolled

downwards.

"You don't understand?" shouted the prince, "but I do! French spy, slave

of Buonaparte, spy, get out of my house! Be off, I tell you..."

Metivier, shrugging his shoulders, went up to Mademoiselle Bourienne who

at the sound of shouting had run in from an adjoining room.

"The prince is not very well: bile and rush of blood to the head. Keep

calm, I will call again tomorrow," said Metivier; and putting his

fingers to his lips he hastened away.

Through the study door came the sound of slippered feet and the cry:

"Spies, traitors, traitors everywhere! Not a moment's peace in my own

house!"

After Metivier's departure the old prince called his daughter in, and

the whole weight of his wrath fell on her. She was to blame that a spy

had been admitted. Had he not told her, yes, told her to make a list,

and not to admit anyone who was not on that list? Then why was that

scoundrel admitted? She was the cause of it all. With her, he said, he

could not have a moment's peace and could not die quietly.

"No, ma'am! We must part, we must part! Understand that, understand it!

I cannot endure any more," he said, and left the room. Then, as if

afraid she might find some means of consolation, he returned and trying

to appear calm added: "And don't imagine I have said this in a moment of

anger. I am calm. I have thought it over, and it will be carried out--we

must part; so find some place for yourself...." But he could not

restrain himself and with the virulence of which only one who loves is

capable, evidently suffering himself, he shook his fists at her and

screamed:

"If only some fool would marry her!" Then he slammed the door, sent for

Mademoiselle Bourienne, and subsided into his study.

At two o'clock the six chosen guests assembled for dinner.

These guests--the famous Count Rostopchin, Prince Lopukhin with his

nephew, General Chatrov an old war comrade of the prince's, and of the

younger generation Pierre and Boris Drubetskoy--awaited the prince in

the drawing room.

Boris, who had come to Moscow on leave a few days before, had been

anxious to be presented to Prince Nicholas Bolkonski, and had contrived

to ingratiate himself so well that the old prince in his case made an

exception to the rule of not receiving bachelors in his house.

The prince's house did not belong to what is known as fashionable

society, but his little circle--though not much talked about in town--

was one it was more flattering to be received in than any other. Boris

had realized this the week before when the commander-in-chief in his

presence invited Rostopchin to dinner on St. Nicholas' Day, and

Rostopchin had replied that he could not come:

"On that day I always go to pay my devotions to the relics of Prince

Nicholas Bolkonski."

"Oh, yes, yes!" replied the commander-in-chief. "How is he?..."

The small group that assembled before dinner in the lofty old-fashioned

drawing room with its old furniture resembled the solemn gathering of a

court of justice. All were silent or talked in low tones. Prince

Nicholas came in serious and taciturn. Princess Mary seemed even quieter

and more diffident than usual. The guests were reluctant to address her,

feeling that she was in no mood for their conversation. Count Rostopchin

alone kept the conversation going, now relating the latest town news,

and now the latest political gossip.

Lopukhin and the old general occasionally took part in the conversation.

Prince Bolkonski listened as a presiding judge receives a report, only

now and then, silently or by a brief word, showing that he took heed of

what was being reported to him. The tone of the conversation was such as

indicated that no one approved of what was being done in the political

world. Incidents were related evidently confirming the opinion that

everything was going from bad to worse, but whether telling a story or

giving an opinion the speaker always stopped, or was stopped, at the

point beyond which his criticism might touch the sovereign himself.

At dinner the talk turned on the latest political news: Napoleon's

seizure of the Duke of Oldenburg's territory, and the Russian Note,

hostile to Napoleon, which had been sent to all the European courts.

"Bonaparte treats Europe as a pirate does a captured vessel," said Count

Rostopchin, repeating a phrase he had uttered several times before. "One

only wonders at the long-suffering or blindness of the crowned heads.

Now the Pope's turn has come and Bonaparte doesn't scruple to depose the

head of the Catholic Church--yet all keep silent! Our sovereign alone

has protested against the seizure of the Duke of Oldenburg's territory,

and even..." Count Rostopchin paused, feeling that he had reached the

limit beyond which censure was impossible.

"Other territories have been offered in exchange for the Duchy of

Oldenburg," said Prince Bolkonski. "He shifts the Dukes about as I might

move my serfs from Bald Hills to Bogucharovo or my Ryazan estates."

"The Duke of Oldenburg bears his misfortunes with admirable strength of

character and resignation," remarked Boris, joining in respectfully.

He said this because on his journey from Petersburg he had had the honor

of being presented to the Duke. Prince Bolkonski glanced at the young

man as if about to say something in reply, but changed his mind,

evidently considering him too young.

"I have read our protests about the Oldenburg affair and was surprised

how badly the Note was worded," remarked Count Rostopchin in the casual

tone of a man dealing with a subject quite familiar to him.

Pierre looked at Rostopchin with naive astonishment, not understanding

why he should be disturbed by the bad composition of the Note.

"Does it matter, Count, how the Note is worded," he asked, "so long as

its substance is forcible?"

"My dear fellow, with our five hundred thousand troops it should be easy

to have a good style," returned Count Rostopchin.

Pierre now understood the count's dissatisfaction with the wording of

the Note.

"One would have thought quill drivers enough had sprung up," remarked

the old prince. "There in Petersburg they are always writing--not notes

only but even new laws. My Andrew there has written a whole volume of

laws for Russia. Nowadays they are always writing!" and he laughed

unnaturally.

There was a momentary pause in the conversation; the old general cleared

his throat to draw attention.

"Did you hear of the last event at the review in Petersburg? The figure

cut by the new French ambassador."

"Eh? Yes, I heard something: he said something awkward in His Majesty's

presence."

"His Majesty drew attention to the Grenadier division and to the march

past," continued the general, "and it seems the ambassador took no

notice and allowed himself to reply that: 'We in France pay no attention

to such trifles!' The Emperor did not condescend to reply. At the next

review, they say, the Emperor did not once deign to address him."

All were silent. On this fact relating to the Emperor personally, it was

impossible to pass any judgment.

"Impudent fellows!" said the prince. "You know Metivier? I turned him

out of my house this morning. He was here; they admitted him in spite of

my request that they should let no one in," he went on, glancing angrily

at his daughter.

And he narrated his whole conversation with the French doctor and the

reasons that convinced him that Metivier was a spy. Though these reasons

were very insufficient and obscure, no one made any rejoinder.

After the roast, champagne was served. The guests rose to congratulate

the old prince. Princess Mary, too, went round to him.

He gave her a cold, angry look and offered her his wrinkled, clean-

shaven cheek to kiss. The whole expression of his face told her that he

had not forgotten the morning's talk, that his decision remained in

force, and only the presence of visitors hindered his speaking of it to

her now.

When they went into the drawing room where coffee was served, the old

men sat together.

Prince Nicholas grew more animated and expressed his views on the

impending war.

He said that our wars with Bonaparte would be disastrous so long as we

sought alliances with the Germans and thrust ourselves into European

affairs, into which we had been drawn by the Peace of Tilsit. "We ought

not to fight either for or against Austria. Our political interests are

all in the East, and in regard to Bonaparte the only thing is to have an

armed frontier and a firm policy, and he will never dare to cross the

Russian frontier, as was the case in 1807!"

"How can we fight the French, Prince?" said Count Rostopchin. "Can we

arm ourselves against our teachers and divinities? Look at our youths,

look at our ladies! The French are our Gods: Paris is our Kingdom of

Heaven."

He began speaking louder, evidently to be heard by everyone.

"French dresses, French ideas, French feelings! There now, you turned

Metivier out by the scruff of his neck because he is a Frenchman and a

scoundrel, but our ladies crawl after him on their knees. I went to a

party last night, and there out of five ladies three were Roman

Catholics and had the Pope's indulgence for doing woolwork on Sundays.

And they themselves sit there nearly naked, like the signboards at our

Public Baths if I may say so. Ah, when one looks at our young people,

Prince, one would like to take Peter the Great's old cudgel out of the

museum and belabor them in the Russian way till all the nonsense jumps

out of them."

All were silent. The old prince looked at Rostopchin with a smile and

wagged his head approvingly.

"Well, good-by, your excellency, keep well!" said Rostopchin, getting up

with characteristic briskness and holding out his hand to the prince.

"Good-bye, my dear fellow.... His words are music, I never tire of

hearing him!" said the old prince, keeping hold of the hand and offering

his cheek to be kissed.

Following Rostopchin's example the others also rose.

CHAPTER IV

Princess Mary as she sat listening to the old men's talk and

faultfinding, understood nothing of what she heard; she only wondered

whether the guests had all observed her father's hostile attitude toward

her. She did not even notice the special attentions and amiabilities

shown her during dinner by Boris Drubetskoy, who was visiting them for

the third time already.

Princess Mary turned with absent-minded questioning look to Pierre, who

hat in hand and with a smile on his face was the last of the guests to

approach her after the old prince had gone out and they were left alone

in the drawing room.

"May I stay a little longer?" he said, letting his stout body sink into

an armchair beside her.

"Oh yes," she answered. "You noticed nothing?" her look asked.

Pierre was in an agreeable after-dinner mood. He looked straight before

him and smiled quietly.

"Have you known that young man long, Princess?" he asked.

"Who?"

"Drubetskoy."

"No, not long..."

"Do you like him?"

"Yes, he is an agreeable young man.... Why do you ask me that?" said

Princess Mary, still thinking of that morning's conversation with her

father.

"Because I have noticed that when a young man comes on leave from

Petersburg to Moscow it is usually with the object of marrying an

heiress."

"You have observed that?" said Princess Mary.

"Yes," returned Pierre with a smile, "and this young man now manages

matters so that where there is a wealthy heiress there he is too. I can

read him like a book. At present he is hesitating whom to lay siege to--

you or Mademoiselle Julie Karagina. He is very attentive to her."

"He visits them?"

"Yes, very often. And do you know the new way of courting?" said Pierre

with an amused smile, evidently in that cheerful mood of good humored

raillery for which he so often reproached himself in his diary.

"No," replied Princess Mary.

"To please Moscow girls nowadays one has to be melancholy. He is very

melancholy with Mademoiselle Karagina," said Pierre.

"Really?" asked Princess Mary, looking into Pierre's kindly face and

still thinking of her own sorrow. "It would be a relief," thought she,

"if I ventured to confide what I am feeling to someone. I should like to

tell everything to Pierre. He is kind and generous. It would be a

relief. He would give me advice."

"Would you marry him?"

"Oh, my God, Count, there are moments when I would marry anybody!" she

cried suddenly to her own surprise and with tears in her voice. "Ah, how

bitter it is to love someone near to you and to feel that..." she went

on in a trembling voice, "that you can do nothing for him but grieve

him, and to know that you cannot alter this. Then there is only one

thing left--to go away, but where could I go?"

"What is wrong? What is it, Princess?"

But without finishing what she was saying, Princess Mary burst into

tears.

"I don't know what is the matter with me today. Don't take any notice--

forget what I have said!"

Pierre's gaiety vanished completely. He anxiously questioned the

princess, asked her to speak out fully and confide her grief to him; but

she only repeated that she begged him to forget what she had said, that

she did not remember what she had said, and that she had no trouble

except the one he knew of--that Prince Andrew's marriage threatened to

cause a rupture between father and son.

"Have you any news of the Rostovs?" she asked, to change the subject. "I

was told they are coming soon. I am also expecting Andrew any day. I

should like them to meet here."

"And how does he now regard the matter?" asked Pierre, referring to the

old prince.

Princess Mary shook her head.

"What is to be done? In a few months the year will be up. The thing is

impossible. I only wish I could spare my brother the first moments. I

wish they would come sooner. I hope to be friends with her. You have

known them a long time," said Princess Mary. "Tell me honestly the whole

truth: what sort of girl is she, and what do you think of her?--The real

truth, because you know Andrew is risking so much doing this against his

father's will that I should like to know..."

An undefined instinct told Pierre that these explanations, and repeated

requests to be told the whole truth, expressed ill-will on the princess'

part toward her future sister-in-law and a wish that he should

disapprove of Andrew's choice; but in reply he said what he felt rather

than what he thought.

"I don't know how to answer your question," he said, blushing without

knowing why. "I really don't know what sort of girl she is; I can't

analyze her at all. She is enchanting, but what makes her so I don't

know. That is all one can say about her."

Princess Mary sighed, and the expression on her face said: "Yes, that's

what I expected and feared."

"Is she clever?" she asked.

Pierre considered.

"I think not," he said, "and yet--yes. She does not deign to be

clever.... Oh no, she is simply enchanting, and that is all."

Princess Mary again shook her head disapprovingly.

"Ah, I so long to like her! Tell her so if you see her before I do."

"I hear they are expected very soon," said Pierre.

Princess Mary told Pierre of her plan to become intimate with her future

sister-in-law as soon as the Rostovs arrived and to try to accustom the

old prince to her.

CHAPTER V

Boris had not succeeded in making a wealthy match in Petersburg, so with

the same object in view he came to Moscow. There he wavered between the

two richest heiresses, Julie and Princess Mary. Though Princess Mary

despite her plainness seemed to him more attractive than Julie, he,

without knowing why, felt awkward about paying court to her. When they

had last met on the old prince's name day, she had answered at random

all his attempts to talk sentimentally, evidently not listening to what

he was saying.

Julie on the contrary accepted his attentions readily, though in a

manner peculiar to herself.

She was twenty-seven. After the death of her brothers she had become

very wealthy. She was by now decidedly plain, but thought herself not

merely as good-looking as before but even far more attractive. She was

confirmed in this delusion by the fact that she had become a very

wealthy heiress and also by the fact that the older she grew the less

dangerous she became to men, and the more freely they could associate

with her and avail themselves of her suppers, soirees, and the animated

company that assembled at her house, without incurring any obligation. A

man who would have been afraid ten years before of going every day to

the house when there was a girl of seventeen there, for fear of

compromising her and committing himself, would now go boldly every day

and treat her not as a marriageable girl but as a sexless acquaintance.

That winter the Karagins' house was the most agreeable and hospitable in

Moscow. In addition to the formal evening and dinner parties, a large

company, chiefly of men, gathered there every day, supping at midnight

and staying till three in the morning. Julie never missed a ball, a

promenade, or a play. Her dresses were always of the latest fashion. But

in spite of that she seemed to be disillusioned about everything and

told everyone that she did not believe either in friendship or in love,

or any of the joys of life, and expected peace only "yonder." She

adopted the tone of one who has suffered a great disappointment, like a

girl who has either lost the man she loved or been cruelly deceived by

him. Though nothing of the kind had happened to her she was regarded in

that light, and had even herself come to believe that she had suffered

much in life. This melancholy, which did not prevent her amusing

herself, did not hinder the young people who came to her house from

passing the time pleasantly. Every visitor who came to the house paid

his tribute to the melancholy mood of the hostess, and then amused

himself with society gossip, dancing, intellectual games, and bouts

rimes, which were in vogue at the Karagins'. Only a few of these young

men, among them Boris, entered more deeply into Julie's melancholy, and

with these she had prolonged conversations in private on the vanity of

all worldly things, and to them she showed her albums filled with

mournful sketches, maxims, and verses.

To Boris, Julie was particularly gracious: she regretted his early

disillusionment with life, offered him such consolation of friendship as

she who had herself suffered so much could render, and showed him her

album. Boris sketched two trees in the album and wrote: "Rustic trees,

your dark branches shed gloom and melancholy upon me."

On another page he drew a tomb, and wrote:

La mort est secourable et la mort est tranquille. Ah! contre les

douleurs il n'y a pas d'autre asile. \*

\* Death gives relief and death is peaceful.

Ah! from suffering there is no other refuge.

Julie said this was charming

"There is something so enchanting in the smile of melancholy," she said

to Boris, repeating word for word a passage she had copied from a book.

"It is a ray of light in the darkness, a shade between sadness and

despair, showing the possibility of consolation."

In reply Boris wrote these lines:

Aliment de poison d'une ame trop sensible, Toi, sans qui le bonheur me

serait impossible, Tendre melancholie, ah, viens me consoler, Viens

calmer les tourments de ma sombre retraite, Et mele une douceur secrete

A ces pleurs que je sens couler. \*

\*Poisonous nourishment of a too sensitive soul, Thou, without whom

happiness would for me be impossible, Tender melancholy, ah, come to

console me, Come to calm the torments of my gloomy retreat, And mingle a

secret sweetness With these tears that I feel to be flowing.

For Boris, Julie played most doleful nocturnes on her harp. Boris read

'Poor Liza' aloud to her, and more than once interrupted the reading

because of the emotions that choked him. Meeting at large gatherings

Julie and Boris looked on one another as the only souls who understood

one another in a world of indifferent people.

Anna Mikhaylovna, who often visited the Karagins, while playing cards

with the mother made careful inquiries as to Julie's dowry (she was to

have two estates in Penza and the Nizhegorod forests). Anna Mikhaylovna

regarded the refined sadness that united her son to the wealthy Julie

with emotion, and resignation to the Divine will.

"You are always charming and melancholy, my dear Julie," she said to the

daughter. "Boris says his soul finds repose at your house. He has

suffered so many disappointments and is so sensitive," said she to the

mother. "Ah, my dear, I can't tell you how fond I have grown of Julie

latterly," she said to her son. "But who could help loving her? She is

an angelic being! Ah, Boris, Boris!"--she paused. "And how I pity her

mother," she went on; "today she showed me her accounts and letters from

Penza (they have enormous estates there), and she, poor thing, has no

one to help her, and they do cheat her so!"

Boris smiled almost imperceptibly while listening to his mother. He

laughed blandly at her naive diplomacy but listened to what she had to

say, and sometimes questioned her carefully about the Penza and

Nizhegorod estates.

Julie had long been expecting a proposal from her melancholy adorer and

was ready to accept it; but some secret feeling of repulsion for her,

for her passionate desire to get married, for her artificiality, and a

feeling of horror at renouncing the possibility of real love still

restrained Boris. His leave was expiring. He spent every day and whole

days at the Karagins', and every day on thinking the matter over told

himself that he would propose tomorrow. But in Julie's presence, looking

at her red face and chin (nearly always powdered), her moist eyes, and

her expression of continual readiness to pass at once from melancholy to

an unnatural rapture of married bliss, Boris could not utter the

decisive words, though in imagination he had long regarded himself as

the possessor of those Penza and Nizhegorod estates and had apportioned

the use of the income from them. Julie saw Boris' indecision, and

sometimes the thought occurred to her that she was repulsive to him, but

her feminine self-deception immediately supplied her with consolation,

and she told herself that he was only shy from love. Her melancholy,

however, began to turn to irritability, and not long before Boris'

departure she formed a definite plan of action. Just as Boris' leave of

absence was expiring, Anatole Kuragin made his appearance in Moscow, and

of course in the Karagins' drawing room, and Julie, suddenly abandoning

her melancholy, became cheerful and very attentive to Kuragin.

"My dear," said Anna Mikhaylovna to her son, "I know from a reliable

source that Prince Vasili has sent his son to Moscow to get him married

to Julie. I am so fond of Julie that I should be sorry for her. What do

you think of it, my dear?"

The idea of being made a fool of and of having thrown away that whole

month of arduous melancholy service to Julie, and of seeing all the

revenue from the Penza estates which he had already mentally apportioned

and put to proper use fall into the hands of another, and especially

into the hands of that idiot Anatole, pained Boris. He drove to the

Karagins' with the firm intention of proposing. Julie met him in a gay,

careless manner, spoke casually of how she had enjoyed yesterday's ball,

and asked when he was leaving. Though Boris had come intentionally to

speak of his love and therefore meant to be tender, he began speaking

irritably of feminine inconstancy, of how easily women can turn from

sadness to joy, and how their moods depend solely on who happens to be

paying court to them. Julie was offended and replied that it was true

that a woman needs variety, and the same thing over and over again would

weary anyone.

"Then I should advise you..." Boris began, wishing to sting her; but at

that instant the galling thought occurred to him that he might have to

leave Moscow without having accomplished his aim, and have vainly wasted

his efforts--which was a thing he never allowed to happen.

He checked himself in the middle of the sentence, lowered his eyes to

avoid seeing her unpleasantly irritated and irresolute face, and said:

"I did not come here at all to quarrel with you. On the contrary..."

He glanced at her to make sure that he might go on. Her irritability had

suddenly quite vanished, and her anxious, imploring eyes were fixed on

him with greedy expectation. "I can always arrange so as not to see her

often," thought Boris. "The affair has been begun and must be finished!"

He blushed hotly, raised his eyes to hers, and said:

"You know my feelings for you!"

There was no need to say more: Julie's face shone with triumph and self-

satisfaction; but she forced Boris to say all that is said on such

occasions--that he loved her and had never loved any other woman more

than her. She knew that for the Penza estates and Nizhegorod forests she

could demand this, and she received what she demanded.

The affianced couple, no longer alluding to trees that shed gloom and

melancholy upon them, planned the arrangements of a splendid house in

Petersburg, paid calls, and prepared everything for a brilliant wedding.

CHAPTER VI

At the end of January old Count Rostov went to Moscow with Natasha and

Sonya. The countess was still unwell and unable to travel but it was

impossible to wait for her recovery. Prince Andrew was expected in

Moscow any day, the trousseau had to be ordered and the estate near

Moscow had to be sold, besides which the opportunity of presenting his

future daughter-in-law to old Prince Bolkonski while he was in Moscow

could not be missed. The Rostovs' Moscow house had not been heated that

winter and, as they had come only for a short time and the countess was

not with them, the count decided to stay with Marya Dmitrievna

Akhrosimova, who had long been pressing her hospitality on them.

Late one evening the Rostovs' four sleighs drove into Marya Dmitrievna's

courtyard in the old Konyusheny street. Marya Dmitrievna lived alone.

She had already married off her daughter, and her sons were all in the

service.

She held herself as erect, told everyone her opinion as candidly,

loudly, and bluntly as ever, and her whole bearing seemed a reproach to

others for any weakness, passion, or temptation--the possibility of

which she did not admit. From early in the morning, wearing a dressing

jacket, she attended to her household affairs, and then she drove out:

on holy days to church and after the service to jails and prisons on

affairs of which she never spoke to anyone. On ordinary days, after

dressing, she received petitioners of various classes, of whom there

were always some. Then she had dinner, a substantial and appetizing meal

at which there were always three or four guests; after dinner she played

a game of boston, and at night she had the newspapers or a new book read

to her while she knitted. She rarely made an exception and went out to

pay visits, and then only to the most important persons in the town.

She had not yet gone to bed when the Rostovs arrived and the pulley of

the hall door squeaked from the cold as it let in the Rostovs and their

servants. Marya Dmitrievna, with her spectacles hanging down on her nose

and her head flung back, stood in the hall doorway looking with a stern,

grim face at the new arrivals. One might have thought she was angry with

the travelers and would immediately turn them out, had she not at the

same time been giving careful instructions to the servants for the

accommodation of the visitors and their belongings.

"The count's things? Bring them here," she said, pointing to the

portmanteaus and not greeting anyone. "The young ladies'? There to the

left. Now what are you dawdling for?" she cried to the maids. "Get the

samovar ready!... You've grown plumper and prettier," she remarked,

drawing Natasha (whose cheeks were glowing from the cold) to her by the

hood. "Foo! You are cold! Now take off your things, quick!" she shouted

to the count who was going to kiss her hand. "You're half frozen, I'm

sure! Bring some rum for tea!... Bonjour, Sonya dear!" she added,

turning to Sonya and indicating by this French greeting her slightly

contemptuous though affectionate attitude toward her.

When they came in to tea, having taken off their outdoor things and

tidied themselves up after their journey, Marya Dmitrievna kissed them

all in due order.

"I'm heartily glad you have come and are staying with me. It was high

time," she said, giving Natasha a significant look. "The old man is here

and his son's expected any day. You'll have to make his acquaintance.

But we'll speak of that later on," she added, glancing at Sonya with a

look that showed she did not want to speak of it in her presence. "Now

listen," she said to the count. "What do you want tomorrow? Whom will

you send for? Shinshin?" she crooked one of her fingers. "The sniveling

Anna Mikhaylovna? That's two. She's here with her son. The son is

getting married! Then Bezukhov, eh? He is here too, with his wife. He

ran away from her and she came galloping after him. He dined with me on

Wednesday. As for them"--and she pointed to the girls--"tomorrow I'll

take them first to the Iberian shrine of the Mother of God, and then

we'll drive to the Super-Rogue's. I suppose you'll have everything new.

Don't judge by me: sleeves nowadays are this size! The other day young

Princess Irina Vasilevna came to see me; she was an awful sight--looked

as if she had put two barrels on her arms. You know not a day passes now

without some new fashion.... And what have you to do yourself?" she

asked the count sternly.

"One thing has come on top of another: her rags to buy, and now a

purchaser has turned up for the Moscow estate and for the house. If you

will be so kind, I'll fix a time and go down to the estate just for a

day, and leave my lassies with you."

"All right. All right. They'll be safe with me, as safe as in Chancery!

I'll take them where they must go, scold them a bit, and pet them a

bit," said Marya Dmitrievna, touching her goddaughter and favorite,

Natasha, on the cheek with her large hand.

Next morning Marya Dmitrievna took the young ladies to the Iberian

shrine of the Mother of God and to Madame Suppert-Roguet, who was so

afraid of Marya Dmitrievna that she always let her have costumes at a

loss merely to get rid of her. Marya Dmitrievna ordered almost the whole

trousseau. When they got home she turned everybody out of the room

except Natasha, and then called her pet to her armchair.

"Well, now we'll talk. I congratulate you on your betrothed. You've

hooked a fine fellow! I am glad for your sake and I've known him since

he was so high." She held her hand a couple of feet from the ground.

Natasha blushed happily. "I like him and all his family. Now listen! You

know that old Prince Nicholas much dislikes his son's marrying. The old

fellow's crotchety! Of course Prince Andrew is not a child and can shift

without him, but it's not nice to enter a family against a father's

will. One wants to do it peacefully and lovingly. You're a clever girl

and you'll know how to manage. Be kind, and use your wits. Then all will

be well."

Natasha remained silent, from shyness Marya Dmitrievna supposed, but

really because she disliked anyone interfering in what touched her love

of Prince Andrew, which seemed to her so apart from all human affairs

that no one could understand it. She loved and knew Prince Andrew, he

loved her only, and was to come one of these days and take her. She

wanted nothing more.

"You see I have known him a long time and am also fond of Mary, your

future sister-in-law. 'Husbands' sisters bring up blisters,' but this

one wouldn't hurt a fly. She has asked me to bring you two together.

Tomorrow you'll go with your father to see her. Be very nice and

affectionate to her: you're younger than she. When he comes, he'll find

you already know his sister and father and are liked by them. Am I right

or not? Won't that be best?"

"Yes, it will," Natasha answered reluctantly.

CHAPTER VII

Next day, by Marya Dmitrievna's advice, Count Rostov took Natasha to

call on Prince Nicholas Bolkonski. The count did not set out cheerfully

on this visit, at heart he felt afraid. He well remembered the last

interview he had had with the old prince at the time of the enrollment,

when in reply to an invitation to dinner he had had to listen to an

angry reprimand for not having provided his full quota of men. Natasha,

on the other hand, having put on her best gown, was in the highest

spirits. "They can't help liking me," she thought. "Everybody always has

liked me, and I am so willing to do anything they wish, so ready to be

fond of him--for being his father--and of her--for being his sister--

that there is no reason for them not to like me..."

They drove up to the gloomy old house on the Vozdvizhenka and entered

the vestibule.

"Well, the Lord have mercy on us!" said the count, half in jest, half in

earnest; but Natasha noticed that her father was flurried on entering

the anteroom and inquired timidly and softly whether the prince and

princess were at home.

When they had been announced a perturbation was noticeable among the

servants. The footman who had gone to announce them was stopped by

another in the large hall and they whispered to one another. Then a

maidservant ran into the hall and hurriedly said something, mentioning

the princess. At last an old, cross looking footman came and announced

to the Rostovs that the prince was not receiving, but that the princess

begged them to walk up. The first person who came to meet the visitors

was Mademoiselle Bourienne. She greeted the father and daughter with

special politeness and showed them to the princess' room. The princess,

looking excited and nervous, her face flushed in patches, ran in to meet

the visitors, treading heavily, and vainly trying to appear cordial and

at ease. From the first glance Princess Mary did not like Natasha. She

thought her too fashionably dressed, frivolously gay and vain. She did

not at all realize that before having seen her future sister-in-law she

was prejudiced against her by involuntary envy of her beauty, youth, and

happiness, as well as by jealousy of her brother's love for her. Apart

from this insuperable antipathy to her, Princess Mary was agitated just

then because on the Rostovs' being announced, the old prince had shouted

that he did not wish to see them, that Princess Mary might do so if she

chose, but they were not to be admitted to him. She had decided to

receive them, but feared lest the prince might at any moment indulge in

some freak, as he seemed much upset by the Rostovs' visit.

"There, my dear princess, I've brought you my songstress," said the

count, bowing and looking round uneasily as if afraid the old prince

might appear. "I am so glad you should get to know one another... very

sorry the prince is still ailing," and after a few more commonplace

remarks he rose. "If you'll allow me to leave my Natasha in your hands

for a quarter of an hour, Princess, I'll drive round to see Anna

Semenovna, it's quite near in the Dogs' Square, and then I'll come back

for her."

The count had devised this diplomatic ruse (as he afterwards told his

daughter) to give the future sisters-in-law an opportunity to talk to

one another freely, but another motive was to avoid the danger of

encountering the old prince, of whom he was afraid. He did not mention

this to his daughter, but Natasha noticed her father's nervousness and

anxiety and felt mortified by it. She blushed for him, grew still

angrier at having blushed, and looked at the princess with a bold and

defiant expression which said that she was not afraid of anybody. The

princess told the count that she would be delighted, and only begged him

to stay longer at Anna Semenovna's, and he departed.

Despite the uneasy glances thrown at her by Princess Mary--who wished to

have a tête-à-tête with Natasha--Mademoiselle Bourienne remained in the

room and persistently talked about Moscow amusements and theaters.

Natasha felt offended by the hesitation she had noticed in the anteroom,

by her father's nervousness, and by the unnatural manner of the princess

who--she thought--was making a favor of receiving her, and so everything

displeased her. She did not like Princess Mary, whom she thought very

plain, affected, and dry. Natasha suddenly shrank into herself and

involuntarily assumed an offhand air which alienated Princess Mary still

more. After five minutes of irksome, constrained conversation, they

heard the sound of slippered feet rapidly approaching. Princess Mary

looked frightened.

The door opened and the old prince, in a dressing gown and a white

nightcap, came in.

"Ah, madam!" he began. "Madam, Countess... Countess Rostova, if I am not

mistaken... I beg you to excuse me, to excuse me... I did not know,

madam. God is my witness, I did not know you had honored us with a

visit, and I came in such a costume only to see my daughter. I beg you

to excuse me... God is my witness, I didn't know-" he repeated,

stressing the word "God" so unnaturally and so unpleasantly that

Princess Mary stood with downcast eyes not daring to look either at her

father or at Natasha.

Nor did the latter, having risen and curtsied, know what to do.

Mademoiselle Bourienne alone smiled agreeably.

"I beg you to excuse me, excuse me! God is my witness, I did not know,"

muttered the old man, and after looking Natasha over from head to foot

he went out.

Mademoiselle Bourienne was the first to recover herself after this

apparition and began speaking about the prince's indisposition. Natasha

and Princess Mary looked at one another in silence, and the longer they

did so without saying what they wanted to say, the greater grew their

antipathy to one another.

When the count returned, Natasha was impolitely pleased and hastened to

get away: at that moment she hated the stiff, elderly princess, who

could place her in such an embarrassing position and had spent half an

hour with her without once mentioning Prince Andrew. "I couldn't begin

talking about him in the presence of that Frenchwoman," thought Natasha.

The same thought was meanwhile tormenting Princess Mary. She knew what

she ought to have said to Natasha, but she had been unable to say it

because Mademoiselle Bourienne was in the way, and because, without

knowing why, she felt it very difficult to speak of the marriage. When

the count was already leaving the room, Princess Mary went up hurriedly

to Natasha, took her by the hand, and said with a deep sigh:

"Wait, I must..."

Natasha glanced at her ironically without knowing why.

"Dear Natalie," said Princess Mary, "I want you to know that I am glad

my brother has found happiness...."

She paused, feeling that she was not telling the truth. Natasha noticed

this and guessed its reason.

"I think, Princess, it is not convenient to speak of that now," she said

with external dignity and coldness, though she felt the tears choking

her.

"What have I said and what have I done?" thought she, as soon as she was

out of the room.

They waited a long time for Natasha to come to dinner that day. She sat

in her room crying like a child, blowing her nose and sobbing. Sonya

stood beside her, kissing her hair.

"Natasha, what is it about?" she asked. "What do they matter to you? It

will all pass, Natasha."

"But if you only knew how offensive it was... as if I..."

"Don't talk about it, Natasha. It wasn't your fault so why should you

mind? Kiss me," said Sonya.

Natasha raised her head and, kissing her friend on the lips, pressed her

wet face against her.

"I can't tell you, I don't know. No one's to blame," said Natasha--"It's

my fault. But it all hurts terribly. Oh, why doesn't he come?..."

She came in to dinner with red eyes. Marya Dmitrievna, who knew how the

prince had received the Rostovs, pretended not to notice how upset

Natasha was and jested resolutely and loudly at table with the count and

the other guests.

CHAPTER VIII

That evening the Rostovs went to the Opera, for which Marya Dmitrievna

had taken a box.

Natasha did not want to go, but could not refuse Marya Dmitrievna's kind

offer which was intended expressly for her. When she came ready dressed

into the ballroom to await her father, and looking in the large mirror

there saw that she was pretty, very pretty, she felt even more sad, but

it was a sweet, tender sadness.

"O God, if he were here now I would not behave as I did then, but

differently. I would not be silly and afraid of things, I would simply

embrace him, cling to him, and make him look at me with those searching

inquiring eyes with which he has so often looked at me, and then I would

make him laugh as he used to laugh. And his eyes--how I see those eyes!"

thought Natasha. "And what do his father and sister matter to me? I love

him alone, him, him, with that face and those eyes, with his smile,

manly and yet childlike.... No, I had better not think of him; not think

of him but forget him, quite forget him for the present. I can't bear

this waiting and I shall cry in a minute!" and she turned away from the

glass, making an effort not to cry. "And how can Sonya love Nicholas so

calmly and quietly and wait so long and so patiently?" thought she,

looking at Sonya, who also came in quite ready, with a fan in her hand.

"No, she's altogether different. I can't!"

Natasha at that moment felt so softened and tender that it was not

enough for her to love and know she was beloved, she wanted now, at

once, to embrace the man she loved, to speak and hear from him words of

love such as filled her heart. While she sat in the carriage beside her

father, pensively watching the lights of the street lamps flickering on

the frozen window, she felt still sadder and more in love, and forgot

where she was going and with whom. Having fallen into the line of

carriages, the Rostovs' carriage drove up to the theater, its wheels

squeaking over the snow. Natasha and Sonya, holding up their dresses,

jumped out quickly. The count got out helped by the footmen, and,

passing among men and women who were entering and the program sellers,

they all three went along the corridor to the first row of boxes.

Through the closed doors the music was already audible.

"Natasha, your hair!..." whispered Sonya.

An attendant deferentially and quickly slipped before the ladies and

opened the door of their box. The music sounded louder and through the

door rows of brightly lit boxes in which ladies sat with bare arms and

shoulders, and noisy stalls brilliant with uniforms, glittered before

their eyes. A lady entering the next box shot a glance of feminine envy

at Natasha. The curtain had not yet risen and the overture was being

played. Natasha, smoothing her gown, went in with Sonya and sat down,

scanning the brilliant tiers of boxes opposite. A sensation she had not

experienced for a long time--that of hundreds of eyes looking at her

bare arms and neck--suddenly affected her both agreeably and

disagreeably and called up a whole crowd of memories, desires and

emotions associated with that feeling.

The two remarkably pretty girls, Natasha and Sonya, with Count Rostov

who had not been seen in Moscow for a long time, attracted general

attention. Moreover, everybody knew vaguely of Natasha's engagement to

Prince Andrew, and knew that the Rostovs had lived in the country ever

since, and all looked with curiosity at a fiancee who was making one of

the best matches in Russia.

Natasha's looks, as everyone told her, had improved in the country, and

that evening thanks to her agitation she was particularly pretty. She

struck those who saw her by her fullness of life and beauty, combined

with her indifference to everything about her. Her black eyes looked at

the crowd without seeking anyone, and her delicate arm, bare to above

the elbow, lay on the velvet edge of the box, while, evidently

unconsciously, she opened and closed her hand in time to the music,

crumpling her program. "Look, there's Alenina," said Sonya, "with her

mother, isn't it?"

"Dear me, Michael Kirilovich has grown still stouter!" remarked the

count.

"Look at our Anna Mikhaylovna--what a headdress she has on!"

"The Karagins, Julie--and Boris with them. One can see at once that

they're engaged...."

"Drubetskoy has proposed?"

"Oh yes, I heard it today," said Shinshin, coming into the Rostovs' box.

Natasha looked in the direction in which her father's eyes were turned

and saw Julie sitting beside her mother with a happy look on her face

and a string of pearls round her thick red neck--which Natasha knew was

covered with powder. Behind them, wearing a smile and leaning over with

an ear to Julie's mouth, was Boris' handsome smoothly brushed head. He

looked at the Rostovs from under his brows and said something, smiling,

to his betrothed.

"They are talking about us, about me and him!" thought Natasha. "And he

no doubt is calming her jealousy of me. They needn't trouble themselves!

If only they knew how little I am concerned about any of them."

Behind them sat Anna Mikhaylovna wearing a green headdress and with a

happy look of resignation to the will of God on her face. Their box was

pervaded by that atmosphere of an affianced couple which Natasha knew so

well and liked so much. She turned away and suddenly remembered all that

had been so humiliating in her morning's visit.

"What right has he not to wish to receive me into his family? Oh, better

not think of it--not till he comes back!" she told herself, and began

looking at the faces, some strange and some familiar, in the stalls. In

the front, in the very center, leaning back against the orchestra rail,

stood Dolokhov in a Persian dress, his curly hair brushed up into a huge

shock. He stood in full view of the audience, well aware that he was

attracting everyone's attention, yet as much at ease as though he were

in his own room. Around him thronged Moscow's most brilliant young men,

whom he evidently dominated.

The count, laughing, nudged the blushing Sonya and pointed to her former

adorer.

"Do you recognize him?" said he. "And where has he sprung from?" he

asked, turning to Shinshin. "Didn't he vanish somewhere?"

"He did," replied Shinshin. "He was in the Caucasus and ran away from

there. They say he has been acting as minister to some ruling prince in

Persia, where he killed the Shah's brother. Now all the Moscow ladies

are mad about him! It's 'Dolokhov the Persian' that does it! We never

hear a word but Dolokhov is mentioned. They swear by him, they offer him

to you as they would a dish of choice sterlet. Dolokhov and Anatole

Kuragin have turned all our ladies' heads."

A tall, beautiful woman with a mass of plaited hair and much exposed

plump white shoulders and neck, round which she wore a double string of

large pearls, entered the adjoining box rustling her heavy silk dress

and took a long time settling into her place.

Natasha involuntarily gazed at that neck, those shoulders, and pearls

and coiffure, and admired the beauty of the shoulders and the pearls.

While Natasha was fixing her gaze on her for the second time the lady

looked round and, meeting the count's eyes, nodded to him and smiled.

She was the Countess Bezukhova, Pierre's wife, and the count, who knew

everyone in society, leaned over and spoke to her.

"Have you been here long, Countess?" he inquired. "I'll call, I'll call

to kiss your hand. I'm here on business and have brought my girls with

me. They say Semenova acts marvelously. Count Pierre never used to

forget us. Is he here?"

"Yes, he meant to look in," answered Helene, and glanced attentively at

Natasha.

Count Rostov resumed his seat.

"Handsome, isn't she?" he whispered to Natasha.

"Wonderful!" answered Natasha. "She's a woman one could easily fall in

love with."

Just then the last chords of the overture were heard and the conductor

tapped with his stick. Some latecomers took their seats in the stalls,

and the curtain rose.

As soon as it rose everyone in the boxes and stalls became silent, and

all the men, old and young, in uniform and evening dress, and all the

women with gems on their bare flesh, turned their whole attention with

eager curiosity to the stage. Natasha too began to look at it.

CHAPTER IX

The floor of the stage consisted of smooth boards, at the sides was some

painted cardboard representing trees, and at the back was a cloth

stretched over boards. In the center of the stage sat some girls in red

bodices and white skirts. One very fat girl in a white silk dress sat

apart on a low bench, to the back of which a piece of green cardboard

was glued. They all sang something. When they had finished their song

the girl in white went up to the prompter's box and a man with tight

silk trousers over his stout legs, and holding a plume and a dagger,

went up to her and began singing, waving his arms about.

First the man in the tight trousers sang alone, then she sang, then they

both paused while the orchestra played and the man fingered the hand of

the girl in white, obviously awaiting the beat to start singing with

her. They sang together and everyone in the theater began clapping and

shouting, while the man and woman on the stage--who represented lovers--

began smiling, spreading out their arms, and bowing.

After her life in the country, and in her present serious mood, all this

seemed grotesque and amazing to Natasha. She could not follow the opera

nor even listen to the music; she saw only the painted cardboard and the

queerly dressed men and women who moved, spoke, and sang so strangely in

that brilliant light. She knew what it was all meant to represent, but

it was so pretentiously false and unnatural that she first felt ashamed

for the actors and then amused at them. She looked at the faces of the

audience, seeking in them the same sense of ridicule and perplexity she

herself experienced, but they all seemed attentive to what was happening

on the stage, and expressed delight which to Natasha seemed feigned. "I

suppose it has to be like this!" she thought. She kept looking round in

turn at the rows of pomaded heads in the stalls and then at the seminude

women in the boxes, especially at Helene in the next box, who--

apparently quite unclothed--sat with a quiet tranquil smile, not taking

her eyes off the stage. And feeling the bright light that flooded the

whole place and the warm air heated by the crowd, Natasha little by

little began to pass into a state of intoxication she had not

experienced for a long while. She did not realize who and where she was,

nor what was going on before her. As she looked and thought, the

strangest fancies unexpectedly and disconnectedly passed through her

mind: the idea occurred to her of jumping onto the edge of the box and

singing the air the actress was singing, then she wished to touch with

her fan an old gentleman sitting not far from her, then to lean over to

Helene and tickle her.

At a moment when all was quiet before the commencement of a song, a door

leading to the stalls on the side nearest the Rostovs' box creaked, and

the steps of a belated arrival were heard. "There's Kuragin!" whispered

Shinshin. Countess Bezukhova turned smiling to the newcomer, and

Natasha, following the direction of that look, saw an exceptionally

handsome adjutant approaching their box with a self-assured yet

courteous bearing. This was Anatole Kuragin whom she had seen and

noticed long ago at the ball in Petersburg. He was now in an adjutant's

uniform with one epaulet and a shoulder knot. He moved with a restrained

swagger which would have been ridiculous had he not been so good-looking

and had his handsome face not worn such an expression of good-humored

complacency and gaiety. Though the performance was proceeding, he walked

deliberately down the carpeted gangway, his sword and spurs slightly

jingling and his handsome perfumed head held high. Having looked at

Natasha he approached his sister, laid his well gloved hand on the edge

of her box, nodded to her, and leaning forward asked a question, with a

motion toward Natasha.

"Mais charmante!" said he, evidently referring to Natasha, who did not

exactly hear his words but understood them from the movement of his

lips. Then he took his place in the first row of the stalls and sat down

beside Dolokhov, nudging with his elbow in a friendly and offhand way

that Dolokhov whom others treated so fawningly. He winked at him gaily,

smiled, and rested his foot against the orchestra screen.

"How like the brother is to the sister," remarked the count. "And how

handsome they both are!"

Shinshin, lowering his voice, began to tell the count of some intrigue

of Kuragin's in Moscow, and Natasha tried to overhear it just because he

had said she was "charmante."

The first act was over. In the stalls everyone began moving about, going

out and coming in.

Boris came to the Rostovs' box, received their congratulations very

simply, and raising his eyebrows with an absent-minded smile conveyed to

Natasha and Sonya his fiancee's invitation to her wedding, and went

away. Natasha with a gay, coquettish smile talked to him, and

congratulated on his approaching wedding that same Boris with whom she

had formerly been in love. In the state of intoxication she was in,

everything seemed simple and natural.

The scantily clad Helene smiled at everyone in the same way, and Natasha

gave Boris a similar smile.

Helene's box was filled and surrounded from the stalls by the most

distinguished and intellectual men, who seemed to vie with one another

in their wish to let everyone see that they knew her.

During the whole of that entr'acte Kuragin stood with Dolokhov in front

of the orchestra partition, looking at the Rostovs' box. Natasha knew he

was talking about her and this afforded her pleasure. She even turned so

that he should see her profile in what she thought was its most becoming

aspect. Before the beginning of the second act Pierre appeared in the

stalls. The Rostovs had not seen him since their arrival. His face

looked sad, and he had grown still stouter since Natasha last saw him.

He passed up to the front rows, not noticing anyone. Anatole went up to

him and began speaking to him, looking at and indicating the Rostovs'

box. On seeing Natasha Pierre grew animated and, hastily passing between

the rows, came toward their box. When he got there he leaned on his

elbows and, smiling, talked to her for a long time. While conversing

with Pierre, Natasha heard a man's voice in Countess Bezukhova's box and

something told her it was Kuragin. She turned and their eyes met. Almost

smiling, he gazed straight into her eyes with such an enraptured

caressing look that it seemed strange to be so near him, to look at him

like that, to be so sure he admired her, and not to be acquainted with

him.

In the second act there was scenery representing tombstones, there was a

round hole in the canvas to represent the moon, shades were raised over

the footlights, and from horns and contrabass came deep notes while many

people appeared from right and left wearing black cloaks and holding

things like daggers in their hands. They began waving their arms. Then

some other people ran in and began dragging away the maiden who had been

in white and was now in light blue. They did not drag her away at once,

but sang with her for a long time and then at last dragged her off, and

behind the scenes something metallic was struck three times and everyone

knelt down and sang a prayer. All these things were repeatedly

interrupted by the enthusiastic shouts of the audience.

During this act every time Natasha looked toward the stalls she saw

Anatole Kuragin with an arm thrown across the back of his chair, staring

at her. She was pleased to see that he was captivated by her and it did

not occur to her that there was anything wrong in it.

When the second act was over Countess Bezukhova rose, turned to the

Rostovs' box--her whole bosom completely exposed--beckoned the old count

with a gloved finger, and paying no attention to those who had entered

her box began talking to him with an amiable smile.

"Do make me acquainted with your charming daughters," said she. "The

whole town is singing their praises and I don't even know them!"

Natasha rose and curtsied to the splendid countess. She was so pleased

by praise from this brilliant beauty that she blushed with pleasure.

"I want to become a Moscovite too, now," said Helene. "How is it you're

not ashamed to bury such pearls in the country?"

Countess Bezukhova quite deserved her reputation of being a fascinating

woman. She could say what she did not think--especially what was

flattering--quite simply and naturally.

"Dear count, you must let me look after your daughters! Though I am not

staying here long this time--nor are you--I will try to amuse them. I

have already heard much of you in Petersburg and wanted to get to know

you," said she to Natasha with her stereotyped and lovely smile. "I had

heard about you from my page, Drubetskoy. Have you heard he is getting

married? And also from my husband's friend Bolkonski, Prince Andrew

Bolkonski," she went on with special emphasis, implying that she knew of

his relation to Natasha. To get better acquainted she asked that one of

the young ladies should come into her box for the rest of the

performance, and Natasha moved over to it.

The scene of the third act represented a palace in which many candles

were burning and pictures of knights with short beards hung on the

walls. In the middle stood what were probably a king and a queen. The

king waved his right arm and, evidently nervous, sang something badly

and sat down on a crimson throne. The maiden who had been first in white

and then in light blue, now wore only a smock, and stood beside the

throne with her hair down. She sang something mournfully, addressing the

queen, but the king waved his arm severely, and men and women with bare

legs came in from both sides and began dancing all together. Then the

violins played very shrilly and merrily and one of the women with thick

bare legs and thin arms, separating from the others, went behind the

wings, adjusted her bodice, returned to the middle of the stage, and

began jumping and striking one foot rapidly against the other. In the

stalls everyone clapped and shouted "bravo!" Then one of the men went

into a corner of the stage. The cymbals and horns in the orchestra

struck up more loudly, and this man with bare legs jumped very high and

waved his feet about very rapidly. (He was Duport, who received sixty

thousand rubles a year for this art.) Everybody in the stalls, boxes,

and galleries began clapping and shouting with all their might, and the

man stopped and began smiling and bowing to all sides. Then other men

and women danced with bare legs. Then the king again shouted to the

sound of music, and they all began singing. But suddenly a storm came

on, chromatic scales and diminished sevenths were heard in the

orchestra, everyone ran off, again dragging one of their number away,

and the curtain dropped. Once more there was a terrible noise and

clatter among the audience, and with rapturous faces everyone began

shouting: "Duport! Duport! Duport!" Natasha no longer thought this

strange. She looked about with pleasure, smiling joyfully.

"Isn't Duport delightful?" Helene asked her.

"Oh, yes," replied Natasha.

CHAPTER X

During the entr'acte a whiff of cold air came into Helene's box, the

door opened, and Anatole entered, stooping and trying not to brush

against anyone.

"Let me introduce my brother to you," said Helene, her eyes shifting

uneasily from Natasha to Anatole.

Natasha turned her pretty little head toward the elegant young officer

and smiled at him over her bare shoulder. Anatole, who was as handsome

at close quarters as at a distance, sat down beside her and told her he

had long wished to have this happiness--ever since the Naryshkins' ball

in fact, at which he had had the well-remembered pleasure of seeing her.

Kuragin was much more sensible and simple with women than among men. He

talked boldly and naturally, and Natasha was strangely and agreeably

struck by the fact that there was nothing formidable in this man about

whom there was so much talk, but that on the contrary his smile was most

naive, cheerful, and good-natured.

Kuragin asked her opinion of the performance and told her how at a

previous performance Semenova had fallen down on the stage.

"And do you know, Countess," he said, suddenly addressing her as an old,

familiar acquaintance, "we are getting up a costume tournament; you

ought to take part in it! It will be great fun. We shall all meet at the

Karagins'! Please come! No! Really, eh?" said he.

While saying this he never removed his smiling eyes from her face, her

neck, and her bare arms. Natasha knew for certain that he was enraptured

by her. This pleased her, yet his presence made her feel constrained and

oppressed. When she was not looking at him she felt that he was looking

at her shoulders, and she involuntarily caught his eye so that he should

look into hers rather than this. But looking into his eyes she was

frightened, realizing that there was not that barrier of modesty she had

always felt between herself and other men. She did not know how it was

that within five minutes she had come to feel herself terribly near to

this man. When she turned away she feared he might seize her from behind

by her bare arm and kiss her on the neck. They spoke of most ordinary

things, yet she felt that they were closer to one another than she had

ever been to any man. Natasha kept turning to Helene and to her father,

as if asking what it all meant, but Helene was engaged in conversation

with a general and did not answer her look, and her father's eyes said

nothing but what they always said: "Having a good time? Well, I'm glad

of it!"

During one of these moments of awkward silence when Anatole's prominent

eyes were gazing calmly and fixedly at her, Natasha, to break the

silence, asked him how he liked Moscow. She asked the question and

blushed. She felt all the time that by talking to him she was doing

something improper. Anatole smiled as though to encourage her.

"At first I did not like it much, because what makes a town pleasant ce

sont les jolies femmes, \* isn't that so? But now I like it very much

indeed," he said, looking at her significantly. "You'll come to the

costume tournament, Countess? Do come!" and putting out his hand to her

bouquet and dropping his voice, he added, "You will be the prettiest

there. Do come, dear countess, and give me this flower as a pledge!"

\* Are the pretty women.

Natasha did not understand what he was saying any more than he did

himself, but she felt that his incomprehensible words had an improper

intention. She did not know what to say and turned away as if she had

not heard his remark. But as soon as she had turned away she felt that

he was there, behind, so close behind her.

"How is he now? Confused? Angry? Ought I to put it right?" she asked

herself, and she could not refrain from turning round. She looked

straight into his eyes, and his nearness, self-assurance, and the good-

natured tenderness of his smile vanquished her. She smiled just as he

was doing, gazing straight into his eyes. And again she felt with horror

that no barrier lay between him and her.

The curtain rose again. Anatole left the box, serene and gay. Natasha

went back to her father in the other box, now quite submissive to the

world she found herself in. All that was going on before her now seemed

quite natural, but on the other hand all her previous thoughts of her

betrothed, of Princess Mary, or of life in the country did not once

recur to her mind and were as if belonging to a remote past.

In the fourth act there was some sort of devil who sang waving his arm

about, till the boards were withdrawn from under him and he disappeared

down below. That was the only part of the fourth act that Natasha saw.

She felt agitated and tormented, and the cause of this was Kuragin whom

she could not help watching. As they were leaving the theater Anatole

came up to them, called their carriage, and helped them in. As he was

putting Natasha in he pressed her arm above the elbow. Agitated and

flushed she turned round. He was looking at her with glittering eyes,

smiling tenderly.

Only after she had reached home was Natasha able clearly to think over

what had happened to her, and suddenly remembering Prince Andrew she was

horrified, and at tea to which all had sat down after the opera, she

gave a loud exclamation, flushed, and ran out of the room.

"O God! I am lost!" she said to herself. "How could I let him?" She sat

for a long time hiding her flushed face in her hands trying to realize

what had happened to her, but was unable either to understand what had

happened or what she felt. Everything seemed dark, obscure, and

terrible. There in that enormous, illuminated theater where the bare-

legged Duport, in a tinsel-decorated jacket, jumped about to the music

on wet boards, and young girls and old men, and the nearly naked Helene

with her proud, calm smile, rapturously cried "bravo!"--there in the

presence of that Helene it had all seemed clear and simple; but now,

alone by herself, it was incomprehensible. "What is it? What was that

terror I felt of him? What is this gnawing of conscience I am feeling

now?" she thought.

Only to the old countess at night in bed could Natasha have told all she

was feeling. She knew that Sonya with her severe and simple views would

either not understand it at all or would be horrified at such a

confession. So Natasha tried to solve what was torturing her by herself.

"Am I spoiled for Andrew's love or not?" she asked herself, and with

soothing irony replied: "What a fool I am to ask that! What did happen

to me? Nothing! I have done nothing, I didn't lead him on at all. Nobody

will know and I shall never see him again," she told herself. "So it is

plain that nothing has happened and there is nothing to repent of, and

Andrew can love me still. But why 'still?' O God, why isn't he here?"

Natasha quieted herself for a moment, but again some instinct told her

that though all this was true, and though nothing had happened, yet the

former purity of her love for Prince Andrew had perished. And again in

imagination she went over her whole conversation with Kuragin, and again

saw the face, gestures, and tender smile of that bold handsome man when

he pressed her arm.

CHAPTER XI

Anatole Kuragin was staying in Moscow because his father had sent him

away from Petersburg, where he had been spending twenty thousand rubles

a year in cash, besides running up debts for as much more, which his

creditors demanded from his father.

His father announced to him that he would now pay half his debts for the

last time, but only on condition that he went to Moscow as adjutant to

the commander-in-chief--a post his father had procured for him--and

would at last try to make a good match there. He indicated to him

Princess Mary and Julie Karagina.

Anatole consented and went to Moscow, where he put up at Pierre's house.

Pierre received him unwillingly at first, but got used to him after a

while, sometimes even accompanied him on his carousals, and gave him

money under the guise of loans.

As Shinshin had remarked, from the time of his arrival Anatole had

turned the heads of the Moscow ladies, especially by the fact that he

slighted them and plainly preferred the gypsy girls and French

actresses--with the chief of whom, Mademoiselle George, he was said to

be on intimate relations. He had never missed a carousal at Danilov's or

other Moscow revelers', drank whole nights through, outvying everyone

else, and was at all the balls and parties of the best society. There

was talk of his intrigues with some of the ladies, and he flirted with a

few of them at the balls. But he did not run after the unmarried girls,

especially the rich heiresses who were most of them plain. There was a

special reason for this, as he had got married two years before--a fact

known only to his most intimate friends. At that time while with his

regiment in Poland, a Polish landowner of small means had forced him to

marry his daughter. Anatole had very soon abandoned his wife and, for a

payment which he agreed to send to his father-in-law, had arranged to be

free to pass himself off as a bachelor.

Anatole was always content with his position, with himself, and with

others. He was instinctively and thoroughly convinced that it was

impossible for him to live otherwise than as he did and that he had

never in his life done anything base. He was incapable of considering

how his actions might affect others or what the consequences of this or

that action of his might be. He was convinced that, as a duck is so made

that it must live in water, so God had made him such that he must spend

thirty thousand rubles a year and always occupy a prominent position in

society. He believed this so firmly that others, looking at him, were

persuaded of it too and did not refuse him either a leading place in

society or money, which he borrowed from anyone and everyone and

evidently would not repay.

He was not a gambler, at any rate he did not care about winning. He was

not vain. He did not mind what people thought of him. Still less could

he be accused of ambition. More than once he had vexed his father by

spoiling his own career, and he laughed at distinctions of all kinds. He

was not mean, and did not refuse anyone who asked of him. All he cared

about was gaiety and women, and as according to his ideas there was

nothing dishonorable in these tastes, and he was incapable of

considering what the gratification of his tastes entailed for others, he

honestly considered himself irreproachable, sincerely despised rogues

and bad people, and with a tranquil conscience carried his head high.

Rakes, those male Magdalenes, have a secret feeling of innocence similar

to that which female Magdalenes have, based on the same hope of

forgiveness. "All will be forgiven her, for she loved much; and all will

be forgiven him, for he enjoyed much."

Dolokhov, who had reappeared that year in Moscow after his exile and his

Persian adventures, and was leading a life of luxury, gambling, and

dissipation, associated with his old Petersburg comrade Kuragin and made

use of him for his own ends.

Anatole was sincerely fond of Dolokhov for his cleverness and audacity.

Dolokhov, who needed Anatole Kuragin's name, position, and connections

as a bait to draw rich young men into his gambling set, made use of him

and amused himself at his expense without letting the other feel it.

Apart from the advantage he derived from Anatole, the very process of

dominating another's will was in itself a pleasure, a habit, and a

necessity to Dolokhov.

Natasha had made a strong impression on Kuragin. At supper after the

opera he described to Dolokhov with the air of a connoisseur the

attractions of her arms, shoulders, feet, and hair and expressed his

intention of making love to her. Anatole had no notion and was incapable

of considering what might come of such love-making, as he never had any

notion of the outcome of any of his actions.

"She's first-rate, my dear fellow, but not for us," replied Dolokhov.

"I will tell my sister to ask her to dinner," said Anatole. "Eh?"

"You'd better wait till she's married...."

"You know, I adore little girls, they lose their heads at once," pursued

Anatole.

"You have been caught once already by a 'little girl,'" said Dolokhov

who knew of Kuragin's marriage. "Take care!"

"Well, that can't happen twice! Eh?" said Anatole, with a good-humored

laugh.

CHAPTER XII

The day after the opera the Rostovs went nowhere and nobody came to see

them. Marya Dmitrievna talked to the count about something which they

concealed from Natasha. Natasha guessed they were talking about the old

prince and planning something, and this disquieted and offended her. She

was expecting Prince Andrew any moment and twice that day sent a

manservant to the Vozdvizhenka to ascertain whether he had come. He had

not arrived. She suffered more now than during her first days in Moscow.

To her impatience and pining for him were now added the unpleasant

recollection of her interview with Princess Mary and the old prince, and

a fear and anxiety of which she did not understand the cause. She

continually fancied that either he would never come or that something

would happen to her before he came. She could no longer think of him by

herself calmly and continuously as she had done before. As soon as she

began to think of him, the recollection of the old prince, of Princess

Mary, of the theater, and of Kuragin mingled with her thoughts. The

question again presented itself whether she was not guilty, whether she

had not already broken faith with Prince Andrew, and again she found

herself recalling to the minutest detail every word, every gesture, and

every shade in the play of expression on the face of the man who had

been able to arouse in her such an incomprehensible and terrifying

feeling. To the family Natasha seemed livelier than usual, but she was

far less tranquil and happy than before.

On Sunday morning Marya Dmitrievna invited her visitors to Mass at her

parish church--the Church of the Assumption built over the graves of

victims of the plague.

"I don't like those fashionable churches," she said, evidently priding

herself on her independence of thought. "God is the same everywhere. We

have an excellent priest, he conducts the service decently and with

dignity, and the deacon is the same. What holiness is there in giving

concerts in the choir? I don't like it, it's just self-indulgence!"

Marya Dmitrievna liked Sundays and knew how to keep them. Her whole

house was scrubbed and cleaned on Saturdays; neither she nor the

servants worked, and they all wore holiday dress and went to church. At

her table there were extra dishes at dinner, and the servants had vodka

and roast goose or suckling pig. But in nothing in the house was the

holiday so noticeable as in Marya Dmitrievna's broad, stern face, which

on that day wore an invariable look of solemn festivity.

After Mass, when they had finished their coffee in the dining room where

the loose covers had been removed from the furniture, a servant

announced that the carriage was ready, and Marya Dmitrievna rose with a

stern air. She wore her holiday shawl, in which she paid calls, and

announced that she was going to see Prince Nicholas Bolkonski to have an

explanation with him about Natasha.

After she had gone, a dressmaker from Madame Suppert-Roguet waited on

the Rostovs, and Natasha, very glad of this diversion, having shut

herself into a room adjoining the drawing room, occupied herself trying

on the new dresses. Just as she had put on a bodice without sleeves and

only tacked together, and was turning her head to see in the glass how

the back fitted, she heard in the drawing room the animated sounds of

her father's voice and another's--a woman's--that made her flush. It was

Helene. Natasha had not time to take off the bodice before the door

opened and Countess Bezukhova, dressed in a purple velvet gown with a

high collar, came into the room beaming with good-humored amiable

smiles.

"Oh, my enchantress!" she cried to the blushing Natasha. "Charming! No,

this is really beyond anything, my dear count," said she to Count Rostov

who had followed her in. "How can you live in Moscow and go nowhere? No,

I won't let you off! Mademoiselle George will recite at my house tonight

and there'll be some people, and if you don't bring your lovely girls--

who are prettier than Mademoiselle George--I won't know you! My husband

is away in Tver or I would send him to fetch you. You must come. You

positively must! Between eight and nine."

She nodded to the dressmaker, whom she knew and who had curtsied

respectfully to her, and seated herself in an armchair beside the

looking glass, draping the folds of her velvet dress picturesquely. She

did not cease chattering good-naturedly and gaily, continually praising

Natasha's beauty. She looked at Natasha's dresses and praised them, as

well as a new dress of her own made of "metallic gauze," which she had

received from Paris, and advised Natasha to have one like it.

"But anything suits you, my charmer!" she remarked.

A smile of pleasure never left Natasha's face. She felt happy and as if

she were blossoming under the praise of this dear Countess Bezukhova who

had formerly seemed to her so unapproachable and important and was now

so kind to her. Natasha brightened up and felt almost in love with this

woman, who was so beautiful and so kind. Helene for her part was

sincerely delighted with Natasha and wished to give her a good time.

Anatole had asked her to bring him and Natasha together, and she was

calling on the Rostovs for that purpose. The idea of throwing her

brother and Natasha together amused her.

Though at one time, in Petersburg, she had been annoyed with Natasha for

drawing Boris away, she did not think of that now, and in her own way

heartily wished Natasha well. As she was leaving the Rostovs she called

her protegee aside.

"My brother dined with me yesterday--we nearly died of laughter--he ate

nothing and kept sighing for you, my charmer! He is madly, quite madly,

in love with you, my dear."

Natasha blushed scarlet when she heard this.

"How she blushes, how she blushes, my pretty!" said Helene. "You must

certainly come. If you love somebody, my charmer, that is not a reason

to shut yourself up. Even if you are engaged, I am sure your fiance

would wish you to go into society rather than be bored to death."

"So she knows I am engaged, and she and her husband Pierre--that good

Pierre--have talked and laughed about this. So it's all right." And

again, under Helene's influence, what had seemed terrible now seemed

simple and natural. "And she is such a grande dame, so kind, and

evidently likes me so much. And why not enjoy myself?" thought Natasha,

gazing at Helene with wide-open, wondering eyes.

Marya Dmitrievna came back to dinner taciturn and serious, having

evidently suffered a defeat at the old prince's. She was still too

agitated by the encounter to be able to talk of the affair calmly. In

answer to the count's inquiries she replied that things were all right

and that she would tell about it next day. On hearing of Countess

Bezukhova's visit and the invitation for that evening, Marya Dmitrievna

remarked:

"I don't care to have anything to do with Bezukhova and don't advise you

to; however, if you've promised--go. It will divert your thoughts," she

added, addressing Natasha.

CHAPTER XIII

Count Rostov took the girls to Countess Bezukhova's. There were a good

many people there, but nearly all strangers to Natasha. Count Rostov was

displeased to see that the company consisted almost entirely of men and

women known for the freedom of their conduct. Mademoiselle George was

standing in a corner of the drawing room surrounded by young men. There

were several Frenchmen present, among them Metivier who from the time

Helene reached Moscow had been an intimate in her house. The count

decided not to sit down to cards or let his girls out of his sight and

to get away as soon as Mademoiselle George's performance was over.

Anatole was at the door, evidently on the lookout for the Rostovs.

Immediately after greeting the count he went up to Natasha and followed

her. As soon as she saw him she was seized by the same feeling she had

had at the opera--gratified vanity at his admiration of her and fear at

the absence of a moral barrier between them.

Helene welcomed Natasha delightedly and was loud in admiration of her

beauty and her dress. Soon after their arrival Mademoiselle George went

out of the room to change her costume. In the drawing room people began

arranging the chairs and taking their seats. Anatole moved a chair for

Natasha and was about to sit down beside her, but the count, who never

lost sight of her, took the seat himself. Anatole sat down behind her.

Mademoiselle George, with her bare, fat, dimpled arms, and a red shawl

draped over one shoulder, came into the space left vacant for her, and

assumed an unnatural pose. Enthusiastic whispering was audible.

Mademoiselle George looked sternly and gloomily at the audience and

began reciting some French verses describing her guilty love for her

son. In some places she raised her voice, in others she whispered,

lifting her head triumphantly; sometimes she paused and uttered hoarse

sounds, rolling her eyes.

"Adorable! divine! delicious!" was heard from every side.

Natasha looked at the fat actress, but neither saw nor heard nor

understood anything of what went on before her. She only felt herself

again completely borne away into this strange senseless world--so remote

from her old world--a world in which it was impossible to know what was

good or bad, reasonable or senseless. Behind her sat Anatole, and

conscious of his proximity she experienced a frightened sense of

expectancy.

After the first monologue the whole company rose and surrounded

Mademoiselle George, expressing their enthusiasm.

"How beautiful she is!" Natasha remarked to her father who had also

risen and was moving through the crowd toward the actress.

"I don't think so when I look at you!" said Anatole, following Natasha.

He said this at a moment when she alone could hear him. "You are

enchanting... from the moment I saw you I have never ceased..."

"Come, come, Natasha!" said the count, as he turned back for his

daughter. "How beautiful she is!" Natasha without saying anything

stepped up to her father and looked at him with surprised inquiring

eyes.

After giving several recitations, Mademoiselle George left, and Countess

Bezukhova asked her visitors into the ballroom.

The count wished to go home, but Helene entreated him not to spoil her

improvised ball, and the Rostovs stayed on. Anatole asked Natasha for a

valse and as they danced he pressed her waist and hand and told her she

was bewitching and that he loved her. During the ecossaise, which she

also danced with him, Anatole said nothing when they happened to be by

themselves, but merely gazed at her. Natasha lifted her frightened eyes

to him, but there was such confident tenderness in his affectionate look

and smile that she could not, whilst looking at him, say what she had to

say. She lowered her eyes.

"Don't say such things to me. I am betrothed and love another," she said

rapidly.... She glanced at him.

Anatole was not upset or pained by what she had said.

"Don't speak to me of that! What can I do?" said he. "I tell you I am

madly, madly, in love with you! Is it my fault that you are

enchanting?... It's our turn to begin."

Natasha, animated and excited, looked about her with wide-open

frightened eyes and seemed merrier than usual. She understood hardly

anything that went on that evening. They danced the ecossaise and the

Grossvater. Her father asked her to come home, but she begged to remain.

Wherever she went and whomever she was speaking to, she felt his eyes

upon her. Later on she recalled how she had asked her father to let her

go to the dressing room to rearrange her dress, that Helene had followed

her and spoken laughingly of her brother's love, and that she again met

Anatole in the little sitting room. Helene had disappeared leaving them

alone, and Anatole had taken her hand and said in a tender voice:

"I cannot come to visit you but is it possible that I shall never see

you? I love you madly. Can I never...?" and, blocking her path, he

brought his face close to hers.

His large, glittering, masculine eyes were so close to hers that she saw

nothing but them.

"Natalie?" he whispered inquiringly while she felt her hands being

painfully pressed. "Natalie?"

"I don't understand. I have nothing to say," her eyes replied.

Burning lips were pressed to hers, and at the same instant she felt

herself released, and Helene's footsteps and the rustle of her dress

were heard in the room. Natasha looked round at her, and then, red and

trembling, threw a frightened look of inquiry at Anatole and moved

toward the door.

"One word, just one, for God's sake!" cried Anatole.

She paused. She so wanted a word from him that would explain to her what

had happened and to which she could find no answer.

"Natalie, just a word, only one!" he kept repeating, evidently not

knowing what to say and he repeated it till Helene came up to them.

Helene returned with Natasha to the drawing room. The Rostovs went away

without staying for supper.

After reaching home Natasha did not sleep all night. She was tormented

by the insoluble question whether she loved Anatole or Prince Andrew.

She loved Prince Andrew--she remembered distinctly how deeply she loved

him. But she also loved Anatole, of that there was no doubt. "Else how

could all this have happened?" thought she. "If, after that, I could

return his smile when saying good-by, if I was able to let it come to

that, it means that I loved him from the first. It means that he is

kind, noble, and splendid, and I could not help loving him. What am I to

do if I love him and the other one too?" she asked herself, unable to

find an answer to these terrible questions.

CHAPTER XIV

Morning came with its cares and bustle. Everyone got up and began to

move about and talk, dressmakers came again. Marya Dmitrievna appeared,

and they were called to breakfast. Natasha kept looking uneasily at

everybody with wide-open eyes, as if wishing to intercept every glance

directed toward her, and tried to appear the same as usual.

After breakfast, which was her best time, Marya Dmitrievna sat down in

her armchair and called Natasha and the count to her.

"Well, friends, I have now thought the whole matter over and this is my

advice," she began. "Yesterday, as you know, I went to see Prince

Bolkonski. Well, I had a talk with him.... He took it into his head to

begin shouting, but I am not one to be shouted down. I said what I had

to say!"

"Well, and he?" asked the count.

"He? He's crazy... he did not want to listen. But what's the use of

talking? As it is we have worn the poor girl out," said Marya

Dmitrievna. "My advice to you is finish your business and go back home

to Otradnoe... and wait there."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Natasha.

"Yes, go back," said Marya Dmitrievna, "and wait there. If your

betrothed comes here now--there will be no avoiding a quarrel; but alone

with the old man he will talk things over and then come on to you."

Count Rostov approved of this suggestion, appreciating its

reasonableness. If the old man came round it would be all the better to

visit him in Moscow or at Bald Hills later on; and if not, the wedding,

against his wishes, could only be arranged at Otradnoe.

"That is perfectly true. And I am sorry I went to see him and took her,"

said the old count.

"No, why be sorry? Being here, you had to pay your respects. But if he

won't--that's his affair," said Marya Dmitrievna, looking for something

in her reticule. "Besides, the trousseau is ready, so there is nothing

to wait for; and what is not ready I'll send after you. Though I don't

like letting you go, it is the best way. So go, with God's blessing!"

Having found what she was looking for in the reticule she handed it to

Natasha. It was a letter from Princess Mary.

"She has written to you. How she torments herself, poor thing! She's

afraid you might think that she does not like you."

"But she doesn't like me," said Natasha.

"Don't talk nonsense!" cried Marya Dmitrievna.

"I shan't believe anyone, I know she doesn't like me," replied Natasha

boldly as she took the letter, and her face expressed a cold and angry

resolution that caused Marya Dmitrievna to look at her more intently and

to frown.

"Don't answer like that, my good girl!" she said. "What I say is true!

Write an answer!" Natasha did not reply and went to her own room to read

Princess Mary's letter.

Princess Mary wrote that she was in despair at the misunderstanding that

had occurred between them. Whatever her father's feelings might be, she

begged Natasha to believe that she could not help loving her as the one

chosen by her brother, for whose happiness she was ready to sacrifice

everything.

"Do not think, however," she wrote, "that my father is ill-disposed

toward you. He is an invalid and an old man who must be forgiven; but he

is good and magnanimous and will love her who makes his son happy."

Princess Mary went on to ask Natasha to fix a time when she could see

her again.

After reading the letter Natasha sat down at the writing table to answer

it. "Dear Princess," she wrote in French quickly and mechanically, and

then paused. What more could she write after all that had happened the

evening before? "Yes, yes! All that has happened, and now all is

changed," she thought as she sat with the letter she had begun before

her. "Must I break off with him? Must I really? That's awful..." and to

escape from these dreadful thoughts she went to Sonya and began sorting

patterns with her.

After dinner Natasha went to her room and again took up Princess Mary's

letter. "Can it be that it is all over?" she thought. "Can it be that

all this has happened so quickly and has destroyed all that went

before?" She recalled her love for Prince Andrew in all its former

strength, and at the same time felt that she loved Kuragin. She vividly

pictured herself as Prince Andrew's wife, and the scenes of happiness

with him she had so often repeated in her imagination, and at the same

time, aglow with excitement, recalled every detail of yesterday's

interview with Anatole.

"Why could that not be as well?" she sometimes asked herself in complete

bewilderment. "Only so could I be completely happy; but now I have to

choose, and I can't be happy without either of them. Only," she thought,

"to tell Prince Andrew what has happened or to hide it from him are both

equally impossible. But with that one nothing is spoiled. But am I

really to abandon forever the joy of Prince Andrew's love, in which I

have lived so long?"

"Please, Miss!" whispered a maid entering the room with a mysterious

air. "A man told me to give you this-" and she handed Natasha a letter.

"Only, for Christ's sake..." the girl went on, as Natasha, without

thinking, mechanically broke the seal and read a love letter from

Anatole, of which, without taking in a word, she understood only that it

was a letter from him--from the man she loved. Yes, she loved him, or

else how could that have happened which had happened? And how could she

have a love letter from him in her hand?

With trembling hands Natasha held that passionate love letter which

Dolokhov had composed for Anatole, and as she read it she found in it an

echo of all that she herself imagined she was feeling.

"Since yesterday evening my fate has been sealed; to be loved by you or

to die. There is no other way for me," the letter began. Then he went on

to say that he knew her parents would not give her to him--for this

there were secret reasons he could reveal only to her--but that if she

loved him she need only say the word yes, and no human power could

hinder their bliss. Love would conquer all. He would steal her away and

carry her off to the ends of the earth.

"Yes, yes! I love him!" thought Natasha, reading the letter for the

twentieth time and finding some peculiarly deep meaning in each word of

it.

That evening Marya Dmitrievna was going to the Akharovs' and proposed to

take the girls with her. Natasha, pleading a headache, remained at home.

CHAPTER XV

On returning late in the evening Sonya went to Natasha's room, and to

her surprise found her still dressed and asleep on the sofa. Open on the

table, beside her lay Anatole's letter. Sonya picked it up and read it.

As she read she glanced at the sleeping Natasha, trying to find in her

face an explanation of what she was reading, but did not find it. Her

face was calm, gentle, and happy. Clutching her breast to keep herself

from choking, Sonya, pale and trembling with fear and agitation, sat

down in an armchair and burst into tears.

"How was it I noticed nothing? How could it go so far? Can she have left

off loving Prince Andrew? And how could she let Kuragin go to such

lengths? He is a deceiver and a villain, that's plain! What will

Nicholas, dear noble Nicholas, do when he hears of it? So this is the

meaning of her excited, resolute, unnatural look the day before

yesterday, yesterday, and today," thought Sonya. "But it can't be that

she loves him! She probably opened the letter without knowing who it was

from. Probably she is offended by it. She could not do such a thing!"

Sonya wiped away her tears and went up to Natasha, again scanning her

face.

"Natasha!" she said, just audibly.

Natasha awoke and saw Sonya.

"Ah, you're back?"

And with the decision and tenderness that often come at the moment of

awakening, she embraced her friend, but noticing Sonya's look of

embarrassment, her own face expressed confusion and suspicion.

"Sonya, you've read that letter?" she demanded.

"Yes," answered Sonya softly.

Natasha smiled rapturously.

"No, Sonya, I can't any longer!" she said. "I can't hide it from you any

longer. You know, we love one another! Sonya, darling, he writes...

Sonya..."

Sonya stared open-eyed at Natasha, unable to believe her ears.

"And Bolkonski?" she asked.

"Ah, Sonya, if you only knew how happy I am!" cried Natasha. "You don't

know what love is...."

"But, Natasha, can that be all over?"

Natasha looked at Sonya with wide-open eyes as if she could not grasp

the question.

"Well, then, are you refusing Prince Andrew?" said Sonya.

"Oh, you don't understand anything! Don't talk nonsense, just listen!"

said Natasha, with momentary vexation.

"But I can't believe it," insisted Sonya. "I don't understand. How is it

you have loved a man for a whole year and suddenly... Why, you have only

seen him three times! Natasha, I don't believe you, you're joking! In

three days to forget everything and so..."

"Three days?" said Natasha. "It seems to me I've loved him a hundred

years. It seems to me that I have never loved anyone before. You can't

understand it.... Sonya, wait a bit, sit here," and Natasha embraced and

kissed her.

"I had heard that it happens like this, and you must have heard it too,

but it's only now that I feel such love. It's not the same as before. As

soon as I saw him I felt he was my master and I his slave, and that I

could not help loving him. Yes, his slave! Whatever he orders I shall

do. You don't understand that. What can I do? What can I do, Sonya?"

cried Natasha with a happy yet frightened expression.

"But think what you are doing," cried Sonya. "I can't leave it like

this. This secret correspondence... How could you let him go so far?"

she went on, with a horror and disgust she could hardly conceal.

"I told you that I have no will," Natasha replied. "Why can't you

understand? I love him!"

"Then I won't let it come to that... I shall tell!" cried Sonya,

bursting into tears.

"What do you mean? For God's sake... If you tell, you are my enemy!"

declared Natasha. "You want me to be miserable, you want us to be

separated...."

When she saw Natasha's fright, Sonya shed tears of shame and pity for

her friend.

"But what has happened between you?" she asked. "What has he said to

you? Why doesn't he come to the house?"

Natasha did not answer her questions.

"For God's sake, Sonya, don't tell anyone, don't torture me," Natasha

entreated. "Remember no one ought to interfere in such matters! I have

confided in you...."

"But why this secrecy? Why doesn't he come to the house?" asked Sonya.

"Why doesn't he openly ask for your hand? You know Prince Andrew gave

you complete freedom--if it is really so; but I don't believe it!

Natasha, have you considered what these secret reasons can be?"

Natasha looked at Sonya with astonishment. Evidently this question

presented itself to her mind for the first time and she did not know how

to answer it.

"I don't know what the reasons are. But there must be reasons!"

Sonya sighed and shook her head incredulously.

"If there were reasons..." she began.

But Natasha, guessing her doubts, interrupted her in alarm.

"Sonya, one can't doubt him! One can't, one can't! Don't you

understand?" she cried.

"Does he love you?"

"Does he love me?" Natasha repeated with a smile of pity at her friend's

lack of comprehension. "Why, you have read his letter and you have seen

him."

"But if he is dishonorable?"

"He! dishonorable? If you only knew!" exclaimed Natasha.

"If he is an honorable man he should either declare his intentions or

cease seeing you; and if you won't do this, I will. I will write to him,

and I will tell Papa!" said Sonya resolutely.

"But I can't live without him!" cried Natasha.

"Natasha, I don't understand you. And what are you saying! Think of your

father and of Nicholas."

"I don't want anyone, I don't love anyone but him. How dare you say he

is dishonorable? Don't you know that I love him?" screamed Natasha. "Go

away, Sonya! I don't want to quarrel with you, but go, for God's sake

go! You see how I am suffering!" Natasha cried angrily, in a voice of

despair and repressed irritation. Sonya burst into sobs and ran from the

room.

Natasha went to the table and without a moment's reflection wrote that

answer to Princess Mary which she had been unable to write all the

morning. In this letter she said briefly that all their

misunderstandings were at an end; that availing herself of the

magnanimity of Prince Andrew who when he went abroad had given her her

freedom, she begged Princess Mary to forget everything and forgive her

if she had been to blame toward her, but that she could not be his wife.

At that moment this all seemed quite easy, simple, and clear to Natasha.

On Friday the Rostovs were to return to the country, but on Wednesday

the count went with the prospective purchaser to his estate near Moscow.

On the day the count left, Sonya and Natasha were invited to a big

dinner party at the Karagins', and Marya Dmitrievna took them there. At

that party Natasha again met Anatole, and Sonya noticed that she spoke

to him, trying not to be overheard, and that all through dinner she was

more agitated than ever. When they got home Natasha was the first to

begin the explanation Sonya expected.

"There, Sonya, you were talking all sorts of nonsense about him,"

Natasha began in a mild voice such as children use when they wish to be

praised. "We have had an explanation today."

"Well, what happened? What did he say? Natasha, how glad I am you're not

angry with me! Tell me everything--the whole truth. What did he say?"

Natasha became thoughtful.

"Oh, Sonya, if you knew him as I do! He said... He asked me what I had

promised Bolkonski. He was glad I was free to refuse him."

Sonya sighed sorrowfully.

"But you haven't refused Bolkonski?" said she.

"Perhaps I have. Perhaps all is over between me and Bolkonski. Why do

you think so badly of me?"

"I don't think anything, only I don't understand this..."

"Wait a bit, Sonya, you'll understand everything. You'll see what a man

he is! Now don't think badly of me or of him. I don't think badly of

anyone: I love and pity everybody. But what am I to do?"

Sonya did not succumb to the tender tone Natasha used toward her. The

more emotional and ingratiating the expression of Natasha's face became,

the more serious and stern grew Sonya's.

"Natasha," said she, "you asked me not to speak to you, and I haven't

spoken, but now you yourself have begun. I don't trust him, Natasha. Why

this secrecy?"

"Again, again!" interrupted Natasha.

"Natasha, I am afraid for you!"

"Afraid of what?"

"I am afraid you're going to your ruin," said Sonya resolutely, and was

herself horrified at what she had said.

Anger again showed in Natasha's face.

"And I'll go to my ruin, I will, as soon as possible! It's not your

business! It won't be you, but I, who'll suffer. Leave me alone, leave

me alone! I hate you!"

"Natasha!" moaned Sonya, aghast.

"I hate you, I hate you! You're my enemy forever!" And Natasha ran out

of the room.

Natasha did not speak to Sonya again and avoided her. With the same

expression of agitated surprise and guilt she went about the house,

taking up now one occupation, now another, and at once abandoning them.

Hard as it was for Sonya, she watched her friend and did not let her out

of her sight.

The day before the count was to return, Sonya noticed that Natasha sat

by the drawing-room window all the morning as if expecting something and

that she made a sign to an officer who drove past, whom Sonya took to be

Anatole.

Sonya began watching her friend still more attentively and noticed that

at dinner and all that evening Natasha was in a strange and unnatural

state. She answered questions at random, began sentences she did not

finish, and laughed at everything.

After tea Sonya noticed a housemaid at Natasha's door timidly waiting to

let her pass. She let the girl go in, and then listening at the door

learned that another letter had been delivered.

Then suddenly it became clear to Sonya that Natasha had some dreadful

plan for that evening. Sonya knocked at her door. Natasha did not let

her in.

"She will run away with him!" thought Sonya. "She is capable of

anything. There was something particularly pathetic and resolute in her

face today. She cried as she said good-by to Uncle," Sonya remembered.

"Yes, that's it, she means to elope with him, but what am I to do?"

thought she, recalling all the signs that clearly indicated that Natasha

had some terrible intention. "The count is away. What am I to do? Write

to Kuragin demanding an explanation? But what is there to oblige him to

reply? Write to Pierre, as Prince Andrew asked me to in case of some

misfortune?... But perhaps she really has already refused Bolkonski--she

sent a letter to Princess Mary yesterday. And Uncle is away...." To tell

Marya Dmitrievna who had such faith in Natasha seemed to Sonya terrible.

"Well, anyway," thought Sonya as she stood in the dark passage, "now or

never I must prove that I remember the family's goodness to me and that

I love Nicholas. Yes! If I don't sleep for three nights I'll not leave

this passage and will hold her back by force and will and not let the

family be disgraced," thought she.

CHAPTER XVI

Anatole had lately moved to Dolokhov's. The plan for Natalie Rostova's

abduction had been arranged and the preparations made by Dolokhov a few

days before, and on the day that Sonya, after listening at Natasha's

door, resolved to safeguard her, it was to have been put into execution.

Natasha had promised to come out to Kuragin at the back porch at ten

that evening. Kuragin was to put her into a troyka he would have ready

and to drive her forty miles to the village of Kamenka, where an

unfrocked priest was in readiness to perform a marriage ceremony over

them. At Kamenka a relay of horses was to wait which would take them to

the Warsaw highroad, and from there they would hasten abroad with post

horses.

Anatole had a passport, an order for post horses, ten thousand rubles he

had taken from his sister and another ten thousand borrowed with

Dolokhov's help.

Two witnesses for the mock marriage--Khvostikov, a retired petty

official whom Dolokhov made use of in his gambling transactions, and

Makarin, a retired hussar, a kindly, weak fellow who had an unbounded

affection for Kuragin--were sitting at tea in Dolokhov's front room.

In his large study, the walls of which were hung to the ceiling with

Persian rugs, bearskins, and weapons, sat Dolokhov in a traveling cloak

and high boots, at an open desk on which lay an abacus and some bundles of

paper money. Anatole, with uniform unbuttoned, walked to and fro from

the room where the witnesses were sitting, through the study to the room

behind, where his French valet and others were packing the last of his

things. Dolokhov was counting the money and noting something down.

"Well," he said, "Khvostikov must have two thousand."

"Give it to him, then," said Anatole.

"Makarka" (their name for Makarin) "will go through fire and water for

you for nothing. So here are our accounts all settled," said Dolokhov,

showing him the memorandum. "Is that right?"

"Yes, of course," returned Anatole, evidently not listening to Dolokhov

and looking straight before him with a smile that did not leave his

face.

Dolokhov banged down the lid of his desk and turned to Anatole with an

ironic smile:

"Do you know? You'd really better drop it all. There's still time!"

"Fool," retorted Anatole. "Don't talk nonsense! If you only knew... it's

the devil knows what!"

"No, really, give it up!" said Dolokhov. "I am speaking seriously. It's

no joke, this plot you've hatched."

"What, teasing again? Go to the devil! Eh?" said Anatole, making a

grimace. "Really it's no time for your stupid jokes," and he left the

room.

Dolokhov smiled contemptuously and condescendingly when Anatole had gone

out.

"You wait a bit," he called after him. "I'm not joking, I'm talking

sense. Come here, come here!"

Anatole returned and looked at Dolokhov, trying to give him his

attention and evidently submitting to him involuntarily.

"Now listen to me. I'm telling you this for the last time. Why should I

joke about it? Did I hinder you? Who arranged everything for you? Who

found the priest and got the passport? Who raised the money? I did it

all."

"Well, thank you for it. Do you think I am not grateful?" And Anatole

sighed and embraced Dolokhov.

"I helped you, but all the same I must tell you the truth; it is a

dangerous business, and if you think about it--a stupid business. Well,

you'll carry her off--all right! Will they let it stop at that? It will

come out that you're already married. Why, they'll have you in the

criminal court...."

"Oh, nonsense, nonsense!" Anatole ejaculated and again made a grimace.

"Didn't I explain to you? What?" And Anatole, with the partiality dull-

witted people have for any conclusion they have reached by their own

reasoning, repeated the argument he had already put to Dolokhov a

hundred times. "Didn't I explain to you that I have come to this

conclusion: if this marriage is invalid," he went on, crooking one

finger, "then I have nothing to answer for; but if it is valid, no

matter! Abroad no one will know anything about it. Isn't that so? And

don't talk to me, don't, don't."

"Seriously, you'd better drop it! You'll only get yourself into a mess!"

"Go to the devil!" cried Anatole and, clutching his hair, left the room,

but returned at once and dropped into an armchair in front of Dolokhov

with his feet turned under him. "It's the very devil! What? Feel how it

beats!" He took Dolokhov's hand and put it on his heart. "What a foot,

my dear fellow! What a glance! A goddess!" he added in French. "What?"

Dolokhov with a cold smile and a gleam in his handsome insolent eyes

looked at him--evidently wishing to get some more amusement out of him.

"Well and when the money's gone, what then?"

"What then? Eh?" repeated Anatole, sincerely perplexed by a thought of

the future. "What then?... Then, I don't know.... But why talk

nonsense!" He glanced at his watch. "It's time!"

Anatole went into the back room.

"Now then! Nearly ready? You're dawdling!" he shouted to the servants.

Dolokhov put away the money, called a footman whom he ordered to bring

something for them to eat and drink before the journey, and went into

the room where Khvostikov and Makarin were sitting.

Anatole lay on the sofa in the study leaning on his elbow and smiling

pensively, while his handsome lips muttered tenderly to himself.

"Come and eat something. Have a drink!" Dolokhov shouted to him from the

other room.

"I don't want to," answered Anatole continuing to smile.

"Come! Balaga is here."

Anatole rose and went into the dining room. Balaga was a famous troyka

driver who had known Dolokhov and Anatole some six years and had given

them good service with his troykas. More than once when Anatole's

regiment was stationed at Tver he had taken him from Tver in the

evening, brought him to Moscow by daybreak, and driven him back again

the next night. More than once he had enabled Dolokhov to escape when

pursued. More than once he had driven them through the town with gypsies

and "ladykins" as he called the cocottes. More than once in their

service he had run over pedestrians and upset vehicles in the streets of

Moscow and had always been protected from the consequences by "my

gentlemen" as he called them. He had ruined more than one horse in their

service. More than once they had beaten him, and more than once they had

made him drunk on champagne and Madeira, which he loved; and he knew

more than one thing about each of them which would long ago have sent an

ordinary man to Siberia. They often called Balaga into their orgies and

made him drink and dance at the gypsies', and more than one thousand

rubles of their money had passed through his hands. In their service he

risked his skin and his life twenty times a year, and in their service

had lost more horses than the money he had from them would buy. But he

liked them; liked that mad driving at twelve miles an hour, liked

upsetting a driver or running down a pedestrian, and flying at full

gallop through the Moscow streets. He liked to hear those wild, tipsy

shouts behind him: "Get on! Get on!" when it was impossible to go any

faster. He liked giving a painful lash on the neck to some peasant who,

more dead than alive, was already hurrying out of his way. "Real

gentlemen!" he considered them.

Anatole and Dolokhov liked Balaga too for his masterly driving and

because he liked the things they liked. With others Balaga bargained,

charging twenty-five rubles for a two hours' drive, and rarely drove

himself, generally letting his young men do so. But with "his gentlemen"

he always drove himself and never demanded anything for his work. Only a

couple of times a year--when he knew from their valets that they had

money in hand--he would turn up of a morning quite sober and with a deep

bow would ask them to help him. The gentlemen always made him sit down.

"Do help me out, Theodore Ivanych, sir," or "your excellency," he would

say. "I am quite out of horses. Let me have what you can to go to the

fair."

And Anatole and Dolokhov, when they had money, would give him a thousand

or a couple of thousand rubles.

Balaga was a fair-haired, short, and snub-nosed peasant of about twenty-

seven; red-faced, with a particularly red thick neck, glittering little

eyes, and a small beard. He wore a fine, dark-blue, silk-lined cloth

coat over a sheepskin.

On entering the room now he crossed himself, turning toward the front

corner of the room, and went up to Dolokhov, holding out a small, black

hand.

"Theodore Ivanych!" he said, bowing.

"How d'you do, friend? Well, here he is!"

"Good day, your excellency!" he said, again holding out his hand to

Anatole who had just come in.

"I say, Balaga," said Anatole, putting his hands on the man's shoulders,

"do you care for me or not? Eh? Now, do me a service.... What horses

have you come with? Eh?"

"As your messenger ordered, your special beasts," replied Balaga.

"Well, listen, Balaga! Drive all three to death but get me there in

three hours. Eh?"

"When they are dead, what shall I drive?" said Balaga with a wink.

"Mind, I'll smash your face in! Don't make jokes!" cried Anatole,

suddenly rolling his eyes.

"Why joke?" said the driver, laughing. "As if I'd grudge my gentlemen

anything! As fast as ever the horses can gallop, so fast we'll go!"

"Ah!" said Anatole. "Well, sit down."

"Yes, sit down!" said Dolokhov.

"I'll stand, Theodore Ivanych."

"Sit down; nonsense! Have a drink!" said Anatole, and filled a large

glass of Madeira for him.

The driver's eyes sparkled at the sight of the wine. After refusing it

for manners' sake, he drank it and wiped his mouth with a red silk

handkerchief he took out of his cap.

"And when are we to start, your excellency?"

"Well..." Anatole looked at his watch. "We'll start at once. Mind,

Balaga! You'll get there in time? Eh?"

"That depends on our luck in starting, else why shouldn't we be there in

time?" replied Balaga. "Didn't we get you to Tver in seven hours? I

think you remember that, your excellency?"

"Do you know, one Christmas I drove from Tver," said Anatole, smilingly

at the recollection and turning to Makarin who gazed rapturously at him

with wide-open eyes. "Will you believe it, Makarka, it took one's breath

away, the rate we flew. We came across a train of loaded sleighs and

drove right over two of them. Eh?"

"Those were horses!" Balaga continued the tale. "That time I'd harnessed

two young side horses with the bay in the shafts," he went on, turning

to Dolokhov. "Will you believe it, Theodore Ivanych, those animals flew

forty miles? I couldn't hold them in, my hands grew numb in the sharp

frost so that I threw down the reins--'Catch hold yourself, your

excellency!' says I, and I just tumbled on the bottom of the sleigh and

sprawled there. It wasn't a case of urging them on, there was no holding

them in till we reached the place. The devils took us there in three

hours! Only the near one died of it."

CHAPTER XVII

Anatole went out of the room and returned a few minutes later wearing a

fur coat girt with a silver belt, and a sable cap jauntily set on one

side and very becoming to his handsome face. Having looked in a mirror,

and standing before Dolokhov in the same pose he had assumed before it,

he lifted a glass of wine.

"Well, good-by, Theodore. Thank you for everything and farewell!" said

Anatole. "Well, comrades and friends..." he considered for a moment

"...of my youth, farewell!" he said, turning to Makarin and the others.

Though they were all going with him, Anatole evidently wished to make

something touching and solemn out of this address to his comrades. He

spoke slowly in a loud voice and throwing out his chest slightly swayed

one leg.

"All take glasses; you too, Balaga. Well, comrades and friends of my

youth, we've had our fling and lived and reveled. Eh? And now, when

shall we meet again? I am going abroad. We have had a good time--now

farewell, lads! To our health! Hurrah!..." he cried, and emptying his

glass flung it on the floor.

"To your health!" said Balaga who also emptied his glass, and wiped his

mouth with his handkerchief.

Makarin embraced Anatole with tears in his eyes.

"Ah, Prince, how sorry I am to part from you!

"Let's go. Let's go!" cried Anatole.

Balaga was about to leave the room.

"No, stop!" said Anatole. "Shut the door; we have first to sit down.

That's the way."

They shut the door and all sat down.

"Now, quick march, lads!" said Anatole, rising.

Joseph, his valet, handed him his sabretache and saber, and they all

went out into the vestibule.

"And where's the fur cloak?" asked Dolokhov. "Hey, Ignatka! Go to

Matrena Matrevna and ask her for the sable cloak. I have heard what

elopements are like," continued Dolokhov with a wink. "Why, she'll rush

out more dead than alive just in the things she is wearing; if you delay

at all there'll be tears and 'Papa' and 'Mamma,' and she's frozen in a

minute and must go back--but you wrap the fur cloak round her first

thing and carry her to the sleigh."

The valet brought a woman's fox-lined cloak.

"Fool, I told you the sable one! Hey, Matrena, the sable!" he shouted so

that his voice rang far through the rooms.

A handsome, slim, and pale-faced gypsy girl with glittering black eyes

and curly blue-black hair, wearing a red shawl, ran out with a sable

mantle on her arm.

"Here, I don't grudge it--take it!" she said, evidently afraid of her

master and yet regretful of her cloak.

Dolokhov, without answering, took the cloak, threw it over Matrena, and

wrapped her up in it.

"That's the way," said Dolokhov, "and then so!" and he turned the collar

up round her head, leaving only a little of the face uncovered. "And

then so, do you see?" and he pushed Anatole's head forward to meet the

gap left by the collar, through which Matrena's brilliant smile was

seen.

"Well, good-by, Matrena," said Anatole, kissing her. "Ah, my revels here

are over. Remember me to Steshka. There, good-by! Good-bye, Matrena,

wish me luck!"

"Well, Prince, may God give you great luck!" said Matrena in her gypsy

accent.

Two troykas were standing before the porch and two young drivers were

holding the horses. Balaga took his seat in the front one and holding

his elbows high arranged the reins deliberately. Anatole and Dolokhov

got in with him. Makarin, Khvostikov, and a valet seated themselves in

the other sleigh.

"Well, are you ready?" asked Balaga.

"Go!" he cried, twisting the reins round his hands, and the troyka tore

down the Nikitski Boulevard.

"Tproo! Get out of the way! Hi!... Tproo!..." The shouting of Balaga and

of the sturdy young fellow seated on the box was all that could be

heard. On the Arbat Square the troyka caught against a carriage;

something cracked, shouts were heard, and the troyka flew along the

Arbat Street.

After taking a turn along the Podnovinski Boulevard, Balaga began to

rein in, and turning back drew up at the crossing of the old Konyusheny

Street.

The young fellow on the box jumped down to hold the horses and Anatole

and Dolokhov went along the pavement. When they reached the gate

Dolokhov whistled. The whistle was answered, and a maidservant ran out.

"Come into the courtyard or you'll be seen; she'll come out directly,"

said she.

Dolokhov stayed by the gate. Anatole followed the maid into the

courtyard, turned the corner, and ran up into the porch.

He was met by Gabriel, Marya Dmitrievna's gigantic footman.

"Come to the mistress, please," said the footman in his deep bass,

intercepting any retreat.

"To what Mistress? Who are you?" asked Anatole in a breathless whisper.

"Kindly step in, my orders are to bring you in."

"Kuragin! Come back!" shouted Dolokhov. "Betrayed! Back!"

Dolokhov, after Anatole entered, had remained at the wicket gate and was

struggling with the yard porter who was trying to lock it. With a last

desperate effort Dolokhov pushed the porter aside, and when Anatole ran

back seized him by the arm, pulled him through the wicket, and ran back

with him to the troyka.

CHAPTER XVIII

Marya Dmitrievna, having found Sonya weeping in the corridor, made her

confess everything, and intercepting the note to Natasha she read it and

went into Natasha's room with it in her hand.

"You shameless good-for-nothing!" said she. "I won't hear a word."

Pushing back Natasha who looked at her with astonished but tearless

eyes, she locked her in; and having given orders to the yard porter to

admit the persons who would be coming that evening, but not to let them

out again, and having told the footman to bring them up to her, she

seated herself in the drawing room to await the abductors.

When Gabriel came to inform her that the men who had come had run away

again, she rose frowning, and clasping her hands behind her paced

through the rooms a long time considering what she should do. Toward

midnight she went to Natasha's room fingering the key in her pocket.

Sonya was sitting sobbing in the corridor. "Marya Dmitrievna, for God's

sake let me in to her!" she pleaded, but Marya Dmitrievna unlocked the

door and went in without giving her an answer.... "Disgusting,

abominable... In my house... horrid girl, hussy! I'm only sorry for her

father!" thought she, trying to restrain her wrath. "Hard as it may be,

I'll tell them all to hold their tongues and will hide it from the

count." She entered the room with resolute steps. Natasha lying on the

sofa, her head hidden in her hands, and she did not stir. She was in

just the same position in which Marya Dmitrievna had left her.

"A nice girl! Very nice!" said Marya Dmitrievna. "Arranging meetings

with lovers in my house! It's no use pretending: you listen when I speak

to you!" And Marya Dmitrievna touched her arm. "Listen when I speak!

You've disgraced yourself like the lowest of hussies. I'd treat you

differently, but I'm sorry for your father, so I will conceal it."

Natasha did not change her position, but her whole body heaved with

noiseless, convulsive sobs which choked her. Marya Dmitrievna glanced

round at Sonya and seated herself on the sofa beside Natasha.

"It's lucky for him that he escaped me; but I'll find him!" she said in

her rough voice. "Do you hear what I am saying or not?" she added.

She put her large hand under Natasha's face and turned it toward her.

Both Marya Dmitrievna and Sonya were amazed when they saw how Natasha

looked. Her eyes were dry and glistening, her lips compressed, her

cheeks sunken.

"Let me be!... What is it to me?... I shall die!" she muttered,

wrenching herself from Marya Dmitrievna's hands with a vicious effort

and sinking down again into her former position.

"Natalie!" said Marya Dmitrievna. "I wish for your good. Lie still, stay

like that then, I won't touch you. But listen. I won't tell you how

guilty you are. You know that yourself. But when your father comes back

tomorrow what am I to tell him? Eh?"

Again Natasha's body shook with sobs.

"Suppose he finds out, and your brother, and your betrothed?"

"I have no betrothed: I have refused him!" cried Natasha.

"That's all the same," continued Marya Dmitrievna. "If they hear of

this, will they let it pass? He, your father, I know him... if he

challenges him to a duel will that be all right? Eh?"

"Oh, let me be! Why have you interfered at all? Why? Why? Who asked you

to?" shouted Natasha, raising herself on the sofa and looking

malignantly at Marya Dmitrievna.

"But what did you want?" cried Marya Dmitrievna, growing angry again.

"Were you kept under lock and key? Who hindered his coming to the house?

Why carry you off as if you were some gypsy singing girl?... Well, if he

had carried you off... do you think they wouldn't have found him? Your

father, or brother, or your betrothed? And he's a scoundrel, a wretch--

that's a fact!"

"He is better than any of you!" exclaimed Natasha getting up. "If you

hadn't interfered... Oh, my God! What is it all? What is it? Sonya,

why?... Go away!"

And she burst into sobs with the despairing vehemence with which people

bewail disasters they feel they have themselves occasioned. Marya

Dmitrievna was to speak again but Natasha cried out:

"Go away! Go away! You all hate and despise me!" and she threw herself

back on the sofa.

Marya Dmitrievna went on admonishing her for some time, enjoining on her

that it must all be kept from her father and assuring her that nobody

would know anything about it if only Natasha herself would undertake to

forget it all and not let anyone see that something had happened.

Natasha did not reply, nor did she sob any longer, but she grew cold and

had a shivering fit. Marya Dmitrievna put a pillow under her head,

covered her with two quilts, and herself brought her some lime-flower

water, but Natasha did not respond to her.

"Well, let her sleep," said Marya Dmitrievna as she went out of the room

supposing Natasha to be asleep.

But Natasha was not asleep; with pale face and fixed wide-open eyes she

looked straight before her. All that night she did not sleep or weep and

did not speak to Sonya who got up and went to her several times.

Next day Count Rostov returned from his estate near Moscow in time for

lunch as he had promised. He was in very good spirits; the affair with

the purchaser was going on satisfactorily, and there was nothing to keep

him any longer in Moscow, away from the countess whom he missed. Marya

Dmitrievna met him and told him that Natasha had been very unwell the

day before and that they had sent for the doctor, but that she was

better now. Natasha had not left her room that morning. With compressed

and parched lips and dry fixed eyes, she sat at the window, uneasily

watching the people who drove past and hurriedly glancing round at

anyone who entered the room. She was evidently expecting news of him and

that he would come or would write to her.

When the count came to see her she turned anxiously round at the sound

of a man's footstep, and then her face resumed its cold and malevolent

expression. She did not even get up to greet him. "What is the matter

with you, my angel? Are you ill?" asked the count.

After a moment's silence Natasha answered: "Yes, ill."

In reply to the count's anxious inquiries as to why she was so dejected

and whether anything had happened to her betrothed, she assured him that

nothing had happened and asked him not to worry. Marya Dmitrievna

confirmed Natasha's assurances that nothing had happened. From the

pretense of illness, from his daughter's distress, and by the

embarrassed faces of Sonya and Marya Dmitrievna, the count saw clearly

that something had gone wrong during his absence, but it was so terrible

for him to think that anything disgraceful had happened to his beloved

daughter, and he so prized his own cheerful tranquillity, that he

avoided inquiries and tried to assure himself that nothing particularly

had happened; and he was only dissatisfied that her indisposition

delayed their return to the country.

CHAPTER XIX

From the day his wife arrived in Moscow Pierre had been intending to go

away somewhere, so as not to be near her. Soon after the Rostovs came to

Moscow the effect Natasha had on him made him hasten to carry out his

intention. He went to Tver to see Joseph Alexeevich's widow, who had

long since promised to hand over to him some papers of her deceased

husband's.

When he returned to Moscow Pierre was handed a letter from Marya

Dmitrievna asking him to come and see her on a matter of great

importance relating to Andrew Bolkonski and his betrothed. Pierre had

been avoiding Natasha because it seemed to him that his feeling for her

was stronger than a married man's should be for his friend's fiancee.

Yet some fate constantly threw them together.

"What can have happened? And what can they want with me?" thought he as

he dressed to go to Marya Dmitrievna's. "If only Prince Andrew would

hurry up and come and marry her!" thought he on his way to the house.

On the Tverskoy Boulevard a familiar voice called to him.

"Pierre! Been back long?" someone shouted. Pierre raised his head. In a

sleigh drawn by two gray trotting-horses that were bespattering the

dashboard with snow, Anatole and his constant companion Makarin dashed

past. Anatole was sitting upright in the classic pose of military

dandies, the lower part of his face hidden by his beaver collar and his

head slightly bent. His face was fresh and rosy, his white-plumed hat,

tilted to one side, disclosed his curled and pomaded hair besprinkled

with powdery snow.

"Yes, indeed, that's a true sage," thought Pierre. "He sees nothing

beyond the pleasure of the moment, nothing troubles him and so he is

always cheerful, satisfied, and serene. What wouldn't I give to be like

him!" he thought enviously.

In Marya Dmitrievna's anteroom the footman who helped him off with his

fur coat said that the mistress asked him to come to her bedroom.

When he opened the ballroom door Pierre saw Natasha sitting at the

window, with a thin, pale, and spiteful face. She glanced round at him,

frowned, and left the room with an expression of cold dignity.

"What has happened?" asked Pierre, entering Marya Dmitrievna's room.

"Fine doings!" answered Dmitrievna. "For fifty-eight years have I lived

in this world and never known anything so disgraceful!"

And having put him on his honor not to repeat anything she told him,

Marya Dmitrievna informed him that Natasha had refused Prince Andrew

without her parents' knowledge and that the cause of this was Anatole

Kuragin into whose society Pierre's wife had thrown her and with whom

Natasha had tried to elope during her father's absence, in order to be

married secretly.

Pierre raised his shoulders and listened open-mouthed to what was told

him, scarcely able to believe his own ears. That Prince Andrew's deeply

loved affianced wife--the same Natasha Rostova who used to be so

charming--should give up Bolkonski for that fool Anatole who was already

secretly married (as Pierre knew), and should be so in love with him as

to agree to run away with him, was something Pierre could not conceive

and could not imagine.

He could not reconcile the charming impression he had of Natasha, whom

he had known from a child, with this new conception of her baseness,

folly, and cruelty. He thought of his wife. "They are all alike!" he

said to himself, reflecting that he was not the only man unfortunate

enough to be tied to a bad woman. But still he pitied Prince Andrew to

the point of tears and sympathized with his wounded pride, and the more

he pitied his friend the more did he think with contempt and even with

disgust of that Natasha who had just passed him in the ballroom with

such a look of cold dignity. He did not know that Natasha's soul was

overflowing with despair, shame, and humiliation, and that it was not

her fault that her face happened to assume an expression of calm dignity

and severity.

"But how get married?" said Pierre, in answer to Marya Dmitrievna. "He

could not marry--he is married!"

"Things get worse from hour to hour!" ejaculated Marya Dmitrievna. "A

nice youth! What a scoundrel! And she's expecting him--expecting him

since yesterday. She must be told! Then at least she won't go on

expecting him."

After hearing the details of Anatole's marriage from Pierre, and giving

vent to her anger against Anatole in words of abuse, Marya Dmitrievna

told Pierre why she had sent for him. She was afraid that the count or

Bolkonski, who might arrive at any moment, if they knew of this affair

(which she hoped to hide from them) might challenge Anatole to a duel,

and she therefore asked Pierre to tell his brother-in-law in her name to

leave Moscow and not dare to let her set eyes on him again. Pierre--only

now realizing the danger to the old count, Nicholas, and Prince Andrew--

promised to do as she wished. Having briefly and exactly explained her

wishes to him, she let him go to the drawing room.

"Mind, the count knows nothing. Behave as if you know nothing either,"

she said. "And I will go and tell her it is no use expecting him! And

stay to dinner if you care to!" she called after Pierre.

Pierre met the old count, who seemed nervous and upset. That morning

Natasha had told him that she had rejected Bolkonski.

"Troubles, troubles, my dear fellow!" he said to Pierre. "What troubles

one has with these girls without their mother! I do so regret having

come here.... I will be frank with you. Have you heard she has broken

off her engagement without consulting anybody? It's true this engagement

never was much to my liking. Of course he is an excellent man, but

still, with his father's disapproval they wouldn't have been happy, and

Natasha won't lack suitors. Still, it has been going on so long, and to

take such a step without father's or mother's consent! And now she's

ill, and God knows what! It's hard, Count, hard to manage daughters in

their mother's absence...."

Pierre saw that the count was much upset and tried to change the

subject, but the count returned to his troubles.

Sonya entered the room with an agitated face.

"Natasha is not quite well; she's in her room and would like to see you.

Marya Dmitrievna is with her and she too asks you to come."

"Yes, you are a great friend of Bolkonski's, no doubt she wants to send

him a message," said the count. "Oh dear! Oh dear! How happy it all

was!"

And clutching the spare gray locks on his temples the count left the

room.

When Marya Dmitrievna told Natasha that Anatole was married, Natasha did

not wish to believe it and insisted on having it confirmed by Pierre

himself. Sonya told Pierre this as she led him along the corridor to

Natasha's room.

Natasha, pale and stern, was sitting beside Marya Dmitrievna, and her

eyes, glittering feverishly, met Pierre with a questioning look the

moment he entered. She did not smile or nod, but only gazed fixedly at

him, and her look asked only one thing: was he a friend, or like the

others an enemy in regard to Anatole? As for Pierre, he evidently did

not exist for her.

"He knows all about it," said Marya Dmitrievna pointing to Pierre and

addressing Natasha. "Let him tell you whether I have told the truth."

Natasha looked from one to the other as a hunted and wounded animal

looks at the approaching dogs and sportsmen.

"Natalya Ilynichna," Pierre began, dropping his eyes with a feeling of

pity for her and loathing for the thing he had to do, "whether it is

true or not should make no difference to you, because..."

"Then it is not true that he's married!"

"Yes, it is true."

"Has he been married long?" she asked. "On your honor?..."

Pierre gave his word of honor.

"Is he still here?" she asked, quickly.

"Yes, I have just seen him."

She was evidently unable to speak and made a sign with her hands that

they should leave her alone.

CHAPTER XX

Pierre did not stay for dinner, but left the room and went away at once.

He drove through the town seeking Anatole Kuragin, at the thought of

whom now the blood rushed to his heart and he felt a difficulty in

breathing. He was not at the ice hills, nor at the gypsies', nor at

Komoneno's. Pierre drove to the club. In the club all was going on as

usual. The members who were assembling for dinner were sitting about in

groups; they greeted Pierre and spoke of the town news. The footman

having greeted him, knowing his habits and his acquaintances, told him

there was a place left for him in the small dining room and that Prince

Michael Zakharych was in the library, but Paul Timofeevich had not yet

arrived. One of Pierre's acquaintances, while they were talking about

the weather, asked if he had heard of Kuragin's abduction of Rostova

which was talked of in the town, and was it true? Pierre laughed and

said it was nonsense for he had just come from the Rostovs'. He asked

everyone about Anatole. One man told him he had not come yet, and

another that he was coming to dinner. Pierre felt it strange to see this

calm, indifferent crowd of people unaware of what was going on in his

soul. He paced through the ballroom, waited till everyone had come, and

as Anatole had not turned up did not stay for dinner but drove home.

Anatole, for whom Pierre was looking, dined that day with Dolokhov,

consulting him as to how to remedy this unfortunate affair. It seemed to

him essential to see Natasha. In the evening he drove to his sister's to

discuss with her how to arrange a meeting. When Pierre returned home

after vainly hunting all over Moscow, his valet informed him that Prince

Anatole was with the countess. The countess' drawing room was full of

guests.

Pierre without greeting his wife whom he had not seen since his return--

at that moment she was more repulsive to him than ever--entered the

drawing room and seeing Anatole went up to him.

"Ah, Pierre," said the countess going up to her husband. "You don't know

what a plight our Anatole..."

She stopped, seeing in the forward thrust of her husband's head, in his

glowing eyes and his resolute gait, the terrible indications of that

rage and strength which she knew and had herself experienced after his

duel with Dolokhov.

"Where you are, there is vice and evil!" said Pierre to his wife.

"Anatole, come with me! I must speak to you," he added in French.

Anatole glanced round at his sister and rose submissively, ready to

follow Pierre. Pierre, taking him by the arm, pulled him toward himself

and was leading him from the room.

"If you allow yourself in my drawing room..." whispered Helene, but

Pierre did not reply and went out of the room.

Anatole followed him with his usual jaunty step but his face betrayed

anxiety.

Having entered his study Pierre closed the door and addressed Anatole

without looking at him.

"You promised Countess Rostova to marry her and were about to elope with

her, is that so?"

"Mon cher," answered Anatole (their whole conversation was in French),

"I don't consider myself bound to answer questions put to me in that

tone."

Pierre's face, already pale, became distorted by fury. He seized Anatole

by the collar of his uniform with his big hand and shook him from side

to side till Anatole's face showed a sufficient degree of terror.

"When I tell you that I must talk to you!..." repeated Pierre.

"Come now, this is stupid. What?" said Anatole, fingering a button of

his collar that had been wrenched loose with a bit of the cloth.

"You're a scoundrel and a blackguard, and I don't know what deprives me

from the pleasure of smashing your head with this!" said Pierre,

expressing himself so artificially because he was talking French.

He took a heavy paperweight and lifted it threateningly, but at once put

it back in its place.

"Did you promise to marry her?"

"I... I didn't think of it. I never promised, because..."

Pierre interrupted him.

"Have you any letters of hers? Any letters?" he said, moving toward

Anatole.

Anatole glanced at him and immediately thrust his hand into his pocket

and drew out his pocketbook.

Pierre took the letter Anatole handed him and, pushing aside a table

that stood in his way, threw himself on the sofa.

"I shan't be violent, don't be afraid!" said Pierre in answer to a

frightened gesture of Anatole's. "First, the letters," said he, as if

repeating a lesson to himself. "Secondly," he continued after a short

pause, again rising and again pacing the room, "tomorrow you must get

out of Moscow."

"But how can I?..."

"Thirdly," Pierre continued without listening to him, "you must never

breathe a word of what has passed between you and Countess Rostova. I

know I can't prevent your doing so, but if you have a spark of

conscience..." Pierre paced the room several times in silence.

Anatole sat at a table frowning and biting his lips.

"After all, you must understand that besides your pleasure there is such

a thing as other people's happiness and peace, and that you are ruining

a whole life for the sake of amusing yourself! Amuse yourself with women

like my wife--with them you are within your rights, for they know what

you want of them. They are armed against you by the same experience of

debauchery; but to promise a maid to marry her... to deceive, to

kidnap.... Don't you understand that it is as mean as beating an old man

or a child?..."

Pierre paused and looked at Anatole no longer with an angry but with a

questioning look.

"I don't know about that, eh?" said Anatole, growing more confident as

Pierre mastered his wrath. "I don't know that and don't want to," he

said, not looking at Pierre and with a slight tremor of his lower jaw,

"but you have used such words to me--'mean' and so on--which as a man of

honor I can't allow anyone to use."

Pierre glanced at him with amazement, unable to understand what he

wanted.

"Though it was tête-à-tête," Anatole continued, "still I can't..."

"Is it satisfaction you want?" said Pierre ironically.

"You could at least take back your words. What? If you want me to do as

you wish, eh?"

"I take them back, I take them back!" said Pierre, "and I ask you to

forgive me." Pierre involuntarily glanced at the loose button. "And if

you require money for your journey..."

Anatole smiled. The expression of that base and cringing smile, which

Pierre knew so well in his wife, revolted him.

"Oh, vile and heartless brood!" he exclaimed, and left the room.

Next day Anatole left for Petersburg.

CHAPTER XXI

Pierre drove to Marya Dmitrievna's to tell her of the fulfillment of her

wish that Kuragin should be banished from Moscow. The whole house was in

a state of alarm and commotion. Natasha was very ill, having, as Marya

Dmitrievna told him in secret, poisoned herself the night after she had

been told that Anatole was married, with some arsenic she had stealthily

procured. After swallowing a little she had been so frightened that she

woke Sonya and told her what she had done. The necessary antidotes had

been administered in time and she was now out of danger, though still so

weak that it was out of the question to move her to the country, and so

the countess had been sent for. Pierre saw the distracted count, and

Sonya, who had a tear-stained face, but he could not see Natasha.

Pierre dined at the club that day and heard on all sides gossip about

the attempted abduction of Rostova. He resolutely denied these rumors,

assuring everyone that nothing had happened except that his brother-in-

law had proposed to her and been refused. It seemed to Pierre that it

was his duty to conceal the whole affair and re-establish Natasha's

reputation.

He was awaiting Prince Andrew's return with dread and went every day to

the old prince's for news of him.

Old Prince Bolkonski heard all the rumors current in the town from

Mademoiselle Bourienne and had read the note to Princess Mary in which

Natasha had broken off her engagement. He seemed in better spirits than

usual and awaited his son with great impatience.

Some days after Anatole's departure Pierre received a note from Prince

Andrew, informing him of his arrival and asking him to come to see him.

As soon as he reached Moscow, Prince Andrew had received from his father

Natasha's note to Princess Mary breaking off her engagement

(Mademoiselle Bourienne had purloined it from Princess Mary and given it

to the old prince), and he heard from him the story of Natasha's

elopement, with additions.

Prince Andrew had arrived in the evening and Pierre came to see him next

morning. Pierre expected to find Prince Andrew in almost the same state

as Natasha and was therefore surprised on entering the drawing room to

hear him in the study talking in a loud animated voice about some

intrigue going on in Petersburg. The old prince's voice and another now

and then interrupted him. Princess Mary came out to meet Pierre. She

sighed, looking toward the door of the room where Prince Andrew was,

evidently intending to express her sympathy with his sorrow, but Pierre

saw by her face that she was glad both at what had happened and at the

way her brother had taken the news of Natasha's faithlessness.

"He says he expected it," she remarked. "I know his pride will not let

him express his feelings, but still he has taken it better, far better,

than I expected. Evidently it had to be...."

"But is it possible that all is really ended?" asked Pierre.

Princess Mary looked at him with astonishment. She did not understand

how he could ask such a question. Pierre went into the study. Prince

Andrew, greatly changed and plainly in better health, but with a fresh

horizontal wrinkle between his brows, stood in civilian dress facing his

father and Prince Meshcherski, warmly disputing and vigorously

gesticulating. The conversation was about Speranski--the news of whose

sudden exile and alleged treachery had just reached Moscow.

"Now he is censured and accused by all who were enthusiastic about him a

month ago," Prince Andrew was saying, "and by those who were unable to

understand his aims. To judge a man who is in disfavor and to throw on

him all the blame of other men's mistakes is very easy, but I maintain

that if anything good has been accomplished in this reign it was done by

him, by him alone."

He paused at the sight of Pierre. His face quivered and immediately

assumed a vindictive expression.

"Posterity will do him justice," he concluded, and at once turned to

Pierre.

"Well, how are you? Still getting stouter?" he said with animation, but

the new wrinkle on his forehead deepened. "Yes, I am well," he said in

answer to Pierre's question, and smiled.

To Pierre that smile said plainly: "I am well, but my health is now of

no use to anyone."

After a few words to Pierre about the awful roads from the Polish

frontier, about people he had met in Switzerland who knew Pierre, and

about M. Dessalles, whom he had brought from abroad to be his son's

tutor, Prince Andrew again joined warmly in the conversation about

Speranski which was still going on between the two old men.

"If there were treason, or proofs of secret relations with Napoleon,

they would have been made public," he said with warmth and haste. "I do

not, and never did, like Speranski personally, but I like justice!"

Pierre now recognized in his friend a need with which he was only too

familiar, to get excited and to have arguments about extraneous matters

in order to stifle thoughts that were too oppressive and too intimate.

When Prince Meshcherski had left, Prince Andrew took Pierre's arm and

asked him into the room that had been assigned him. A bed had been made

up there, and some open portmanteaus and trunks stood about. Prince

Andrew went to one and took out a small casket, from which he drew a

packet wrapped in paper. He did it all silently and very quickly. He

stood up and coughed. His face was gloomy and his lips compressed.

"Forgive me for troubling you..."

Pierre saw that Prince Andrew was going to speak of Natasha, and his

broad face expressed pity and sympathy. This expression irritated Prince

Andrew, and in a determined, ringing, and unpleasant tone he continued:

"I have received a refusal from Countess Rostova and have heard reports

of your brother-in-law having sought her hand, or something of that

kind. Is that true?"

"Both true and untrue," Pierre began; but Prince Andrew interrupted him.

"Here are her letters and her portrait," said he.

He took the packet from the table and handed it to Pierre.

"Give this to the countess... if you see her."

"She is very ill," said Pierre.

"Then she is here still?" said Prince Andrew. "And Prince Kuragin?" he

added quickly.

"He left long ago. She has been at death's door."

"I much regret her illness," said Prince Andrew; and he smiled like his

father, coldly, maliciously, and unpleasantly.

"So Monsieur Kuragin has not honored Countess Rostova with his hand?"

said Prince Andrew, and he snorted several times.

"He could not marry, for he was married already," said Pierre.

Prince Andrew laughed disagreeably, again reminding one of his father.

"And where is your brother-in-law now, if I may ask?" he said.

"He has gone to Peters... But I don't know," said Pierre.

"Well, it doesn't matter," said Prince Andrew. "Tell Countess Rostova

that she was and is perfectly free and that I wish her all that is

good."

Pierre took the packet. Prince Andrew, as if trying to remember whether

he had something more to say, or waiting to see if Pierre would say

anything, looked fixedly at him.

"I say, do you remember our discussion in Petersburg?" asked Pierre,

"about..."

"Yes," returned Prince Andrew hastily. "I said that a fallen woman

should be forgiven, but I didn't say I could forgive her. I can't."

"But can this be compared...?" said Pierre.

Prince Andrew interrupted him and cried sharply: "Yes, ask her hand

again, be magnanimous, and so on?... Yes, that would be very noble, but

I am unable to follow in that gentleman's footsteps. If you wish to be

my friend never speak to me of that... of all that! Well, good-by. So

you'll give her the packet?"

Pierre left the room and went to the old prince and Princess Mary.

The old man seemed livelier than usual. Princess Mary was the same as

always, but beneath her sympathy for her brother, Pierre noticed her

satisfaction that the engagement had been broken off. Looking at them

Pierre realized what contempt and animosity they all felt for the

Rostovs, and that it was impossible in their presence even to mention

the name of her who could give up Prince Andrew for anyone else.

At dinner the talk turned on the war, the approach of which was becoming

evident. Prince Andrew talked incessantly, arguing now with his father,

now with the Swiss tutor Dessalles, and showing an unnatural animation,

the cause of which Pierre so well understood.

CHAPTER XXII

That same evening Pierre went to the Rostovs' to fulfill the commission

entrusted to him. Natasha was in bed, the count at the club, and Pierre,

after giving the letters to Sonya, went to Marya Dmitrievna who was

interested to know how Prince Andrew had taken the news. Ten minutes

later Sonya came to Marya Dmitrievna.

"Natasha insists on seeing Count Peter Kirilovich," said she.

"But how? Are we to take him up to her? The room there has not been

tidied up."

"No, she has dressed and gone into the drawing room," said Sonya.

Marya Dmitrievna only shrugged her shoulders.

"When will her mother come? She has worried me to death! Now mind, don't

tell her everything!" said she to Pierre. "One hasn't the heart to scold

her, she is so much to be pitied, so much to be pitied."

Natasha was standing in the middle of the drawing room, emaciated, with

a pale set face, but not at all shamefaced as Pierre expected to find

her. When he appeared at the door she grew flurried, evidently undecided

whether to go to meet him or to wait till he came up.

Pierre hastened to her. He thought she would give him her hand as usual;

but she, stepping up to him, stopped, breathing heavily, her arms

hanging lifelessly just in the pose she used to stand in when she went

to the middle of the ballroom to sing, but with quite a different

expression of face.

"Peter Kirilovich," she began rapidly, "Prince Bolkonski was your

friend--is your friend," she corrected herself. (It seemed to her that

everything that had once been must now be different.) "He told me once

to apply to you..."

Pierre sniffed as he looked at her, but did not speak. Till then he had

reproached her in his heart and tried to despise her, but he now felt so

sorry for her that there was no room in his soul for reproach.

"He is here now: tell him... to for... forgive me!" She stopped and

breathed still more quickly, but did not shed tears.

"Yes... I will tell him," answered Pierre; "but..."

He did not know what to say.

Natasha was evidently dismayed at the thought of what he might think she

had meant.

"No, I know all is over," she said hurriedly. "No, that can never be.

I'm only tormented by the wrong I have done him. Tell him only that I

beg him to forgive, forgive, forgive me for everything...."

She trembled all over and sat down on a chair.

A sense of pity he had never before known overflowed Pierre's heart.

"I will tell him, I will tell him everything once more," said Pierre.

"But... I should like to know one thing...."

"Know what?" Natasha's eyes asked.

"I should like to know, did you love..." Pierre did not know how to

refer to Anatole and flushed at the thought of him--"did you love that

bad man?"

"Don't call him bad!" said Natasha. "But I don't know, don't know at

all...."

She began to cry and a still greater sense of pity, tenderness, and love

welled up in Pierre. He felt the tears trickle under his spectacles and

hoped they would not be noticed.

"We won't speak of it any more, my dear," said Pierre, and his gentle,

cordial tone suddenly seemed very strange to Natasha.

"We won't speak of it, my dear--I'll tell him everything; but one thing

I beg of you, consider me your friend and if you want help, advice, or

simply to open your heart to someone--not now, but when your mind is

clearer think of me!" He took her hand and kissed it. "I shall be happy

if it's in my power..."

Pierre grew confused.

"Don't speak to me like that. I am not worth it!" exclaimed Natasha and

turned to leave the room, but Pierre held her hand.

He knew he had something more to say to her. But when he said it he was

amazed at his own words.

"Stop, stop! You have your whole life before you," said he to her.

"Before me? No! All is over for me," she replied with shame and self-

abasement.

"All over?" he repeated. "If I were not myself, but the handsomest,

cleverest, and best man in the world, and were free, I would this moment

ask on my knees for your hand and your love!"

For the first time for many days Natasha wept tears of gratitude and

tenderness, and glancing at Pierre she went out of the room.

Pierre too when she had gone almost ran into the anteroom, restraining

tears of tenderness and joy that choked him, and without finding the

sleeves of his fur cloak threw it on and got into his sleigh.

"Where to now, your excellency?" asked the coachman.

"Where to?" Pierre asked himself. "Where can I go now? Surely not to the

club or to pay calls?" All men seemed so pitiful, so poor, in comparison

with this feeling of tenderness and love he experienced: in comparison

with that softened, grateful, last look she had given him through her

tears.

"Home!" said Pierre, and despite twenty-two degrees of frost Fahrenheit

he threw open the bearskin cloak from his broad chest and inhaled the

air with joy.

It was clear and frosty. Above the dirty, ill-lit streets, above the

black roofs, stretched the dark starry sky. Only looking up at the sky

did Pierre cease to feel how sordid and humiliating were all mundane

things compared with the heights to which his soul had just been raised.

At the entrance to the Arbat Square an immense expanse of dark starry

sky presented itself to his eyes. Almost in the center of it, above the

Prechistenka Boulevard, surrounded and sprinkled on all sides by stars

but distinguished from them all by its nearness to the earth, its white

light, and its long uplifted tail, shone the enormous and brilliant

comet of 1812--the comet which was said to portend all kinds of woes and

the end of the world. In Pierre, however, that comet with its long

luminous tail aroused no feeling of fear. On the contrary he gazed

joyfully, his eyes moist with tears, at this bright comet which, having

traveled in its orbit with inconceivable velocity through immeasurable

space, seemed suddenly--like an arrow piercing the earth--to remain

fixed in a chosen spot, vigorously holding its tail erect, shining and

displaying its white light amid countless other scintillating stars. It

seemed to Pierre that this comet fully responded to what was passing in

his own softened and uplifted soul, now blossoming into a new life.

BOOK NINE: 1812

CHAPTER I

From the close of the year 1811 intensified arming and concentrating of

the forces of Western Europe began, and in 1812 these forces--millions

of men, reckoning those transporting and feeding the army--moved from

the west eastwards to the Russian frontier, toward which since 1811

Russian forces had been similarly drawn. On the twelfth of June, 1812,

the forces of Western Europe crossed the Russian frontier and war began,

that is, an event took place opposed to human reason and to human

nature. Millions of men perpetrated against one another such innumerable

crimes, frauds, treacheries, thefts, forgeries, issues of false money,

burglaries, incendiarisms, and murders as in whole centuries are not

recorded in the annals of all the law courts of the world, but which

those who committed them did not at the time regard as being crimes.

What produced this extraordinary occurrence? What were its causes? The

historians tell us with naive assurance that its causes were the wrongs

inflicted on the Duke of Oldenburg, the nonobservance of the Continental

System, the ambition of Napoleon, the firmness of Alexander, the

mistakes of the diplomatists, and so on.

Consequently, it would only have been necessary for Metternich,

Rumyantsev, or Talleyrand, between a levee and an evening party, to have

taken proper pains and written a more adroit note, or for Napoleon to

have written to Alexander: "My respected Brother, I consent to restore

the duchy to the Duke of Oldenburg"--and there would have been no war.

We can understand that the matter seemed like that to contemporaries. It

naturally seemed to Napoleon that the war was caused by England's

intrigues (as in fact he said on the island of St. Helena). It naturally

seemed to members of the English Parliament that the cause of the war

was Napoleon's ambition; to the Duke of Oldenburg, that the cause of the

war was the violence done to him; to businessmen that the cause of the

war was the Continental System which was ruining Europe; to the generals

and old soldiers that the chief reason for the war was the necessity of

giving them employment; to the legitimists of that day that it was the

need of re-establishing les bons principes, and to the diplomatists of

that time that it all resulted from the fact that the alliance between

Russia and Austria in 1809 had not been sufficiently well concealed from

Napoleon, and from the awkward wording of Memorandum No. 178. It is

natural that these and a countless and infinite quantity of other

reasons, the number depending on the endless diversity of points of

view, presented themselves to the men of that day; but to us, to

posterity who view the thing that happened in all its magnitude and

perceive its plain and terrible meaning, these causes seem insufficient.

To us it is incomprehensible that millions of Christian men killed and

tortured each other either because Napoleon was ambitious or Alexander

was firm, or because England's policy was astute or the Duke of

Oldenburg wronged. We cannot grasp what connection such circumstances

have with the actual fact of slaughter and violence: why because the

Duke was wronged, thousands of men from the other side of Europe killed

and ruined the people of Smolensk and Moscow and were killed by them.

To us, their descendants, who are not historians and are not carried

away by the process of research and can therefore regard the event with

unclouded common sense, an incalculable number of causes present

themselves. The deeper we delve in search of these causes the more of

them we find; and each separate cause or whole series of causes appears

to us equally valid in itself and equally false by its insignificance

compared to the magnitude of the events, and by its impotence--apart

from the cooperation of all the other coincident causes--to occasion the

event. To us, the wish or objection of this or that French corporal to

serve a second term appears as much a cause as Napoleon's refusal to

withdraw his troops beyond the Vistula and to restore the duchy of

Oldenburg; for had he not wished to serve, and had a second, a third,

and a thousandth corporal and private also refused, there would have

been so many less men in Napoleon's army and the war could not have

occurred.

Had Napoleon not taken offense at the demand that he should withdraw

beyond the Vistula, and not ordered his troops to advance, there would

have been no war; but had all his sergeants objected to serving a second

term then also there could have been no war. Nor could there have been a

war had there been no English intrigues and no Duke of Oldenburg, and

had Alexander not felt insulted, and had there not been an autocratic

government in Russia, or a Revolution in France and a subsequent

dictatorship and Empire, or all the things that produced the French

Revolution, and so on. Without each of these causes nothing could have

happened. So all these causes--myriads of causes--coincided to bring it

about. And so there was no one cause for that occurrence, but it had to

occur because it had to. Millions of men, renouncing their human

feelings and reason, had to go from west to east to slay their fellows,

just as some centuries previously hordes of men had come from the east

to the west, slaying their fellows.

The actions of Napoleon and Alexander, on whose words the event seemed

to hang, were as little voluntary as the actions of any soldier who was

drawn into the campaign by lot or by conscription. This could not be

otherwise, for in order that the will of Napoleon and Alexander (on whom

the event seemed to depend) should be carried out, the concurrence of

innumerable circumstances was needed without any one of which the event

could not have taken place. It was necessary that millions of men in

whose hands lay the real power--the soldiers who fired, or transported

provisions and guns--should consent to carry out the will of these weak

individuals, and should have been induced to do so by an infinite number

of diverse and complex causes.

We are forced to fall back on fatalism as an explanation of irrational

events (that is to say, events the reasonableness of which we do not

understand). The more we try to explain such events in history

reasonably, the more unreasonable and incomprehensible do they become to

us.

Each man lives for himself, using his freedom to attain his personal

aims, and feels with his whole being that he can now do or abstain from

doing this or that action; but as soon as he has done it, that action

performed at a certain moment in time becomes irrevocable and belongs to

history, in which it has not a free but a predestined significance.

There are two sides to the life of every man, his individual life, which

is the more free the more abstract its interests, and his elemental hive

life in which he inevitably obeys laws laid down for him.

Man lives consciously for himself, but is an unconscious instrument in

the attainment of the historic, universal, aims of humanity. A deed done

is irrevocable, and its result coinciding in time with the actions of

millions of other men assumes an historic significance. The higher a man

stands on the social ladder, the more people he is connected with and

the more power he has over others, the more evident is the

predestination and inevitability of his every action.

"The king's heart is in the hands of the Lord."

A king is history's slave.

History, that is, the unconscious, general, hive life of mankind, uses

every moment of the life of kings as a tool for its own purposes.

Though Napoleon at that time, in 1812, was more convinced than ever that

it depended on him, verser (ou ne pas verser) le sang de ses peuples \*--

as Alexander expressed it in the last letter he wrote him--he had never

been so much in the grip of inevitable laws, which compelled him, while

thinking that he was acting on his own volition, to perform for the hive

life--that is to say, for history--whatever had to be performed.

\* "To shed (or not to shed) the blood of his peoples."

The people of the west moved eastwards to slay their fellow men, and by

the law of coincidence thousands of minute causes fitted in and co-

ordinated to produce that movement and war: reproaches for the

nonobservance of the Continental System, the Duke of Oldenburg's wrongs,

the movement of troops into Prussia--undertaken (as it seemed to

Napoleon) only for the purpose of securing an armed peace, the French

Emperor's love and habit of war coinciding with his people's

inclinations, allurement by the grandeur of the preparations, and the

expenditure on those preparations and the need of obtaining advantages

to compensate for that expenditure, the intoxicating honors he received

in Dresden, the diplomatic negotiations which, in the opinion of

contemporaries, were carried on with a sincere desire to attain peace,

but which only wounded the self-love of both sides, and millions of

other causes that adapted themselves to the event that was happening or

coincided with it.

When an apple has ripened and falls, why does it fall? Because of its

attraction to the earth, because its stalk withers, because it is dried

by the sun, because it grows heavier, because the wind shakes it, or

because the boy standing below wants to eat it?

Nothing is the cause. All this is only the coincidence of conditions in

which all vital organic and elemental events occur. And the botanist who

finds that the apple falls because the cellular tissue decays and so

forth is equally right with the child who stands under the tree and says

the apple fell because he wanted to eat it and prayed for it. Equally

right or wrong is he who says that Napoleon went to Moscow because he

wanted to, and perished because Alexander desired his destruction, and

he who says that an undermined hill weighing a million tons fell because

the last navvy struck it for the last time with his mattock. In historic

events the so-called great men are labels giving names to events, and

like labels they have but the smallest connection with the event itself.

Every act of theirs, which appears to them an act of their own will, is

in an historical sense involuntary and is related to the whole course of

history and predestined from eternity.

CHAPTER II

On the twenty-ninth of May Napoleon left Dresden, where he had spent

three weeks surrounded by a court that included princes, dukes, kings,

and even an emperor. Before leaving, Napoleon showed favor to the

emperor, kings, and princes who had deserved it, reprimanded the kings

and princes with whom he was dissatisfied, presented pearls and diamonds

of his own--that is, which he had taken from other kings--to the Empress

of Austria, and having, as his historian tells us, tenderly embraced the

Empress Marie Louise--who regarded him as her husband, though he had

left another wife in Paris--left her grieved by the parting which she

seemed hardly able to bear. Though the diplomatists still firmly

believed in the possibility of peace and worked zealously to that end,

and though the Emperor Napoleon himself wrote a letter to Alexander,

calling him Monsieur mon frere, and sincerely assured him that he did

not want war and would always love and honor him--yet he set off to join

his army, and at every station gave fresh orders to accelerate the

movement of his troops from west to east. He went in a traveling coach

with six horses, surrounded by pages, aides-de-camp, and an escort,

along the road to Posen, Thorn, Danzig, and Konigsberg. At each of these

towns thousands of people met him with excitement and enthusiasm.

The army was moving from west to east, and relays of six horses carried

him in the same direction. On the tenth of June, \* coming up with the

army, he spent the night in apartments prepared for him on the estate of

a Polish count in the Vilkavisski forest.

\* Old style.

Next day, overtaking the army, he went in a carriage to the Niemen, and,

changing into a Polish uniform, he drove to the riverbank in order to

select a place for the crossing.

Seeing, on the other side, some Cossacks (les Cosaques) and the wide-

spreading steppes in the midst of which lay the holy city of Moscow

(Moscou, la ville sainte), the capital of a realm such as the Scythia

into which Alexander the Great had marched--Napoleon unexpectedly, and

contrary alike to strategic and diplomatic considerations, ordered an

advance, and the next day his army began to cross the Niemen.

Early in the morning of the twelfth of June he came out of his tent,

which was pitched that day on the steep left bank of the Niemen, and

looked through a spyglass at the streams of his troops pouring out of

the Vilkavisski forest and flowing over the three bridges thrown across

the river. The troops, knowing of the Emperor's presence, were on the

lookout for him, and when they caught sight of a figure in an overcoat

and a cocked hat standing apart from his suite in front of his tent on

the hill, they threw up their caps and shouted: "Vive l'Empereur!" and

one after another poured in a ceaseless stream out of the vast forest

that had concealed them and, separating, flowed on and on by the three

bridges to the other side.

"Now we'll go into action. Oh, when he takes it in hand himself, things

get hot... by heaven!... There he is!... Vive l'Empereur! So these are

the steppes of Asia! It's a nasty country all the same. Au revoir,

Beauche; I'll keep the best palace in Moscow for you! Au revoir. Good

luck!... Did you see the Emperor? Vive l'Empereur!... preur!--If they

make me Governor of India, Gerard, I'll make you Minister of Kashmir--

that's settled. Vive l'Empereur! Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah! The Cossacks--

those rascals--see how they run! Vive l'Empereur! There he is, do you

see him? I've seen him twice, as I see you now. The little corporal... I

saw him give the cross to one of the veterans.... Vive l'Empereur!" came

the voices of men, old and young, of most diverse characters and social

positions. On the faces of all was one common expression of joy at the

commencement of the long-expected campaign and of rapture and devotion

to the man in the gray coat who was standing on the hill.

On the thirteenth of June a rather small, thoroughbred Arab horse was

brought to Napoleon. He mounted it and rode at a gallop to one of the

bridges over the Niemen, deafened continually by incessant and rapturous

acclamations which he evidently endured only because it was impossible

to forbid the soldiers to express their love of him by such shouting,

but the shouting which accompanied him everywhere disturbed him and

distracted him from the military cares that had occupied him from the

time he joined the army. He rode across one of the swaying pontoon

bridges to the farther side, turned sharply to the left, and galloped in

the direction of Kovno, preceded by enraptured, mounted chasseurs of the

Guard who, breathless with delight, galloped ahead to clear a path for

him through the troops. On reaching the broad river Viliya, he stopped

near a regiment of Polish uhlans stationed by the river.

"Vivat!" shouted the Poles, ecstatically, breaking their ranks and

pressing against one another to see him.

Napoleon looked up and down the river, dismounted, and sat down on a log

that lay on the bank. At a mute sign from him, a telescope was handed

him which he rested on the back of a happy page who had run up to him,

and he gazed at the opposite bank. Then he became absorbed in a map laid

out on the logs. Without lifting his head he said something, and two of

his aides-de-camp galloped off to the Polish uhlans.

"What? What did he say?" was heard in the ranks of the Polish uhlans

when one of the aides-de-camp rode up to them.

The order was to find a ford and to cross the river. The colonel of the

Polish uhlans, a handsome old man, flushed and, fumbling in his speech

from excitement, asked the aide-de-camp whether he would be permitted to

swim the river with his uhlans instead of seeking a ford. In evident

fear of refusal, like a boy asking for permission to get on a horse, he

begged to be allowed to swim across the river before the Emperor's eyes.

The aide-de-camp replied that probably the Emperor would not be

displeased at this excess of zeal.

As soon as the aide-de-camp had said this, the old mustached officer,

with happy face and sparkling eyes, raised his saber, shouted "Vivat!"

and, commanding the uhlans to follow him, spurred his horse and galloped

into the river. He gave an angry thrust to his horse, which had grown

restive under him, and plunged into the water, heading for the deepest

part where the current was swift. Hundreds of uhlans galloped in after

him. It was cold and uncanny in the rapid current in the middle of the

stream, and the uhlans caught hold of one another as they fell off their

horses. Some of the horses were drowned and some of the men; the others

tried to swim on, some in the saddle and some clinging to their horses'

manes. They tried to make their way forward to the opposite bank and,

though there was a ford one third of a mile away, were proud that they

were swimming and drowning in this river under the eyes of the man who

sat on the log and was not even looking at what they were doing. When

the aide-de-camp, having returned and choosing an opportune moment,

ventured to draw the Emperor's attention to the devotion of the Poles to

his person, the little man in the gray overcoat got up and, having

summoned Berthier, began pacing up and down the bank with him, giving

him instructions and occasionally glancing disapprovingly at the

drowning uhlans who distracted his attention.

For him it was no new conviction that his presence in any part of the

world, from Africa to the steppes of Muscovy alike, was enough to

dumfound people and impel them to insane self-oblivion. He called for

his horse and rode to his quarters.

Some forty uhlans were drowned in the river, though boats were sent to

their assistance. The majority struggled back to the bank from which

they had started. The colonel and some of his men got across and with

difficulty clambered out on the further bank. And as soon as they had

got out, in their soaked and streaming clothes, they shouted "Vivat!"

and looked ecstatically at the spot where Napoleon had been but where he

no longer was and at that moment considered themselves happy.

That evening, between issuing one order that the forged Russian paper

money prepared for use in Russia should be delivered as quickly as

possible and another that a Saxon should be shot, on whom a letter

containing information about the orders to the French army had been

found, Napoleon also gave instructions that the Polish colonel who had

needlessly plunged into the river should be enrolled in the Legion

d'honneur of which Napoleon was himself the head.

Quos vult perdere dementat. \*

\* Those whom (God) wishes to destroy he drives mad.

CHAPTER III

The Emperor of Russia had, meanwhile, been in Vilna for more than a

month, reviewing troops and holding maneuvers. Nothing was ready for the

war that everyone expected and to prepare for which the Emperor had come

from Petersburg. There was no general plan of action. The vacillation

between the various plans that were proposed had even increased after

the Emperor had been at headquarters for a month. Each of the three

armies had its own commander-in-chief, but there was no supreme

commander of all the forces, and the Emperor did not assume that

responsibility himself.

The longer the Emperor remained in Vilna the less did everybody--tired

of waiting--prepare for the war. All the efforts of those who surrounded

the sovereign seemed directed merely to making him spend his time

pleasantly and forget that war was impending.

In June, after many balls and fetes given by the Polish magnates, by the

courtiers, and by the Emperor himself, it occurred to one of the Polish

aides-de-camp in attendance that a dinner and ball should be given for

the Emperor by his aides-de-camp. This idea was eagerly received. The

Emperor gave his consent. The aides-de-camp collected money by

subscription. The lady who was thought to be most pleasing to the

Emperor was invited to act as hostess. Count Bennigsen, being a

landowner in the Vilna province, offered his country house for the fete,

and the thirteenth of June was fixed for a ball, dinner, regatta, and

fireworks at Zakret, Count Bennigsen's country seat.

The very day that Napoleon issued the order to cross the Niemen, and his

vanguard, driving off the Cossacks, crossed the Russian frontier,

Alexander spent the evening at the entertainment given by his aides-de-

camp at Bennigsen's country house.

It was a gay and brilliant fete. Connoisseurs of such matters declared

that rarely had so many beautiful women been assembled in one place.

Countess Bezukhova was present among other Russian ladies who had

followed the sovereign from Petersburg to Vilna and eclipsed the refined

Polish ladies by her massive, so-called Russian type of beauty. The

Emperor noticed her and honored her with a dance.

Boris Drubetskoy, having left his wife in Moscow and being for the

present en garcon (as he phrased it), was also there and, though not an

aide-de-camp, had subscribed a large sum toward the expenses. Boris was

now a rich man who had risen to high honors and no longer sought

patronage but stood on an equal footing with the highest of those of his

own age. He was meeting Helene in Vilna after not having seen her for a

long time and did not recall the past, but as Helene was enjoying the

favors of a very important personage and Boris had only recently

married, they met as good friends of long standing.

At midnight dancing was still going on. Helene, not having a suitable

partner, herself offered to dance the mazurka with Boris. They were the

third couple. Boris, coolly looking at Helene's dazzling bare shoulders

which emerged from a dark, gold-embroidered, gauze gown, talked to her

of old acquaintances and at the same time, unaware of it himself and

unnoticed by others, never for an instant ceased to observe the Emperor

who was in the same room. The Emperor was not dancing, he stood in the

doorway, stopping now one pair and now another with gracious words which

he alone knew how to utter.

As the mazurka began, Boris saw that Adjutant General Balashev, one of

those in closest attendance on the Emperor, went up to him and contrary

to court etiquette stood near him while he was talking to a Polish lady.

Having finished speaking to her, the Emperor looked inquiringly at

Balashev and, evidently understanding that he only acted thus because

there were important reasons for so doing, nodded slightly to the lady

and turned to him. Hardly had Balashev begun to speak before a look of

amazement appeared on the Emperor's face. He took Balashev by the arm

and crossed the room with him, unconsciously clearing a path seven yards

wide as the people on both sides made way for him. Boris noticed

Arakcheev's excited face when the sovereign went out with Balashev.

Arakcheev looked at the Emperor from under his brow and, sniffing with

his red nose, stepped forward from the crowd as if expecting the Emperor

to address him. (Boris understood that Arakcheev envied Balashev and was

displeased that evidently important news had reached the Emperor

otherwise than through himself.)

But the Emperor and Balashev passed out into the illuminated garden

without noticing Arakcheev who, holding his sword and glancing

wrathfully around, followed some twenty paces behind them.

All the time Boris was going through the figures of the mazurka, he was

worried by the question of what news Balashev had brought and how he

could find it out before others. In the figure in which he had to choose

two ladies, he whispered to Helene that he meant to choose Countess

Potocka who, he thought, had gone out onto the veranda, and glided over

the parquet to the door opening into the garden, where, seeing Balashev

and the Emperor returning to the veranda, he stood still. They were

moving toward the door. Boris, fluttering as if he had not had time to

withdraw, respectfully pressed close to the doorpost with bowed head.

The Emperor, with the agitation of one who has been personally

affronted, was finishing with these words:

"To enter Russia without declaring war! I will not make peace as long as

a single armed enemy remains in my country!" It seemed to Boris that it

gave the Emperor pleasure to utter these words. He was satisfied with

the form in which he had expressed his thoughts, but displeased that

Boris had overheard it.

"Let no one know of it!" the Emperor added with a frown.

Boris understood that this was meant for him and, closing his eyes,

slightly bowed his head. The Emperor re-entered the ballroom and

remained there about another half-hour.

Boris was thus the first to learn the news that the French army had

crossed the Niemen and, thanks to this, was able to show certain

important personages that much that was concealed from others was

usually known to him, and by this means he rose higher in their

estimation.

The unexpected news of the French having crossed the Niemen was

particularly startling after a month of unfulfilled expectations, and at

a ball. On first receiving the news, under the influence of indignation

and resentment the Emperor had found a phrase that pleased him, fully

expressed his feelings, and has since become famous. On returning home

at two o'clock that night he sent for his secretary, Shishkov, and told

him to write an order to the troops and a rescript to Field Marshal

Prince Saltykov, in which he insisted on the words being inserted that

he would not make peace so long as a single armed Frenchman remained on

Russian soil.

Next day the following letter was sent to Napoleon:

Monsieur mon frere,

Yesterday I learned that, despite the loyalty with which I have kept my

engagements with Your Majesty, your troops have crossed the Russian

frontier, and I have this moment received from Petersburg a note, in

which Count Lauriston informs me, as a reason for this aggression, that

Your Majesty has considered yourself to be in a state of war with me

from the time Prince Kuragin asked for his passports. The reasons on

which the Duc de Bassano based his refusal to deliver them to him would

never have led me to suppose that that could serve as a pretext for

aggression. In fact, the ambassador, as he himself has declared, was

never authorized to make that demand, and as soon as I was informed of

it I let him know how much I disapproved of it and ordered him to remain

at his post. If Your Majesty does not intend to shed the blood of our

peoples for such a misunderstanding, and consents to withdraw your

troops from Russian territory, I will regard what has passed as not

having occurred and an understanding between us will be possible. In the

contrary case, Your Majesty, I shall see myself forced to repel an

attack that nothing on my part has provoked. It still depends on Your

Majesty to preserve humanity from the calamity of another war. I am,

etc.,

(signed) Alexander.

CHAPTER IV

At two in the morning of the fourteenth of June, the Emperor, having

sent for Balashev and read him his letter to Napoleon, ordered him to

take it and hand it personally to the French Emperor. When dispatching

Balashev, the Emperor repeated to him the words that he would not make

peace so long as a single armed enemy remained on Russian soil and told

him to transmit those words to Napoleon. Alexander did not insert them

in his letter to Napoleon, because with his characteristic tact he felt

it would be injudicious to use them at a moment when a last attempt at

reconciliation was being made, but he definitely instructed Balashev to

repeat them personally to Napoleon.

Having set off in the small hours of the fourteenth, accompanied by a

bugler and two Cossacks, Balashev reached the French outposts at the

village of Rykonty, on the Russian side of the Niemen, by dawn. There he

was stopped by French cavalry sentinels.

A French noncommissioned officer of hussars, in crimson uniform and a

shaggy cap, shouted to the approaching Balashev to halt. Balashev did

not do so at once, but continued to advance along the road at a walking

pace.

The noncommissioned officer frowned and, muttering words of abuse,

advanced his horse's chest against Balashev, put his hand to his saber,

and shouted rudely at the Russian general, asking: was he deaf that he

did not do as he was told? Balashev mentioned who he was. The

noncommissioned officer began talking with his comrades about regimental

matters without looking at the Russian general.

After living at the seat of the highest authority and power, after

conversing with the Emperor less than three hours before, and in general

being accustomed to the respect due to his rank in the service, Balashev

found it very strange here on Russian soil to encounter this hostile,

and still more this disrespectful, application of brute force to

himself.

The sun was only just appearing from behind the clouds, the air was

fresh and dewy. A herd of cattle was being driven along the road from

the village, and over the fields the larks rose trilling, one after

another, like bubbles rising in water.

Balashev looked around him, awaiting the arrival of an officer from the

village. The Russian Cossacks and bugler and the French hussars looked

silently at one another from time to time.

A French colonel of hussars, who had evidently just left his bed, came

riding from the village on a handsome sleek gray horse, accompanied by

two hussars. The officer, the soldiers, and their horses all looked

smart and well kept.

It was that first period of a campaign when troops are still in full

trim, almost like that of peacetime maneuvers, but with a shade of

martial swagger in their clothes, and a touch of the gaiety and spirit

of enterprise which always accompany the opening of a campaign.

The French colonel with difficulty repressed a yawn, but was polite and

evidently understood Balashev's importance. He led him past his soldiers

and behind the outposts and told him that his wish to be presented to

the Emperor would most likely be satisfied immediately, as the Emperor's

quarters were, he believed, not far off.

They rode through the village of Rykonty, past tethered French hussar

horses, past sentinels and men who saluted their colonel and stared with

curiosity at a Russian uniform, and came out at the other end of the

village. The colonel said that the commander of the division was a mile

and a quarter away and would receive Balashev and conduct him to his

destination.

The sun had by now risen and shone gaily on the bright verdure.

They had hardly ridden up a hill, past a tavern, before they saw a group

of horsemen coming toward them. In front of the group, on a black horse

with trappings that glittered in the sun, rode a tall man with plumes in

his hat and black hair curling down to his shoulders. He wore a red

mantle, and stretched his long legs forward in French fashion. This man

rode toward Balashev at a gallop, his plumes flowing and his gems and

gold lace glittering in the bright June sunshine.

Balashev was only two horses' length from the equestrian with the

bracelets, plumes, necklaces, and gold embroidery, who was galloping

toward him with a theatrically solemn countenance, when Julner, the

French colonel, whispered respectfully: "The King of Naples!" It was, in

fact, Murat, now called "King of Naples." Though it was quite

incomprehensible why he should be King of Naples, he was called so, and

was himself convinced that he was so, and therefore assumed a more

solemn and important air than formerly. He was so sure that he really

was the King of Naples that when, on the eve of his departure from that

city, while walking through the streets with his wife, some Italians

called out to him: "Viva il re!" \* he turned to his wife with a pensive

smile and said: "Poor fellows, they don't know that I am leaving them

tomorrow!"

\* "Long live the king."

But though he firmly believed himself to be King of Naples and pitied

the grief felt by the subjects he was abandoning, latterly, after he had

been ordered to return to military service--and especially since his

last interview with Napoleon in Danzig, when his august brother-in-law

had told him: "I made you King that you should reign in my way, but not

in yours!"--he had cheerfully taken up his familiar business, and--like

a well-fed but not overfat horse that feels himself in harness and grows

skittish between the shafts--he dressed up in clothes as variegated and

expensive as possible, and gaily and contentedly galloped along the

roads of Poland, without himself knowing why or whither.

On seeing the Russian general he threw back his head, with its long hair

curling to his shoulders, in a majestically royal manner, and looked

inquiringly at the French colonel. The colonel respectfully informed His

Majesty of Balashev's mission, whose name he could not pronounce.

"De Bal-macheve!" said the King (overcoming by his assurance the

difficulty that had presented itself to the colonel). "Charmed to make

your acquaintance, General!" he added, with a gesture of kingly

condescension.

As soon as the King began to speak loud and fast his royal dignity

instantly forsook him, and without noticing it he passed into his

natural tone of good-natured familiarity. He laid his hand on the

withers of Balashev's horse and said:

"Well, General, it all looks like war," as if regretting a circumstance

of which he was unable to judge.

"Your Majesty," replied Balashev, "my master, the Emperor, does not

desire war and as Your Majesty sees..." said Balashev, using the words

Your Majesty at every opportunity, with the affectation unavoidable in

frequently addressing one to whom the title was still a novelty.

Murat's face beamed with stupid satisfaction as he listened to "Monsieur

de Bal-macheve." But royaute oblige! \* and he felt it incumbent on him,

as a king and an ally, to confer on state affairs with Alexander's

envoy. He dismounted, took Balashev's arm, and moving a few steps away

from his suite, which waited respectfully, began to pace up and down

with him, trying to speak significantly. He referred to the fact that

the Emperor Napoleon had resented the demand that he should withdraw his

troops from Prussia, especially when that demand became generally known

and the dignity of France was thereby offended.

\* "Royalty has its obligations."

Balashev replied that there was "nothing offensive in the demand,

because..." but Murat interrupted him.

"Then you don't consider the Emperor Alexander the aggressor?" he asked

unexpectedly, with a kindly and foolish smile.

Balashev told him why he considered Napoleon to be the originator of the

war.

"Oh, my dear general!" Murat again interrupted him, "with all my heart I

wish the Emperors may arrange the affair between them, and that the war

begun by no wish of mine may finish as quickly as possible!" said he, in

the tone of a servant who wants to remain good friends with another

despite a quarrel between their masters.

And he went on to inquiries about the Grand Duke and the state of his

health, and to reminiscences of the gay and amusing times he had spent

with him in Naples. Then suddenly, as if remembering his royal dignity,

Murat solemnly drew himself up, assumed the pose in which he had stood

at his coronation, and, waving his right arm, said:

"I won't detain you longer, General. I wish success to your mission,"

and with his embroidered red mantle, his flowing feathers, and his

glittering ornaments, he rejoined his suite who were respectfully

awaiting him.

Balashev rode on, supposing from Murat's words that he would very soon

be brought before Napoleon himself. But instead of that, at the next

village the sentinels of Davout's infantry corps detained him as the

pickets of the vanguard had done, and an adjutant of the corps

commander, who was fetched, conducted him into the village to Marshal

Davout.

CHAPTER V

Davout was to Napoleon what Arakcheev was to Alexander--though not a

coward like Arakcheev, he was as precise, as cruel, and as unable to

express his devotion to his monarch except by cruelty.

In the organism of states such men are necessary, as wolves are

necessary in the organism of nature, and they always exist, always

appear and hold their own, however incongruous their presence and their

proximity to the head of the government may be. This inevitability alone

can explain how the cruel Arakcheev, who tore out a grenadier's mustache

with his own hands, whose weak nerves rendered him unable to face

danger, and who was neither an educated man nor a courtier, was able to

maintain his powerful position with Alexander, whose own character was

chivalrous, noble, and gentle.

Balashev found Davout seated on a barrel in the shed of a peasant's hut,

writing--he was auditing accounts. Better quarters could have been found

him, but Marshal Davout was one of those men who purposely put

themselves in most depressing conditions to have a justification for

being gloomy. For the same reason they are always hard at work and in a

hurry. "How can I think of the bright side of life when, as you see, I

am sitting on a barrel and working in a dirty shed?" the expression of

his face seemed to say. The chief pleasure and necessity of such men,

when they encounter anyone who shows animation, is to flaunt their own

dreary, persistent activity. Davout allowed himself that pleasure when

Balashev was brought in. He became still more absorbed in his task when

the Russian general entered, and after glancing over his spectacles at

Balashev's face, which was animated by the beauty of the morning and by

his talk with Murat, he did not rise or even stir, but scowled still

more and sneered malevolently.

When he noticed in Balashev's face the disagreeable impression this

reception produced, Davout raised his head and coldly asked what he

wanted.

Thinking he could have been received in such a manner only because

Davout did not know that he was adjutant general to the Emperor

Alexander and even his envoy to Napoleon, Balashev hastened to inform

him of his rank and mission. Contrary to his expectation, Davout, after

hearing him, became still surlier and ruder.

"Where is your dispatch?" he inquired. "Give it to me. I will send it to

the Emperor."

Balashev replied that he had been ordered to hand it personally to the

Emperor.

"Your Emperor's orders are obeyed in your army, but here," said Davout,

"you must do as you're told."

And, as if to make the Russian general still more conscious of his

dependence on brute force, Davout sent an adjutant to call the officer

on duty.

Balashev took out the packet containing the Emperor's letter and laid it

on the table (made of a door with its hinges still hanging on it, laid

across two barrels). Davout took the packet and read the inscription.

"You are perfectly at liberty to treat me with respect or not,"

protested Balashev, "but permit me to observe that I have the honor to

be adjutant general to His Majesty...."

Davout glanced at him silently and plainly derived pleasure from the

signs of agitation and confusion which appeared on Balashev's face.

"You will be treated as is fitting," said he and, putting the packet in

his pocket, left the shed.

A minute later the marshal's adjutant, de Castres, came in and conducted

Balashev to the quarters assigned him.

That day he dined with the marshal, at the same board on the barrels.

Next day Davout rode out early and, after asking Balashev to come to

him, peremptorily requested him to remain there, to move on with the

baggage train should orders come for it to move, and to talk to no one

except Monsieur de Castres.

After four days of solitude, ennui, and consciousness of his impotence

and insignificance--particularly acute by contrast with the sphere of

power in which he had so lately moved--and after several marches with

the marshal's baggage and the French army, which occupied the whole

district, Balashev was brought to Vilna--now occupied by the French--

through the very gate by which he had left it four days previously.

Next day the imperial gentleman-in-waiting, the Comte de Turenne, came

to Balashev and informed him of the Emperor Napoleon's wish to honor him

with an audience.

Four days before, sentinels of the Preobrazhensk regiment had stood in

front of the house to which Balashev was conducted, and now two French

grenadiers stood there in blue uniforms unfastened in front and with

shaggy caps on their heads, and an escort of hussars and uhlans and a

brilliant suite of aides-de-camp, pages, and generals, who were waiting

for Napoleon to come out, were standing at the porch, round his saddle

horse and his Mameluke, Rustan. Napoleon received Balashev in the very

house in Vilna from which Alexander had dispatched him on his mission.

CHAPTER VI

Though Balashev was used to imperial pomp, he was amazed at the luxury

and magnificence of Napoleon's court.

The Comte de Turenne showed him into a big reception room where many

generals, gentlemen-in-waiting, and Polish magnates--several of whom

Balashev had seen at the court of the Emperor of Russia--were waiting.

Duroc said that Napoleon would receive the Russian general before going

for his ride.

After some minutes, the gentleman-in-waiting who was on duty came into

the great reception room and, bowing politely, asked Balashev to follow

him.

Balashev went into a small reception room, one door of which led into a

study, the very one from which the Russian Emperor had dispatched him on

his mission. He stood a minute or two, waiting. He heard hurried

footsteps beyond the door, both halves of it were opened rapidly; all

was silent and then from the study the sound was heard of other steps,

firm and resolute--they were those of Napoleon. He had just finished

dressing for his ride, and wore a blue uniform, opening in front over a

white waistcoat so long that it covered his rotund stomach, white

leather breeches tightly fitting the fat thighs of his short legs, and

Hessian boots. His short hair had evidently just been brushed, but one

lock hung down in the middle of his broad forehead. His plump white neck

stood out sharply above the black collar of his uniform, and he smelled

of Eau de Cologne. His full face, rather young-looking, with its

prominent chin, wore a gracious and majestic expression of imperial

welcome.

He entered briskly, with a jerk at every step and his head slightly

thrown back. His whole short corpulent figure with broad thick

shoulders, and chest and stomach involuntarily protruding, had that

imposing and stately appearance one sees in men of forty who live in

comfort. It was evident, too, that he was in the best of spirits that

day.

He nodded in answer to Balashav's low and respectful bow, and coming up

to him at once began speaking like a man who values every moment of his

time and does not condescend to prepare what he has to say but is sure

he will always say the right thing and say it well.

"Good day, General!" said he. "I have received the letter you brought

from the Emperor Alexander and am very glad to see you." He glanced with

his large eyes into Balashav's face and immediately looked past him.

It was plain that Balashev's personality did not interest him at all.

Evidently only what took place within his own mind interested him.

Nothing outside himself had any significance for him, because everything

in the world, it seemed to him, depended entirely on his will.

"I do not, and did not, desire war," he continued, "but it has been

forced on me. Even now" (he emphasized the word) "I am ready to receive

any explanations you can give me."

And he began clearly and concisely to explain his reasons for

dissatisfaction with the Russian government. Judging by the calmly

moderate and amicable tone in which the French Emperor spoke, Balashev

was firmly persuaded that he wished for peace and intended to enter into

negotiations.

When Napoleon, having finished speaking, looked inquiringly at the

Russian envoy, Balashev began a speech he had prepared long before:

"Sire! The Emperor, my master..." but the sight of the Emperor's eyes

bent on him confused him. "You are flurried--compose yourself!" Napoleon

seemed to say, as with a scarcely perceptible smile he looked at

Balashev's uniform and sword.

Balashev recovered himself and began to speak. He said that the Emperor

Alexander did not consider Kurakin's demand for his passports a

sufficient cause for war; that Kurakin had acted on his own initiative

and without his sovereign's assent, that the Emperor Alexander did not

desire war, and had no relations with England.

"Not yet!" interposed Napoleon, and, as if fearing to give vent to his

feelings, he frowned and nodded slightly as a sign that Balashev might

proceed.

After saying all he had been instructed to say, Balashev added that the

Emperor Alexander wished for peace, but would not enter into

negotiations except on condition that... Here Balashev hesitated: he

remembered the words the Emperor Alexander had not written in his

letter, but had specially inserted in the rescript to Saltykov and had

told Balashev to repeat to Napoleon. Balashev remembered these words,

"So long as a single armed foe remains on Russian soil," but some

complex feeling restrained him. He could not utter them, though he

wished to do so. He grew confused and said: "On condition that the

French army retires beyond the Niemen."

Napoleon noticed Balashev's embarrassment when uttering these last

words; his face twitched and the calf of his left leg began to quiver

rhythmically. Without moving from where he stood he began speaking in a

louder tone and more hurriedly than before. During the speech that

followed, Balashev, who more than once lowered his eyes, involuntarily

noticed the quivering of Napoleon's left leg which increased the more

Napoleon raised his voice.

"I desire peace, no less than the Emperor Alexander," he began. "Have I

not for eighteen months been doing everything to obtain it? I have

waited eighteen months for explanations. But in order to begin

negotiations, what is demanded of me?" he said, frowning and making an

energetic gesture of inquiry with his small white plump hand.

"The withdrawal of your army beyond the Niemen, sire," replied Balashev.

"The Niemen?" repeated Napoleon. "So now you want me to retire beyond

the Niemen--only the Niemen?" repeated Napoleon, looking straight at

Balashev.

The latter bowed his head respectfully.

Instead of the demand of four months earlier to withdraw from Pomerania,

only a withdrawal beyond the Niemen was now demanded. Napoleon turned

quickly and began to pace the room.

"You say the demand now is that I am to withdraw beyond the Niemen

before commencing negotiations, but in just the same way two months ago

the demand was that I should withdraw beyond the Vistula and the Oder,

and yet you are willing to negotiate."

He went in silence from one corner of the room to the other and again

stopped in front of Balashev. Balashev noticed that his left leg was

quivering faster than before and his face seemed petrified in its stern

expression. This quivering of his left leg was a thing Napoleon was

conscious of. "The vibration of my left calf is a great sign with me,"

he remarked at a later date.

"Such demands as to retreat beyond the Vistula and Oder may be made to a

Prince of Baden, but not to me!" Napoleon almost screamed, quite to his

own surprise. "If you gave me Petersburg and Moscow I could not accept

such conditions. You say I have begun this war! But who first joined his

army? The Emperor Alexander, not I! And you offer me negotiations when I

have expended millions, when you are in alliance with England, and when

your position is a bad one. You offer me negotiations! But what is the

aim of your alliance with England? What has she given you?" he continued

hurriedly, evidently no longer trying to show the advantages of peace

and discuss its possibility, but only to prove his own rectitude and

power and Alexander's errors and duplicity.

The commencement of his speech had obviously been made with the

intention of demonstrating the advantages of his position and showing

that he was nevertheless willing to negotiate. But he had begun talking,

and the more he talked the less could he control his words.

The whole purport of his remarks now was evidently to exalt himself and

insult Alexander--just what he had least desired at the commencement of

the interview.

"I hear you have made peace with Turkey?"

Balashev bowed his head affirmatively.

"Peace has been concluded..." he began.

But Napoleon did not let him speak. He evidently wanted to do all the

talking himself, and continued to talk with the sort of eloquence and

unrestrained irritability to which spoiled people are so prone.

"Yes, I know you have made peace with the Turks without obtaining

Moldavia and Wallachia; I would have given your sovereign those

provinces as I gave him Finland. Yes," he went on, "I promised and would

have given the Emperor Alexander Moldavia and Wallachia, and now he

won't have those splendid provinces. Yet he might have united them to

his empire and in a single reign would have extended Russia from the

Gulf of Bothnia to the mouths of the Danube. Catherine the Great could

not have done more," said Napoleon, growing more and more excited as he

paced up and down the room, repeating to Balashev almost the very words

he had used to Alexander himself at Tilsit. "All that, he would have

owed to my friendship. Oh, what a splendid reign!" he repeated several

times, then paused, drew from his pocket a gold snuffbox, lifted it to

his nose, and greedily sniffed at it.

"What a splendid reign the Emperor Alexander's might have been!"

He looked compassionately at Balashev, and as soon as the latter tried

to make some rejoinder hastily interrupted him.

"What could he wish or look for that he would not have obtained through

my friendship?" demanded Napoleon, shrugging his shoulders in

perplexity. "But no, he has preferred to surround himself with my

enemies, and with whom? With Steins, Armfeldts, Bennigsens, and

Wintzingerodes! Stein, a traitor expelled from his own country;

Armfeldt, a rake and an intriguer; Wintzingerode, a fugitive French

subject; Bennigsen, rather more of a soldier than the others, but all

the same an incompetent who was unable to do anything in 1807 and who

should awaken terrible memories in the Emperor Alexander's mind....

Granted that were they competent they might be made use of," continued

Napoleon--hardly able to keep pace in words with the rush of thoughts

that incessantly sprang up, proving how right and strong he was (in his

perception the two were one and the same)--"but they are not even that!

They are neither fit for war nor peace! Barclay is said to be the most

capable of them all, but I cannot say so, judging by his first

movements. And what are they doing, all these courtiers? Pfuel proposes,

Armfeldt disputes, Bennigsen considers, and Barclay, called on to act,

does not know what to decide on, and time passes bringing no result.

Bagration alone is a military man. He's stupid, but he has experience, a

quick eye, and resolution.... And what role is your young monarch

playing in that monstrous crowd? They compromise him and throw on him

the responsibility for all that happens. A sovereign should not be with

the army unless he is a general!" said Napoleon, evidently uttering

these words as a direct challenge to the Emperor. He knew how Alexander

desired to be a military commander.

"The campaign began only a week ago, and you haven't even been able to

defend Vilna. You are cut in two and have been driven out of the Polish

provinces. Your army is grumbling."

"On the contrary, Your Majesty," said Balashev, hardly able to remember

what had been said to him and following these verbal fireworks with

difficulty, "the troops are burning with eagerness..."

"I know everything!" Napoleon interrupted him. "I know everything. I

know the number of your battalions as exactly as I know my own. You have

not two hundred thousand men, and I have three times that number. I give

you my word of honor," said Napoleon, forgetting that his word of honor

could carry no weight--"I give you my word of honor that I have five

hundred and thirty thousand men this side of the Vistula. The Turks will

be of no use to you; they are worth nothing and have shown it by making

peace with you. As for the Swedes--it is their fate to be governed by

mad kings. Their king was insane and they changed him for another--

Bernadotte, who promptly went mad--for no Swede would ally himself with

Russia unless he were mad."

Napoleon grinned maliciously and again raised his snuffbox to his nose.

Balashev knew how to reply to each of Napoleon's remarks, and would have

done so; he continually made the gesture of a man wishing to say

something, but Napoleon always interrupted him. To the alleged insanity

of the Swedes, Balashev wished to reply that when Russia is on her side

Sweden is practically an island: but Napoleon gave an angry exclamation

to drown his voice. Napoleon was in that state of irritability in which

a man has to talk, talk, and talk, merely to convince himself that he is

in the right. Balashev began to feel uncomfortable: as envoy he feared

to demean his dignity and felt the necessity of replying; but, as a man,

he shrank before the transport of groundless wrath that had evidently

seized Napoleon. He knew that none of the words now uttered by Napoleon

had any significance, and that Napoleon himself would be ashamed of them

when he came to his senses. Balashev stood with downcast eyes, looking

at the movements of Napoleon's stout legs and trying to avoid meeting

his eyes.

"But what do I care about your allies?" said Napoleon. "I have allies--

the Poles. There are eighty thousand of them and they fight like lions.

And there will be two hundred thousand of them."

And probably still more perturbed by the fact that he had uttered this

obvious falsehood, and that Balashev still stood silently before him in

the same attitude of submission to fate, Napoleon abruptly turned round,

drew close to Balashev's face, and, gesticulating rapidly and

energetically with his white hands, almost shouted:

"Know that if you stir up Prussia against me, I'll wipe it off the map

of Europe!" he declared, his face pale and distorted by anger, and he

struck one of his small hands energetically with the other. "Yes, I will

throw you back beyond the Dvina and beyond the Dnieper, and will re-

erect against you that barrier which it was criminal and blind of Europe

to allow to be destroyed. Yes, that is what will happen to you. That is

what you have gained by alienating me!" And he walked silently several

times up and down the room, his fat shoulders twitching.

He put his snuffbox into his waistcoat pocket, took it out again, lifted

it several times to his nose, and stopped in front of Balashev. He

paused, looked ironically straight into Balashev's eyes, and said in a

quiet voice:

"And yet what a splendid reign your master might have had!"

Balashev, feeling it incumbent on him to reply, said that from the

Russian side things did not appear in so gloomy a light. Napoleon was

silent, still looking derisively at him and evidently not listening to

him. Balashev said that in Russia the best results were expected from

the war. Napoleon nodded condescendingly, as if to say, "I know it's

your duty to say that, but you don't believe it yourself. I have

convinced you."

When Balashev had ended, Napoleon again took out his snuffbox, sniffed

at it, and stamped his foot twice on the floor as a signal. The door

opened, a gentleman-in-waiting, bending respectfully, handed the Emperor

his hat and gloves; another brought him a pocket handkerchief. Napoleon,

without giving them a glance, turned to Balashev:

"Assure the Emperor Alexander from me," said he, taking his hat, "that I

am as devoted to him as before: I know him thoroughly and very highly

esteem his lofty qualities. I will detain you no longer, General; you

shall receive my letter to the Emperor."

And Napoleon went quickly to the door. Everyone in the reception room

rushed forward and descended the staircase.

CHAPTER VII

After all that Napoleon had said to him--those bursts of anger and the

last dryly spoken words: "I will detain you no longer, General; you

shall receive my letter," Balashev felt convinced that Napoleon would

not wish to see him, and would even avoid another meeting with him--an

insulted envoy--especially as he had witnessed his unseemly anger. But,

to his surprise, Balashev received, through Duroc, an invitation to dine

with the Emperor that day.

Bessieres, Caulaincourt, and Berthier were present at that dinner.

Napoleon met Balashev cheerfully and amiably. He not only showed no sign

of constraint or self-reproach on account of his outburst that morning,

but, on the contrary, tried to reassure Balashev. It was evident that he

had long been convinced that it was impossible for him to make a

mistake, and that in his perception whatever he did was right, not

because it harmonized with any idea of right and wrong, but because he

did it.

The Emperor was in very good spirits after his ride through Vilna, where

crowds of people had rapturously greeted and followed him. From all the

windows of the streets through which he rode, rugs, flags, and his

monogram were displayed, and the Polish ladies, welcoming him, waved

their handkerchiefs to him.

At dinner, having placed Balashev beside him, Napoleon not only treated

him amiably but behaved as if Balashev were one of his own courtiers,

one of those who sympathized with his plans and ought to rejoice at his

success. In the course of conversation he mentioned Moscow and

questioned Balashev about the Russian capital, not merely as an

interested traveler asks about a new city he intends to visit, but as if

convinced that Balashev, as a Russian, must be flattered by his

curiosity.

"How many inhabitants are there in Moscow? How many houses? Is it true

that Moscow is called 'Holy Moscow'? How many churches are there in

Moscow?" he asked.

And receiving the reply that there were more than two hundred churches,

he remarked:

"Why such a quantity of churches?"

"The Russians are very devout," replied Balashev.

"But a large number of monasteries and churches is always a sign of the

backwardness of a people," said Napoleon, turning to Caulaincourt for

appreciation of this remark.

Balashev respectfully ventured to disagree with the French Emperor.

"Every country has its own character," said he.

"But nowhere in Europe is there anything like that," said Napoleon.

"I beg your Majesty's pardon," returned Balashev, "besides Russia there

is Spain, where there are also many churches and monasteries."

This reply of Balashev's, which hinted at the recent defeats of the

French in Spain, was much appreciated when he related it at Alexander's

court, but it was not much appreciated at Napoleon's dinner, where it

passed unnoticed.

The uninterested and perplexed faces of the marshals showed that they

were puzzled as to what Balashev's tone suggested. "If there is a point

we don't see it, or it is not at all witty," their expressions seemed to

say. So little was his rejoinder appreciated that Napoleon did not

notice it at all and naively asked Balashev through what towns the

direct road from there to Moscow passed. Balashev, who was on the alert

all through the dinner, replied that just as "all roads lead to Rome,"

so all roads lead to Moscow: there were many roads, and "among them the

road through Poltava, which Charles XII chose." Balashev involuntarily

flushed with pleasure at the aptitude of this reply, but hardly had he

uttered the word Poltava before Caulaincourt began speaking of the

badness of the road from Petersburg to Moscow and of his Petersburg

reminiscences.

After dinner they went to drink coffee in Napoleon's study, which four

days previously had been that of the Emperor Alexander. Napoleon sat

down, toying with his Sevres coffee cup, and motioned Balashev to a

chair beside him.

Napoleon was in that well-known after-dinner mood which, more than any

reasoned cause, makes a man contented with himself and disposed to

consider everyone his friend. It seemed to him that he was surrounded by

men who adored him: and he felt convinced that, after his dinner,

Balashev too was his friend and worshiper. Napoleon turned to him with a

pleasant, though slightly ironic, smile.

"They tell me this is the room the Emperor Alexander occupied? Strange,

isn't it, General?" he said, evidently not doubting that this remark

would be agreeable to his hearer since it went to prove his, Napoleon's,

superiority to Alexander.

Balashev made no reply and bowed his head in silence.

"Yes. Four days ago in this room, Wintzingerode and Stein were

deliberating," continued Napoleon with the same derisive and self-

confident smile. "What I can't understand," he went on, "is that the

Emperor Alexander has surrounded himself with my personal enemies. That

I do not... understand. Has he not thought that I may do the same?" and

he turned inquiringly to Balashev, and evidently this thought turned him

back on to the track of his morning's anger, which was still fresh in

him.

"And let him know that I will do so!" said Napoleon, rising and pushing

his cup away with his hand. "I'll drive all his Wurttemberg, Baden, and

Weimar relations out of Germany.... Yes. I'll drive them out. Let him

prepare an asylum for them in Russia!"

Balashev bowed his head with an air indicating that he would like to

make his bow and leave, and only listened because he could not help

hearing what was said to him. Napoleon did not notice this expression;

he treated Balashev not as an envoy from his enemy, but as a man now

fully devoted to him and who must rejoice at his former master's

humiliation.

"And why has the Emperor Alexander taken command of the armies? What is

the good of that? War is my profession, but his business is to reign and

not to command armies! Why has he taken on himself such a

responsibility?"

Again Napoleon brought out his snuffbox, paced several times up and down

the room in silence, and then, suddenly and unexpectedly, went up to

Balashev and with a slight smile, as confidently, quickly, and simply as

if he were doing something not merely important but pleasing to

Balashev, he raised his hand to the forty-year-old Russian general's

face and, taking him by the ear, pulled it gently, smiling with his lips

only.

To have one's ear pulled by the Emperor was considered the greatest

honor and mark of favor at the French court.

"Well, adorer and courtier of the Emperor Alexander, why don't you say

anything?" said he, as if it was ridiculous, in his presence, to be the

adorer and courtier of anyone but himself, Napoleon. "Are the horses

ready for the general?" he added, with a slight inclination of his head

in reply to Balashev's bow. "Let him have mine, he has a long way to

go!"

The letter taken by Balashev was the last Napoleon sent to Alexander.

Every detail of the interview was communicated to the Russian monarch,

and the war began...

CHAPTER VIII

After his interview with Pierre in Moscow, Prince Andrew went to

Petersburg, on business as he told his family, but really to meet

Anatole Kuragin whom he felt it necessary to encounter. On reaching

Petersburg he inquired for Kuragin but the latter had already left the

city. Pierre had warned his brother-in-law that Prince Andrew was on his

track. Anatole Kuragin promptly obtained an appointment from the

Minister of War and went to join the army in Moldavia. While in

Petersburg Prince Andrew met Kutuzov, his former commander who was

always well disposed toward him, and Kutuzov suggested that he should

accompany him to the army in Moldavia, to which the old general had been

appointed commander-in-chief. So Prince Andrew, having received an

appointment on the headquarters staff, left for Turkey.

Prince Andrew did not think it proper to write and challenge Kuragin. He

thought that if he challenged him without some fresh cause it might

compromise the young Countess Rostova and so he wanted to meet Kuragin

personally in order to find a fresh pretext for a duel. But he again

failed to meet Kuragin in Turkey, for soon after Prince Andrew arrived,

the latter returned to Russia. In a new country, amid new conditions,

Prince Andrew found life easier to bear. After his betrothed had broken

faith with him--which he felt the more acutely the more he tried to

conceal its effects--the surroundings in which he had been happy became

trying to him, and the freedom and independence he had once prized so

highly were still more so. Not only could he no longer think the

thoughts that had first come to him as he lay gazing at the sky on the

field of Austerlitz and had later enlarged upon with Pierre, and which

had filled his solitude at Bogucharovo and then in Switzerland and Rome,

but he even dreaded to recall them and the bright and boundless horizons

they had revealed. He was now concerned only with the nearest practical

matters unrelated to his past interests, and he seized on these the more

eagerly the more those past interests were closed to him. It was as if

that lofty, infinite canopy of heaven that had once towered above him

had suddenly turned into a low, solid vault that weighed him down, in

which all was clear, but nothing eternal or mysterious.

Of the activities that presented themselves to him, army service was the

simplest and most familiar. As a general on duty on Kutuzov's staff, he

applied himself to business with zeal and perseverance and surprised

Kutuzov by his willingness and accuracy in work. Not having found

Kuragin in Turkey, Prince Andrew did not think it necessary to rush back

to Russia after him, but all the same he knew that however long it might

be before he met Kuragin, despite his contempt for him and despite all

the proofs he deduced to convince himself that it was not worth stooping

to a conflict with him--he knew that when he did meet him he would not

be able to resist calling him out, any more than a ravenous man can help

snatching at food. And the consciousness that the insult was not yet

avenged, that his rancor was still unspent, weighed on his heart and

poisoned the artificial tranquillity which he managed to obtain in

Turkey by means of restless, plodding, and rather vainglorious and

ambitious activity.

In the year 1812, when news of the war with Napoleon reached Bucharest--

where Kutuzov had been living for two months, passing his days and

nights with a Wallachian woman--Prince Andrew asked Kutuzov to transfer

him to the Western Army. Kutuzov, who was already weary of Bolkonski's

activity which seemed to reproach his own idleness, very readily let him

go and gave him a mission to Barclay de Tolly.

Before joining the Western Army which was then, in May, encamped at

Drissa, Prince Andrew visited Bald Hills which was directly on his way,

being only two miles off the Smolensk highroad. During the last three

years there had been so many changes in his life, he had thought, felt,

and seen so much (having traveled both in the east and the west), that

on reaching Bald Hills it struck him as strange and unexpected to find

the way of life there unchanged and still the same in every detail. He

entered through the gates with their stone pillars and drove up the

avenue leading to the house as if he were entering an enchanted,

sleeping castle. The same old stateliness, the same cleanliness, the

same stillness reigned there, and inside there was the same furniture,

the same walls, sounds, and smell, and the same timid faces, only

somewhat older. Princess Mary was still the same timid, plain maiden

getting on in years, uselessly and joylessly passing the best years of

her life in fear and constant suffering. Mademoiselle Bourienne was the

same coquettish, self-satisfied girl, enjoying every moment of her

existence and full of joyous hopes for the future. She had merely become

more self-confident, Prince Andrew thought. Dessalles, the tutor he had

brought from Switzerland, was wearing a coat of Russian cut and talking

broken Russian to the servants, but was still the same narrowly

intelligent, conscientious, and pedantic preceptor. The old prince had

changed in appearance only by the loss of a tooth, which left a

noticeable gap on one side of his mouth; in character he was the same as

ever, only showing still more irritability and skepticism as to what was

happening in the world. Little Nicholas alone had changed. He had grown,

become rosier, had curly dark hair, and, when merry and laughing, quite

unconsciously lifted the upper lip of his pretty little mouth just as

the little princess used to do. He alone did not obey the law of

immutability in the enchanted, sleeping castle. But though externally

all remained as of old, the inner relations of all these people had

changed since Prince Andrew had seen them last. The household was

divided into two alien and hostile camps, who changed their habits for

his sake and only met because he was there. To the one camp belonged the

old prince, Mademoiselle Bourienne, and the architect; to the other

Princess Mary, Dessalles, little Nicholas, and all the old nurses and

maids.

During his stay at Bald Hills all the family dined together, but they

were ill at ease and Prince Andrew felt that he was a visitor for whose

sake an exception was being made and that his presence made them all

feel awkward. Involuntarily feeling this at dinner on the first day, he

was taciturn, and the old prince noticing this also became morosely dumb

and retired to his apartments directly after dinner. In the evening,

when Prince Andrew went to him and, trying to rouse him, began to tell

him of the young Count Kamensky's campaign, the old prince began

unexpectedly to talk about Princess Mary, blaming her for her

superstitions and her dislike of Mademoiselle Bourienne, who, he said,

was the only person really attached to him.

The old prince said that if he was ill it was only because of Princess

Mary: that she purposely worried and irritated him, and that by

indulgence and silly talk she was spoiling little Prince Nicholas. The

old prince knew very well that he tormented his daughter and that her

life was very hard, but he also knew that he could not help tormenting

her and that she deserved it. "Why does Prince Andrew, who sees this,

say nothing to me about his sister? Does he think me a scoundrel, or an

old fool who, without any reason, keeps his own daughter at a distance

and attaches this Frenchwoman to himself? He doesn't understand, so I

must explain it, and he must hear me out," thought the old prince. And

he began explaining why he could not put up with his daughter's

unreasonable character.

"If you ask me," said Prince Andrew, without looking up (he was

censuring his father for the first time in his life), "I did not wish to

speak about it, but as you ask me I will give you my frank opinion. If

there is any misunderstanding and discord between you and Mary, I can't

blame her for it at all. I know how she loves and respects you. Since

you ask me," continued Prince Andrew, becoming irritable--as he was

always liable to do of late--"I can only say that if there are any

misunderstandings they are caused by that worthless woman, who is not

fit to be my sister's companion."

The old man at first stared fixedly at his son, and an unnatural smile

disclosed the fresh gap between his teeth to which Prince Andrew could

not get accustomed.

"What companion, my dear boy? Eh? You've already been talking it over!

Eh?"

"Father, I did not want to judge," said Prince Andrew, in a hard and

bitter tone, "but you challenged me, and I have said, and always shall

say, that Mary is not to blame, but those to blame--the one to blame--is

that Frenchwoman."

"Ah, he has passed judgment... passed judgement!" said the old man in a

low voice and, as it seemed to Prince Andrew, with some embarrassment,

but then he suddenly jumped up and cried: "Be off, be off! Let not a

trace of you remain here!..."

Prince Andrew wished to leave at once, but Princess Mary persuaded him

to stay another day. That day he did not see his father, who did not

leave his room and admitted no one but Mademoiselle Bourienne and

Tikhon, but asked several times whether his son had gone. Next day,

before leaving, Prince Andrew went to his son's rooms. The boy, curly-

headed like his mother and glowing with health, sat on his knee, and

Prince Andrew began telling him the story of Bluebeard, but fell into a

reverie without finishing the story. He thought not of this pretty

child, his son whom he held on his knee, but of himself. He sought in

himself either remorse for having angered his father or regret at

leaving home for the first time in his life on bad terms with him, and

was horrified to find neither. What meant still more to him was that he

sought and did not find in himself the former tenderness for his son

which he had hoped to reawaken by caressing the boy and taking him on

his knee.

"Well, go on!" said his son.

Prince Andrew, without replying, put him down from his knee and went out

of the room.

As soon as Prince Andrew had given up his daily occupations, and

especially on returning to the old conditions of life amid which he had

been happy, weariness of life overcame him with its former intensity,

and he hastened to escape from these memories and to find some work as

soon as possible.

"So you've decided to go, Andrew?" asked his sister.

"Thank God that I can," replied Prince Andrew. "I am very sorry you

can't."

"Why do you say that?" replied Princess Mary. "Why do you say that, when

you are going to this terrible war, and he is so old? Mademoiselle

Bourienne says he has been asking about you...."

As soon as she began to speak of that, her lips trembled and her tears

began to fall. Prince Andrew turned away and began pacing the room.

"Ah, my God! my God! When one thinks who and what--what trash--can cause

people misery!" he said with a malignity that alarmed Princess Mary.

She understood that when speaking of "trash" he referred not only to

Mademoiselle Bourienne, the cause of her misery, but also to the man who

had ruined his own happiness.

"Andrew! One thing I beg, I entreat of you!" she said, touching his

elbow and looking at him with eyes that shone through her tears. "I

understand you" (she looked down). "Don't imagine that sorrow is the

work of men. Men are His tools." She looked a little above Prince

Andrew's head with the confident, accustomed look with which one looks

at the place where a familiar portrait hangs. "Sorrow is sent by Him,

not by men. Men are His instruments, they are not to blame. If you think

someone has wronged you, forget it and forgive! We have no right to

punish. And then you will know the happiness of forgiving."

"If I were a woman I would do so, Mary. That is a woman's virtue. But a

man should not and cannot forgive and forget," he replied, and though

till that moment he had not been thinking of Kuragin, all his unexpended

anger suddenly swelled up in his heart.

"If Mary is already persuading me to forgive, it means that I ought long

ago to have punished him," he thought. And giving her no further reply,

he began thinking of the glad vindictive moment when he would meet

Kuragin who he knew was now in the army.

Princess Mary begged him to stay one day more, saying that she knew how

unhappy her father would be if Andrew left without being reconciled to

him, but Prince Andrew replied that he would probably soon be back again

from the army and would certainly write to his father, but that the

longer he stayed now the more embittered their differences would become.

"Good-bye, Andrew! Remember that misfortunes come from God, and men are

never to blame," were the last words he heard from his sister when he

took leave of her.

"Then it must be so!" thought Prince Andrew as he drove out of the

avenue from the house at Bald Hills. "She, poor innocent creature, is

left to be victimized by an old man who has outlived his wits. The old

man feels he is guilty, but cannot change himself. My boy is growing up

and rejoices in life, in which like everybody else he will deceive or be

deceived. And I am off to the army. Why? I myself don't know. I want to

meet that man whom I despise, so as to give him a chance to kill and

laugh at me!"

These conditions of life had been the same before, but then they were

all connected, while now they had all tumbled to pieces. Only senseless

things, lacking coherence, presented themselves one after another to

Prince Andrew's mind.

CHAPTER IX

Prince Andrew reached the general headquarters of the army at the end of

June. The first army, with which was the Emperor, occupied the fortified

camp at Drissa; the second army was retreating, trying to effect a

junction with the first one from which it was said to be cut off by

large French forces. Everyone was dissatisfied with the general course

of affairs in the Russian army, but no one anticipated any danger of

invasion of the Russian provinces, and no one thought the war would

extend farther than the western, the Polish, provinces.

Prince Andrew found Barclay de Tolly, to whom he had been assigned, on

the bank of the Drissa. As there was not a single town or large village

in the vicinity of the camp, the immense number of generals and

courtiers accompanying the army were living in the best houses of the

villages on both sides of the river, over a radius of six miles. Barclay

de Tolly was quartered nearly three miles from the Emperor. He received

Bolkonski stiffly and coldly and told him in his foreign accent that he

would mention him to the Emperor for a decision as to his employment,

but asked him meanwhile to remain on his staff. Anatole Kuragin, whom

Prince Andrew had hoped to find with the army, was not there. He had

gone to Petersburg, but Prince Andrew was glad to hear this. His mind

was occupied by the interests of the center that was conducting a

gigantic war, and he was glad to be free for a while from the

distraction caused by the thought of Kuragin. During the first four

days, while no duties were required of him, Prince Andrew rode round the

whole fortified camp and, by the aid of his own knowledge and by talks

with experts, tried to form a definite opinion about it. But the

question whether the camp was advantageous or disadvantageous remained

for him undecided. Already from his military experience and what he had

seen in the Austrian campaign, he had come to the conclusion that in war

the most deeply considered plans have no significance and that all

depends on the way unexpected movements of the enemy--that cannot be

foreseen--are met, and on how and by whom the whole matter is handled.

To clear up this last point for himself, Prince Andrew, utilizing his

position and acquaintances, tried to fathom the character of the control

of the army and of the men and parties engaged in it, and he deduced for

himself the following of the state of affairs.

While the Emperor had still been at Vilna, the forces had been divided

into three armies. First, the army under Barclay de Tolly, secondly, the

army under Bagration, and thirdly, the one commanded by Tormasov. The

Emperor was with the first army, but not as commander-in-chief. In the

orders issued it was stated, not that the Emperor would take command,

but only that he would be with the army. The Emperor, moreover, had with

him not a commander-in-chief's staff but the imperial headquarters

staff. In attendance on him was the head of the imperial staff,

Quartermaster General Prince Volkonski, as well as generals, imperial

aides-de-camp, diplomatic officials, and a large number of foreigners,

but not the army staff. Besides these, there were in attendance on the

Emperor without any definite appointments: Arakcheev, the ex-Minister of

War; Count Bennigsen, the senior general in rank; the Grand Duke

Tsarevich Constantine Pavlovich; Count Rumyantsev, the Chancellor;

Stein, a former Prussian minister; Armfeldt, a Swedish general; Pfuel,

the chief author of the plan of campaign; Paulucci, an adjutant general

and Sardinian emigre; Wolzogen--and many others. Though these men had no

military appointment in the army, their position gave them influence,

and often a corps commander, or even the commander-in-chief, did not

know in what capacity he was questioned by Bennigsen, the Grand Duke,

Arakcheev, or Prince Volkonski, or was given this or that advice and did

not know whether a certain order received in the form of advice emanated

from the man who gave it or from the Emperor and whether it had to be

executed or not. But this was only the external condition; the essential

significance of the presence of the Emperor and of all these people,

from a courtier's point of view (and in an Emperor's vicinity all became

courtiers), was clear to everyone. It was this: the Emperor did not

assume the title of commander-in-chief, but disposed of all the armies;

the men around him were his assistants. Arakcheev was a faithful

custodian to enforce order and acted as the sovereign's bodyguard.

Bennigsen was a landlord in the Vilna province who appeared to be doing

the honors of the district, but was in reality a good general, useful as

an adviser and ready at hand to replace Barclay. The Grand Duke was

there because it suited him to be. The ex-Minister Stein was there

because his advice was useful and the Emperor Alexander held him in high

esteem personally. Armfeldt virulently hated Napoleon and was a general

full of self-confidence, a quality that always influenced Alexander.

Paulucci was there because he was bold and decided in speech. The

adjutants general were there because they always accompanied the

Emperor, and lastly and chiefly Pfuel was there because he had drawn up

the plan of campaign against Napoleon and, having induced Alexander to

believe in the efficacy of that plan, was directing the whole business

of the war. With Pfuel was Wolzogen, who expressed Pfuel's thoughts in a

more comprehensible way than Pfuel himself (who was a harsh, bookish

theorist, self-confident to the point of despising everyone else) was

able to do.

Besides these Russians and foreigners who propounded new and unexpected

ideas every day--especially the foreigners, who did so with a boldness

characteristic of people employed in a country not their own--there were

many secondary personages accompanying the army because their principals

were there.

Among the opinions and voices in this immense, restless, brilliant, and

proud sphere, Prince Andrew noticed the following sharply defined

subdivisions of tendencies and parties:

The first party consisted of Pfuel and his adherents--military theorists

who believed in a science of war with immutable laws--laws of oblique

movements, outflankings, and so forth. Pfuel and his adherents demanded

a retirement into the depths of the country in accordance with precise

laws defined by a pseudo-theory of war, and they saw only barbarism,

ignorance, or evil intention in every deviation from that theory. To

this party belonged the foreign nobles, Wolzogen, Wintzingerode, and

others, chiefly Germans.

The second party was directly opposed to the first; one extreme, as

always happens, was met by representatives of the other. The members of

this party were those who had demanded an advance from Vilna into Poland

and freedom from all prearranged plans. Besides being advocates of bold

action, this section also represented nationalism, which made them still

more one-sided in the dispute. They were Russians: Bagration, Ermolov

(who was beginning to come to the front), and others. At that time a

famous joke of Ermolov's was being circulated, that as a great favor he

had petitioned the Emperor to make him a German. The men of that party,

remembering Suvorov, said that what one had to do was not to reason, or

stick pins into maps, but to fight, beat the enemy, keep him out of

Russia, and not let the army get discouraged.

To the third party--in which the Emperor had most confidence--belonged

the courtiers who tried to arrange compromises between the other two.

The members of this party, chiefly civilians and to whom Arakcheev

belonged, thought and said what men who have no convictions but wish to

seem to have some generally say. They said that undoubtedly war,

particularly against such a genius as Bonaparte (they called him

Bonaparte now), needs most deeply devised plans and profound scientific

knowledge and in that respect Pfuel was a genius, but at the same time

it had to be acknowledged that the theorists are often one-sided, and

therefore one should not trust them absolutely, but should also listen

to what Pfuel's opponents and practical men of experience in warfare had

to say, and then choose a middle course. They insisted on the retention

of the camp at Drissa, according to Pfuel's plan, but on changing the

movements of the other armies. Though, by this course, neither one aim

nor the other could be attained, yet it seemed best to the adherents of

this third party.

Of a fourth opinion the most conspicuous representative was the

Tsarevich, who could not forget his disillusionment at Austerlitz, where

he had ridden out at the head of the Guards, in his casque and cavalry

uniform as to a review, expecting to crush the French gallantly; but

unexpectedly finding himself in the front line had narrowly escaped amid

the general confusion. The men of this party had both the quality and

the defect of frankness in their opinions. They feared Napoleon,

recognized his strength and their own weakness, and frankly said so.

They said: "Nothing but sorrow, shame, and ruin will come of all this!

We have abandoned Vilna and Vitebsk and shall abandon Drissa. The only

reasonable thing left to do is to conclude peace as soon as possible,

before we are turned out of Petersburg."

This view was very general in the upper army circles and found support

also in Petersburg and from the chancellor, Rumyantsev, who, for other

reasons of state, was in favor of peace.

The fifth party consisted of those who were adherents of Barclay de

Tolly, not so much as a man but as minister of war and commander-in-

chief. "Be he what he may" (they always began like that), "he is an

honest, practical man and we have nobody better. Give him real power,

for war cannot be conducted successfully without unity of command, and

he will show what he can do, as he did in Finland. If our army is well

organized and strong and has withdrawn to Drissa without suffering any

defeats, we owe this entirely to Barclay. If Barclay is now to be

superseded by Bennigsen all will be lost, for Bennigsen showed his

incapacity already in 1807."

The sixth party, the Bennigsenites, said, on the contrary, that at any

rate there was no one more active and experienced than Bennigsen: "and

twist about as you may, you will have to come to Bennigsen eventually.

Let the others make mistakes now!" said they, arguing that our

retirement to Drissa was a most shameful reverse and an unbroken series

of blunders. "The more mistakes that are made the better. It will at any

rate be understood all the sooner that things cannot go on like this.

What is wanted is not some Barclay or other, but a man like Bennigsen,

who made his mark in 1807, and to whom Napoleon himself did justice--a

man whose authority would be willingly recognized, and Bennigsen is the

only such man."

The seventh party consisted of the sort of people who are always to be

found, especially around young sovereigns, and of whom there were

particularly many round Alexander--generals and imperial aides-de-camp

passionately devoted to the Emperor, not merely as a monarch but as a

man, adoring him sincerely and disinterestedly, as Rostov had done in

1805, and who saw in him not only all the virtues but all human

capabilities as well. These men, though enchanted with the sovereign for

refusing the command of the army, yet blamed him for such excessive

modesty, and only desired and insisted that their adored sovereign

should abandon his diffidence and openly announce that he would place

himself at the head of the army, gather round him a commander-in-chief's

staff, and, consulting experienced theoreticians and practical men where

necessary, would himself lead the troops, whose spirits would thereby be

raised to the highest pitch.

The eighth and largest group, which in its enormous numbers was to the

others as ninety-nine to one, consisted of men who desired neither peace

nor war, neither an advance nor a defensive camp at the Drissa or

anywhere else, neither Barclay nor the Emperor, neither Pfuel nor

Bennigsen, but only the one most essential thing--as much advantage and

pleasure for themselves as possible. In the troubled waters of

conflicting and intersecting intrigues that eddied about the Emperor's

headquarters, it was possible to succeed in many ways unthinkable at

other times. A man who simply wished to retain his lucrative post would

today agree with Pfuel, tomorrow with his opponent, and the day after,

merely to avoid responsibility or to please the Emperor, would declare

that he had no opinion at all on the matter. Another who wished to gain

some advantage would attract the Emperor's attention by loudly

advocating the very thing the Emperor had hinted at the day before, and

would dispute and shout at the council, beating his breast and

challenging those who did not agree with him to duels, thereby proving

that he was prepared to sacrifice himself for the common good. A third,

in the absence of opponents, between two councils would simply solicit a

special gratuity for his faithful services, well knowing that at that

moment people would be too busy to refuse him. A fourth while seemingly

overwhelmed with work would often come accidentally under the Emperor's

eye. A fifth, to achieve his long-cherished aim of dining with the

Emperor, would stubbornly insist on the correctness or falsity of some

newly emerging opinion and for this object would produce arguments more

or less forcible and correct.

All the men of this party were fishing for rubles, decorations, and

promotions, and in this pursuit watched only the weathercock of imperial

favor, and directly they noticed it turning in any direction, this whole

drone population of the army began blowing hard that way, so that it was

all the harder for the Emperor to turn it elsewhere. Amid the

uncertainties of the position, with the menace of serious danger giving

a peculiarly threatening character to everything, amid this vortex of

intrigue, egotism, conflict of views and feelings, and the diversity of

race among these people--this eighth and largest party of those

preoccupied with personal interests imparted great confusion and

obscurity to the common task. Whatever question arose, a swarm of these

drones, without having finished their buzzing on a previous theme, flew

over to the new one and by their hum drowned and obscured the voices of

those who were disputing honestly.

From among all these parties, just at the time Prince Andrew reached the

army, another, a ninth party, was being formed and was beginning to

raise its voice. This was the party of the elders, reasonable men

experienced and capable in state affairs, who, without sharing any of

those conflicting opinions, were able to take a detached view of what

was going on at the staff at headquarters and to consider means of

escape from this muddle, indecision, intricacy, and weakness.

The men of this party said and thought that what was wrong resulted

chiefly from the Emperor's presence in the army with his military court

and from the consequent presence there of an indefinite, conditional,

and unsteady fluctuation of relations, which is in place at court but

harmful in an army; that a sovereign should reign but not command the

army, and that the only way out of the position would be for the Emperor

and his court to leave the army; that the mere presence of the Emperor

paralyzed the action of fifty thousand men required to secure his

personal safety, and that the worst commander-in-chief, if independent,

would be better than the very best one trammeled by the presence and

authority of the monarch.

Just at the time Prince Andrew was living unoccupied at Drissa,

Shishkov, the Secretary of State and one of the chief representatives of

this party, wrote a letter to the Emperor which Arakcheev and Balashev

agreed to sign. In this letter, availing himself of permission given him

by the Emperor to discuss the general course of affairs, he respectfully

suggested--on the plea that it was necessary for the sovereign to arouse

a warlike spirit in the people of the capital--that the Emperor should

leave the army.

That arousing of the people by their sovereign and his call to them to

defend their country--the very incitement which was the chief cause of

Russia's triumph in so far as it was produced by the Tsar's personal

presence in Moscow--was suggested to the Emperor, and accepted by him,

as a pretext for quitting the army.

CHAPTER X

This letter had not yet been presented to the Emperor when Barclay, one

day at dinner, informed Bolkonski that the sovereign wished to see him

personally, to question him about Turkey, and that Prince Andrew was to

present himself at Bennigsen's quarters at six that evening.

News was received at the Emperor's quarters that very day of a fresh

movement by Napoleon which might endanger the army--news subsequently

found to be false. And that morning Colonel Michaud had ridden round the

Drissa fortifications with the Emperor and had pointed out to him that

this fortified camp constructed by Pfuel, and till then considered a

chef-d'oeuvre of tactical science which would ensure Napoleon's

destruction, was an absurdity, threatening the destruction of the

Russian army.

Prince Andrew arrived at Bennigsen's quarters--a country gentleman's

house of moderate size, situated on the very banks of the river. Neither

Bennigsen nor the Emperor was there, but Chernyshev, the Emperor's aide-

de-camp, received Bolkonski and informed him that the Emperor,

accompanied by General Bennigsen and Marquis Paulucci, had gone a second

time that day to inspect the fortifications of the Drissa camp, of the

suitability of which serious doubts were beginning to be felt.

Chernyshev was sitting at a window in the first room with a French novel

in his hand. This room had probably been a music room; there was still

an organ in it on which some rugs were piled, and in one corner stood

the folding bedstead of Bennigsen's adjutant. This adjutant was also

there and sat dozing on the rolled-up bedding, evidently exhausted by

work or by feasting. Two doors led from the room, one straight on into

what had been the drawing room, and another, on the right, to the study.

Through the first door came the sound of voices conversing in German and

occasionally in French. In that drawing room were gathered, by the

Emperor's wish, not a military council (the Emperor preferred

indefiniteness), but certain persons whose opinions he wished to know in

view of the impending difficulties. It was not a council of war, but, as

it were, a council to elucidate certain questions for the Emperor

personally. To this semicouncil had been invited the Swedish General

Armfeldt, Adjutant General Wolzogen, Wintzingerode (whom Napoleon had

referred to as a renegade French subject), Michaud, Toll, Count Stein

who was not a military man at all, and Pfuel himself, who, as Prince

Andrew had heard, was the mainspring of the whole affair. Prince Andrew

had an opportunity of getting a good look at him, for Pfuel arrived soon

after himself and, in passing through to the drawing room, stopped a

minute to speak to Chernyshev.

At first sight, Pfuel, in his ill-made uniform of a Russian general,

which fitted him badly like a fancy costume, seemed familiar to Prince

Andrew, though he saw him now for the first time. There was about him

something of Weyrother, Mack, and Schmidt, and many other German

theorist-generals whom Prince Andrew had seen in 1805, but he was more

typical than any of them. Prince Andrew had never yet seen a German

theorist in whom all the characteristics of those others were united to

such an extent.

Pfuel was short and very thin but broad-boned, of coarse, robust build,

broad in the hips, and with prominent shoulder blades. His face was much

wrinkled and his eyes deep set. His hair had evidently been hastily

brushed smooth in front of the temples, but stuck up behind in quaint

little tufts. He entered the room, looking restlessly and angrily

around, as if afraid of everything in that large apartment. Awkwardly

holding up his sword, he addressed Chernyshev and asked in German where

the Emperor was. One could see that he wished to pass through the rooms

as quickly as possible, finish with the bows and greetings, and sit down

to business in front of a map, where he would feel at home. He nodded

hurriedly in reply to Chernyshev, and smiled ironically on hearing that

the sovereign was inspecting the fortifications that he, Pfuel, had

planned in accord with his theory. He muttered something to himself

abruptly and in a bass voice, as self-assured Germans do--it might have

been "stupid fellow"... or "the whole affair will be ruined," or

"something absurd will come of it."... Prince Andrew did not catch what

he said and would have passed on, but Chernyshev introduced him to

Pfuel, remarking that Prince Andrew was just back from Turkey where the

war had terminated so fortunately. Pfuel barely glanced--not so much at

Prince Andrew as past him--and said, with a laugh: "That must have been

a fine tactical war"; and, laughing contemptuously, went on into the

room from which the sound of voices was heard.

Pfuel, always inclined to be irritably sarcastic, was particularly

disturbed that day, evidently by the fact that they had dared to inspect

and criticize his camp in his absence. From this short interview with

Pfuel, Prince Andrew, thanks to his Austerlitz experiences, was able to

form a clear conception of the man. Pfuel was one of those hopelessly

and immutably self-confident men, self-confident to the point of

martyrdom as only Germans are, because only Germans are self-confident

on the basis of an abstract notion--science, that is, the supposed

knowledge of absolute truth. A Frenchman is self-assured because he

regards himself personally, both in mind and body, as irresistibly

attractive to men and women. An Englishman is self-assured, as being a

citizen of the best-organized state in the world, and therefore as an

Englishman always knows what he should do and knows that all he does as

an Englishman is undoubtedly correct. An Italian is self-assured because

he is excitable and easily forgets himself and other people. A Russian

is self-assured just because he knows nothing and does not want to know

anything, since he does not believe that anything can be known. The

German's self-assurance is worst of all, stronger and more repulsive

than any other, because he imagines that he knows the truth--science--

which he himself has invented but which is for him the absolute truth.

Pfuel was evidently of that sort. He had a science--the theory of

oblique movements deduced by him from the history of Frederick the

Great's wars, and all he came across in the history of more recent

warfare seemed to him absurd and barbarous--monstrous collisions in

which so many blunders were committed by both sides that these wars

could not be called wars, they did not accord with the theory, and

therefore could not serve as material for science.

In 1806 Pfuel had been one of those responsible, for the plan of

campaign that ended in Jena and Auerstadt, but he did not see the least

proof of the fallibility of his theory in the disasters of that war. On

the contrary, the deviations made from his theory were, in his opinion,

the sole cause of the whole disaster, and with characteristically

gleeful sarcasm he would remark, "There, I said the whole affair would

go to the devil!" Pfuel was one of those theoreticians who so love their

theory that they lose sight of the theory's object--its practical

application. His love of theory made him hate everything practical, and

he would not listen to it. He was even pleased by failures, for failures

resulting from deviations in practice from the theory only proved to him

the accuracy of his theory.

He said a few words to Prince Andrew and Chernyshev about the present

war, with the air of a man who knows beforehand that all will go wrong,

and who is not displeased that it should be so. The unbrushed tufts of

hair sticking up behind and the hastily brushed hair on his temples

expressed this most eloquently.

He passed into the next room, and the deep, querulous sounds of his

voice were at once heard from there.

CHAPTER XI

Prince Andrew's eyes were still following Pfuel out of the room when

Count Bennigsen entered hurriedly, and nodding to Bolkonski, but not

pausing, went into the study, giving instructions to his adjutant as he

went. The Emperor was following him, and Bennigsen had hastened on to

make some preparations and to be ready to receive the sovereign.

Chernyshev and Prince Andrew went out into the porch, where the Emperor,

who looked fatigued, was dismounting. Marquis Paulucci was talking to

him with particular warmth and the Emperor, with his head bent to the

left, was listening with a dissatisfied air. The Emperor moved forward

evidently wishing to end the conversation, but the flushed and excited

Italian, oblivious of decorum, followed him and continued to speak.

"And as for the man who advised forming this camp--the Drissa camp,"

said Paulucci, as the Emperor mounted the steps and noticing Prince

Andrew scanned his unfamiliar face, "as to that person, sire..."

continued Paulucci, desperately, apparently unable to restrain himself,

"the man who advised the Drissa camp--I see no alternative but the

lunatic asylum or the gallows!"

Without heeding the end of the Italian's remarks, and as though not

hearing them, the Emperor, recognizing Bolkonski, addressed him

graciously.

"I am very glad to see you! Go in there where they are meeting, and wait

for me."

The Emperor went into the study. He was followed by Prince Peter

Mikhaylovich Volkonski and Baron Stein, and the door closed behind them.

Prince Andrew, taking advantage of the Emperor's permission, accompanied

Paulucci, whom he had known in Turkey, into the drawing room where the

council was assembled.

Prince Peter Mikhaylovich Volkonski occupied the position, as it were,

of chief of the Emperor's staff. He came out of the study into the

drawing room with some maps which he spread on a table, and put

questions on which he wished to hear the opinion of the gentlemen

present. What had happened was that news (which afterwards proved to be

false) had been received during the night of a movement by the French to

outflank the Drissa camp.

The first to speak was General Armfeldt who, to meet the difficulty that

presented itself, unexpectedly proposed a perfectly new position away

from the Petersburg and Moscow roads. The reason for this was

inexplicable (unless he wished to show that he, too, could have an

opinion), but he urged that at this point the army should unite and

there await the enemy. It was plain that Armfeldt had thought out that

plan long ago and now expounded it not so much to answer the questions

put--which, in fact, his plan did not answer--as to avail himself of the

opportunity to air it. It was one of the millions of proposals, one as

good as another, that could be made as long as it was quite unknown what

character the war would take. Some disputed his arguments, others

defended them. Young Count Toll objected to the Swedish general's views

more warmly than anyone else, and in the course of the dispute drew from

his side pocket a well-filled notebook, which he asked permission to

read to them. In these voluminous notes Toll suggested another scheme,

totally different from Armfeldt's or Pfuel's plan of campaign. In answer

to Toll, Paulucci suggested an advance and an attack, which, he urged,

could alone extricate us from the present uncertainty and from the trap

(as he called the Drissa camp) in which we were situated.

During all these discussions Pfuel and his interpreter, Wolzogen (his

"bridge" in court relations), were silent. Pfuel only snorted

contemptuously and turned away, to show that he would never demean

himself by replying to such nonsense as he was now hearing. So when

Prince Volkonski, who was in the chair, called on him to give his

opinion, he merely said:

"Why ask me? General Armfeldt has proposed a splendid position with an

exposed rear, or why not this Italian gentleman's attack--very fine, or

a retreat, also good! Why ask me?" said he. "Why, you yourselves know

everything better than I do."

But when Volkonski said, with a frown, that it was in the Emperor's name

that he asked his opinion, Pfuel rose and, suddenly growing animated,

began to speak:

"Everything has been spoiled, everything muddled, everybody thought they

knew better than I did, and now you come to me! How mend matters? There

is nothing to mend! The principles laid down by me must be strictly

adhered to," said he, drumming on the table with his bony fingers. "What

is the difficulty? Nonsense, childishness!"

He went up to the map and speaking rapidly began proving that no

eventuality could alter the efficiency of the Drissa camp, that

everything had been foreseen, and that if the enemy were really going to

outflank it, the enemy would inevitably be destroyed.

Paulucci, who did not know German, began questioning him in French.

Wolzogen came to the assistance of his chief, who spoke French badly,

and began translating for him, hardly able to keep pace with Pfuel, who

was rapidly demonstrating that not only all that had happened, but all

that could happen, had been foreseen in his scheme, and that if there

were now any difficulties the whole fault lay in the fact that his plan

had not been precisely executed. He kept laughing sarcastically, he

demonstrated, and at last contemptuously ceased to demonstrate, like a

mathematician who ceases to prove in various ways the accuracy of a

problem that has already been proved. Wolzogen took his place and

continued to explain his views in French, every now and then turning to

Pfuel and saying, "Is it not so, your excellency?" But Pfuel, like a man

heated in a fight who strikes those on his own side, shouted angrily at

his own supporter, Wolzogen:

"Well, of course, what more is there to explain?"

Paulucci and Michaud both attacked Wolzogen simultaneously in French.

Armfeldt addressed Pfuel in German. Toll explained to Volkonski in

Russian. Prince Andrew listened and observed in silence.

Of all these men Prince Andrew sympathized most with Pfuel, angry,

determined, and absurdly self-confident as he was. Of all those present,

evidently he alone was not seeking anything for himself, nursed no

hatred against anyone, and only desired that the plan, formed on a

theory arrived at by years of toil, should be carried out. He was

ridiculous, and unpleasantly sarcastic, but yet he inspired involuntary

respect by his boundless devotion to an idea. Besides this, the remarks

of all except Pfuel had one common trait that had not been noticeable at

the council of war in 1805: there was now a panic fear of Napoleon's

genius, which, though concealed, was noticeable in every rejoinder.

Everything was assumed to be possible for Napoleon, they expected him

from every side, and invoked his terrible name to shatter each other's

proposals. Pfuel alone seemed to consider Napoleon a barbarian like

everyone else who opposed his theory. But besides this feeling of

respect, Pfuel evoked pity in Prince Andrew. From the tone in which the

courtiers addressed him and the way Paulucci had allowed himself to

speak of him to the Emperor, but above all from a certain desperation in

Pfuel's own expressions, it was clear that the others knew, and Pfuel

himself felt, that his fall was at hand. And despite his self-confidence

and grumpy German sarcasm he was pitiable, with his hair smoothly

brushed on the temples and sticking up in tufts behind. Though he

concealed the fact under a show of irritation and contempt, he was

evidently in despair that the sole remaining chance of verifying his

theory by a huge experiment and proving its soundness to the whole world

was slipping away from him.

The discussions continued a long time, and the longer they lasted the

more heated became the disputes, culminating in shouts and

personalities, and the less was it possible to arrive at any general

conclusion from all that had been said. Prince Andrew, listening to this

polyglot talk and to these surmises, plans, refutations, and shouts,

felt nothing but amazement at what they were saying. A thought that had

long since and often occurred to him during his military activities--the

idea that there is not and cannot be any science of war, and that

therefore there can be no such thing as a military genius--now appeared

to him an obvious truth. "What theory and science is possible about a

matter the conditions and circumstances of which are unknown and cannot

be defined, especially when the strength of the acting forces cannot be

ascertained? No one was or is able to foresee in what condition our or

the enemy's armies will be in a day's time, and no one can gauge the

force of this or that detachment. Sometimes--when there is not a coward

at the front to shout, 'We are cut off!' and start running, but a brave

and jolly lad who shouts, 'Hurrah!'--a detachment of five thousand is

worth thirty thousand, as at Schon Grabern, while at times fifty

thousand run from eight thousand, as at Austerlitz. What science can

there be in a matter in which, as in all practical matters, nothing can

be defined and everything depends on innumerable conditions, the

significance of which is determined at a particular moment which arrives

no one knows when? Armfeldt says our army is cut in half, and Paulucci

says we have got the French army between two fires; Michaud says that

the worthlessness of the Drissa camp lies in having the river behind it,

and Pfuel says that is what constitutes its strength; Toll proposes one

plan, Armfeldt another, and they are all good and all bad, and the

advantages of any suggestions can be seen only at the moment of trial.

And why do they all speak of a 'military genius'? Is a man a genius who

can order bread to be brought up at the right time and say who is to go

to the right and who to the left? It is only because military men are

invested with pomp and power and crowds of sychophants flatter power,

attributing to it qualities of genius it does not possess. The best

generals I have known were, on the contrary, stupid or absent-minded

men. Bagration was the best, Napoleon himself admitted that. And of

Bonaparte himself! I remember his limited, self-satisfied face on the

field of Austerlitz. Not only does a good army commander not need any

special qualities, on the contrary he needs the absence of the highest

and best human attributes--love, poetry, tenderness, and philosophic

inquiring doubt. He should be limited, firmly convinced that what he is

doing is very important (otherwise he will not have sufficient

patience), and only then will he be a brave leader. God forbid that he

should be humane, should love, or pity, or think of what is just and

unjust. It is understandable that a theory of their 'genius' was

invented for them long ago because they have power! The success of a

military action depends not on them, but on the man in the ranks who

shouts, 'We are lost!' or who shouts, 'Hurrah!' And only in the ranks

can one serve with assurance of being useful."

So thought Prince Andrew as he listened to the talking, and he roused

himself only when Paulucci called him and everyone was leaving.

At the review next day the Emperor asked Prince Andrew where he would

like to serve, and Prince Andrew lost his standing in court circles

forever by not asking to remain attached to the sovereign's person, but

for permission to serve in the army.

CHAPTER XII

Before the beginning of the campaign, Rostov had received a letter from

his parents in which they told him briefly of Natasha's illness and the

breaking off of her engagement to Prince Andrew (which they explained by

Natasha's having rejected him) and again asked Nicholas to retire from

the army and return home. On receiving this letter, Nicholas did not

even make any attempt to get leave of absence or to retire from the

army, but wrote to his parents that he was sorry Natasha was ill and her

engagement broken off, and that he would do all he could to meet their

wishes. To Sonya he wrote separately.

"Adored friend of my soul!" he wrote. "Nothing but honor could keep me

from returning to the country. But now, at the commencement of the

campaign, I should feel dishonored, not only in my comrades' eyes but in

my own, if I preferred my own happiness to my love and duty to the

Fatherland. But this shall be our last separation. Believe me, directly

the war is over, if I am still alive and still loved by you, I will

throw up everything and fly to you, to press you forever to my ardent

breast."

It was, in fact, only the commencement of the campaign that prevented

Rostov from returning home as he had promised and marrying Sonya. The

autumn in Otradnoe with the hunting, and the winter with the Christmas

holidays and Sonya's love, had opened out to him a vista of tranquil

rural joys and peace such as he had never known before, and which now

allured him. "A splendid wife, children, a good pack of hounds, a dozen

leashes of smart borzois, agriculture, neighbors, service by

election..." thought he. But now the campaign was beginning, and he had

to remain with his regiment. And since it had to be so, Nicholas Rostov,

as was natural to him, felt contented with the life he led in the

regiment and was able to find pleasure in that life.

On his return from his furlough Nicholas, having been joyfully welcomed

by his comrades, was sent to obtain remounts and brought back from the

Ukraine excellent horses which pleased him and earned him commendation

from his commanders. During his absence he had been promoted captain,

and when the regiment was put on war footing with an increase in

numbers, he was again allotted his old squadron.

The campaign began, the regiment was moved into Poland on double pay,

new officers arrived, new men and horses, and above all everybody was

infected with the merrily excited mood that goes with the commencement

of a war, and Rostov, conscious of his advantageous position in the

regiment, devoted himself entirely to the pleasures and interests of

military service, though he knew that sooner or later he would have to

relinquish them.

The troops retired from Vilna for various complicated reasons of state,

political and strategic. Each step of the retreat was accompanied by a

complicated interplay of interests, arguments, and passions at

headquarters. For the Pavlograd hussars, however, the whole of this

retreat during the finest period of summer and with sufficient supplies

was a very simple and agreeable business.

It was only at headquarters that there was depression, uneasiness, and

intriguing; in the body of the army they did not ask themselves where

they were going or why. If they regretted having to retreat, it was only

because they had to leave billets they had grown accustomed to, or some

pretty young Polish lady. If the thought that things looked bad chanced

to enter anyone's head, he tried to be as cheerful as befits a good

soldier and not to think of the general trend of affairs, but only of

the task nearest to hand. First they camped gaily before Vilna, making

acquaintance with the Polish landowners, preparing for reviews and being

reviewed by the Emperor and other high commanders. Then came an order to

retreat to Sventsyani and destroy any provisions they could not carry

away with them. Sventsyani was remembered by the hussars only as the

drunken camp, a name the whole army gave to their encampment there, and

because many complaints were made against the troops, who, taking

advantage of the order to collect provisions, took also horses,

carriages, and carpets from the Polish proprietors. Rostov remembered

Sventsyani, because on the first day of their arrival at that small town

he changed his sergeant major and was unable to manage all the drunken

men of his squadron who, unknown to him, had appropriated five barrels

of old beer. From Sventsyani they retired farther and farther to Drissa,

and thence again beyond Drissa, drawing near to the frontier of Russia

proper.

On the thirteenth of July the Pavlograds took part in a serious action

for the first time.

On the twelfth of July, on the eve of that action, there was a heavy

storm of rain and hail. In general, the summer of 1812 was remarkable

for its storms.

The two Pavlograd squadrons were bivouacking on a field of rye, which

was already in ear but had been completely trodden down by cattle and

horses. The rain was descending in torrents, and Rostov, with a young

officer named Ilyin, his protege, was sitting in a hastily constructed

shelter. An officer of their regiment, with long mustaches extending

onto his cheeks, who after riding to the staff had been overtaken by the

rain, entered Rostov's shelter.

"I have come from the staff, Count. Have you heard of Raevski's

exploit?"

And the officer gave them details of the Saltanov battle, which he had

heard at the staff.

Rostov, smoking his pipe and turning his head about as the water

trickled down his neck, listened inattentively, with an occasional

glance at Ilyin, who was pressing close to him. This officer, a lad of

sixteen who had recently joined the regiment, was now in the same

relation to Nicholas that Nicholas had been to Denisov seven years

before. Ilyin tried to imitate Rostov in everything and adored him as a

girl might have done.

Zdrzhinski, the officer with the long mustache, spoke grandiloquently of

the Saltanov dam being "a Russian Thermopylae," and of how a deed worthy

of antiquity had been performed by General Raevski. He recounted how

Raevski had led his two sons onto the dam under terrific fire and had

charged with them beside him. Rostov heard the story and not only said

nothing to encourage Zdrzhinski's enthusiasm but, on the contrary,

looked like a man ashamed of what he was hearing, though with no

intention of contradicting it. Since the campaigns of Austerlitz and of

1807 Rostov knew by experience that men always lie when describing

military exploits, as he himself had done when recounting them; besides

that, he had experience enough to know that nothing happens in war at

all as we can imagine or relate it. And so he did not like Zdrzhinski's

tale, nor did he like Zdrzhinski himself who, with his mustaches

extending over his cheeks, bent low over the face of his hearer, as was

his habit, and crowded Rostov in the narrow shanty. Rostov looked at him

in silence. "In the first place, there must have been such a confusion

and crowding on the dam that was being attacked that if Raevski did lead

his sons there, it could have had no effect except perhaps on some dozen

men nearest to him," thought he, "the rest could not have seen how or

with whom Raevski came onto the dam. And even those who did see it would

not have been much stimulated by it, for what had they to do with

Raevski's tender paternal feelings when their own skins were in danger?

And besides, the fate of the Fatherland did not depend on whether they

took the Saltanov dam or not, as we are told was the case at

Thermopylae. So why should he have made such a sacrifice? And why expose

his own children in the battle? I would not have taken my brother Petya

there, or even Ilyin, who's a stranger to me but a nice lad, but would

have tried to put them somewhere under cover," Nicholas continued to

think, as he listened to Zdrzhinski. But he did not express his

thoughts, for in such matters, too, he had gained experience. He knew

that this tale redounded to the glory of our arms and so one had to

pretend not to doubt it. And he acted accordingly.

"I can't stand this any more," said Ilyin, noticing that Rostov did not

relish Zdrzhinski's conversation. "My stockings and shirt... and the

water is running on my seat! I'll go and look for shelter. The rain

seems less heavy."

Ilyin went out and Zdrzhinski rode away.

Five minutes later Ilyin, splashing through the mud, came running back

to the shanty.

"Hurrah! Rostov, come quick! I've found it! About two hundred yards away

there's a tavern where ours have already gathered. We can at least get

dry there, and Mary Hendrikhovna's there."

Mary Hendrikhovna was the wife of the regimental doctor, a pretty young

German woman he had married in Poland. The doctor, whether from lack of

means or because he did not like to part from his young wife in the

early days of their marriage, took her about with him wherever the

hussar regiment went and his jealousy had become a standing joke among

the hussar officers.

Rostov threw his cloak over his shoulders, shouted to Lavrushka to

follow with the things, and--now slipping in the mud, now splashing

right through it--set off with Ilyin in the lessening rain and the

darkness that was occasionally rent by distant lightning.

"Rostov, where are you?"

"Here. What lightning!" they called to one another.

CHAPTER XIII

In the tavern, before which stood the doctor's covered cart, there were

already some five officers. Mary Hendrikhovna, a plump little blonde

German, in a dressing jacket and nightcap, was sitting on a broad bench

in the front corner. Her husband, the doctor, lay asleep behind her.

Rostov and Ilyin, on entering the room, were welcomed with merry shouts

and laughter.

"Dear me, how jolly we are!" said Rostov laughing.

"And why do you stand there gaping?"

"What swells they are! Why, the water streams from them! Don't make our

drawing room so wet."

"Don't mess Mary Hendrikhovna's dress!" cried other voices.

Rostov and Ilyin hastened to find a corner where they could change into

dry clothes without offending Mary Hendrikhovna's modesty. They were

going into a tiny recess behind a partition to change, but found it

completely filled by three officers who sat playing cards by the light

of a solitary candle on an empty box, and these officers would on no

account yield their position. Mary Hendrikhovna obliged them with the

loan of a petticoat to be used as a curtain, and behind that screen

Rostov and Ilyin, helped by Lavrushka who had brought their kits,

changed their wet things for dry ones.

A fire was made up in the dilapidated brick stove. A board was found,

fixed on two saddles and covered with a horsecloth, a small samovar was

produced and a cellaret and half a bottle of rum, and having asked Mary

Hendrikhovna to preside, they all crowded round her. One offered her a

clean handkerchief to wipe her charming hands, another spread a jacket

under her little feet to keep them from the damp, another hung his coat

over the window to keep out the draft, and yet another waved the flies

off her husband's face, lest he should wake up.

"Leave him alone," said Mary Hendrikhovna, smiling timidly and happily.

"He is sleeping well as it is, after a sleepless night."

"Oh, no, Mary Hendrikhovna," replied the officer, "one must look after

the doctor. Perhaps he'll take pity on me someday, when it comes to

cutting off a leg or an arm for me."

There were only three tumblers, the water was so muddy that one could

not make out whether the tea was strong or weak, and the samovar held

only six tumblers of water, but this made it all the pleasanter to take

turns in order of seniority to receive one's tumbler from Mary

Hendrikhovna's plump little hands with their short and not overclean

nails. All the officers appeared to be, and really were, in love with

her that evening. Even those playing cards behind the partition soon

left their game and came over to the samovar, yielding to the general

mood of courting Mary Hendrikhovna. She, seeing herself surrounded by

such brilliant and polite young men, beamed with satisfaction, try as

she might to hide it, and perturbed as she evidently was each time her

husband moved in his sleep behind her.

There was only one spoon, sugar was more plentiful than anything else,

but it took too long to dissolve, so it was decided that Mary

Hendrikhovna should stir the sugar for everyone in turn. Rostov received

his tumbler, and adding some rum to it asked Mary Hendrikhovna to stir

it.

"But you take it without sugar?" she said, smiling all the time, as if

everything she said and everything the others said was very amusing and

had a double meaning.

"It is not the sugar I want, but only that your little hand should stir

my tea."

Mary Hendrikhovna assented and began looking for the spoon which someone

meanwhile had pounced on.

"Use your finger, Mary Hendrikhovna, it will be still nicer," said

Rostov.

"Too hot!" she replied, blushing with pleasure.

Ilyin put a few drops of rum into the bucket of water and brought it to

Mary Hendrikhovna, asking her to stir it with her finger.

"This is my cup," said he. "Only dip your finger in it and I'll drink it

all up."

When they had emptied the samovar, Rostov took a pack of cards and

proposed that they should play "Kings" with Mary Hendrikhovna. They drew

lots to settle who should make up her set. At Rostov's suggestion it was

agreed that whoever became "King" should have the right to kiss Mary

Hendrikhovna's hand, and that the "Booby" should go to refill and reheat

the samovar for the doctor when the latter awoke.

"Well, but supposing Mary Hendrikhovna is 'King'?" asked Ilyin.

"As it is, she is Queen, and her word is law!"

They had hardly begun to play before the doctor's disheveled head

suddenly appeared from behind Mary Hendrikhovna. He had been awake for

some time, listening to what was being said, and evidently found nothing

entertaining or amusing in what was going on. His face was sad and

depressed. Without greeting the officers, he scratched himself and asked

to be allowed to pass as they were blocking the way. As soon as he had

left the room all the officers burst into loud laughter and Mary

Hendrikhovna blushed till her eyes filled with tears and thereby became

still more attractive to them. Returning from the yard, the doctor told

his wife (who had ceased to smile so happily, and looked at him in

alarm, awaiting her sentence) that the rain had ceased and they must go

to sleep in their covered cart, or everything in it would be stolen.

"But I'll send an orderly.... Two of them!" said Rostov. "What an idea,

doctor!"

"I'll stand guard on it myself!" said Ilyin.

"No, gentlemen, you have had your sleep, but I have not slept for two

nights," replied the doctor, and he sat down morosely beside his wife,

waiting for the game to end.

Seeing his gloomy face as he frowned at his wife, the officers grew

still merrier, and some of them could not refrain from laughter, for

which they hurriedly sought plausible pretexts. When he had gone, taking

his wife with him, and had settled down with her in their covered cart,

the officers lay down in the tavern, covering themselves with their wet

cloaks, but they did not sleep for a long time; now they exchanged

remarks, recalling the doctor's uneasiness and his wife's delight, now

they ran out into the porch and reported what was taking place in the

covered trap. Several times Rostov, covering his head, tried to go to

sleep, but some remark would arouse him and conversation would be

resumed, to the accompaniment of unreasoning, merry, childlike laughter.

CHAPTER XIV

It was nearly three o'clock but no one was yet asleep, when the

quartermaster appeared with an order to move on to the little town of

Ostrovna. Still laughing and talking, the officers began hurriedly

getting ready and again boiled some muddy water in the samovar. But

Rostov went off to his squadron without waiting for tea. Day was

breaking, the rain had ceased, and the clouds were dispersing. It felt

damp and cold, especially in clothes that were still moist. As they left

the tavern in the twilight of the dawn, Rostov and Ilyin both glanced

under the wet and glistening leather hood of the doctor's cart, from

under the apron of which his feet were sticking out, and in the middle

of which his wife's nightcap was visible and her sleepy breathing

audible.

"She really is a dear little thing," said Rostov to Ilyin, who was

following him.

"A charming woman!" said Ilyin, with all the gravity of a boy of

sixteen.

Half an hour later the squadron was lined up on the road. The command

was heard to "mount" and the soldiers crossed themselves and mounted.

Rostov riding in front gave the order "Forward!" and the hussars, with

clanking sabers and subdued talk, their horses' hoofs splashing in the

mud, defiled in fours and moved along the broad road planted with birch

trees on each side, following the infantry and a battery that had gone

on in front.

Tattered, blue-purple clouds, reddening in the east, were scudding

before the wind. It was growing lighter and lighter. That curly grass

which always grows by country roadsides became clearly visible, still

wet with the night's rain; the drooping branches of the birches, also

wet, swayed in the wind and flung down bright drops of water to one

side. The soldiers' faces were more and more clearly visible. Rostov,

always closely followed by Ilyin, rode along the side of the road

between two rows of birch trees.

When campaigning, Rostov allowed himself the indulgence of riding not a

regimental but a Cossack horse. A judge of horses and a sportsman, he

had lately procured himself a large, fine, mettlesome, Donets horse,

dun-colored, with light mane and tail, and when he rode it no one could

outgallop him. To ride this horse was a pleasure to him, and he thought

of the horse, of the morning, of the doctor's wife, but not once of the

impending danger.

Formerly, when going into action, Rostov had felt afraid; now he had not

the least feeling of fear. He was fearless, not because he had grown

used to being under fire (one cannot grow used to danger), but because

he had learned how to manage his thoughts when in danger. He had grown

accustomed when going into action to think about anything but what would

seem most likely to interest him--the impending danger. During the first

period of his service, hard as he tried and much as he reproached

himself with cowardice, he had not been able to do this, but with time

it had come of itself. Now he rode beside Ilyin under the birch trees,

occasionally plucking leaves from a branch that met his hand, sometimes

touching his horse's side with his foot, or, without turning round,

handing a pipe he had finished to an hussar riding behind him, with as

calm and careless an air as though he were merely out for a ride. He

glanced with pity at the excited face of Ilyin, who talked much and in

great agitation. He knew from experience the tormenting expectation of

terror and death the cornet was suffering and knew that only time could

help him.

As soon as the sun appeared in a clear strip of sky beneath the clouds,

the wind fell, as if it dared not spoil the beauty of the summer morning

after the storm; drops still continued to fall, but vertically now, and

all was still. The whole sun appeared on the horizon and disappeared

behind a long narrow cloud that hung above it. A few minutes later it

reappeared brighter still from behind the top of the cloud, tearing its

edge. Everything grew bright and glittered. And with that light, and as

if in reply to it, came the sound of guns ahead of them.

Before Rostov had had time to consider and determine the distance of

that firing, Count Ostermann-Tolstoy's adjutant came galloping from

Vitebsk with orders to advance at a trot along the road.

The squadron overtook and passed the infantry and the battery--which had

also quickened their pace--rode down a hill, and passing through an

empty and deserted village again ascended. The horses began to lather

and the men to flush.

"Halt! Dress your ranks!" the order of the regimental commander was

heard ahead. "Forward by the left. Walk, march!" came the order from in

front.

And the hussars, passing along the line of troops on the left flank of

our position, halted behind our uhlans who were in the front line. To

the right stood our infantry in a dense column: they were the reserve.

Higher up the hill, on the very horizon, our guns were visible through

the wonderfully clear air, brightly illuminated by slanting morning

sunbeams. In front, beyond a hollow dale, could be seen the enemy's

columns and guns. Our advanced line, already in action, could be heard

briskly exchanging shots with the enemy in the dale.

At these sounds, long unheard, Rostov's spirits rose, as at the strains

of the merriest music. Trap-ta-ta-tap! cracked the shots, now together,

now several quickly one after another. Again all was silent and then

again it sounded as if someone were walking on detonators and exploding

them.

The hussars remained in the same place for about an hour. A cannonade

began. Count Ostermann with his suite rode up behind the squadron,

halted, spoke to the commander of the regiment, and rode up the hill to

the guns.

After Ostermann had gone, a command rang out to the uhlans.

"Form column! Prepare to charge!"

The infantry in front of them parted into platoons to allow the cavalry

to pass. The uhlans started, the streamers on their spears fluttering,

and trotted downhill toward the French cavalry which was seen below to

the left.

As soon as the uhlans descended the hill, the hussars were ordered up

the hill to support the battery. As they took the places vacated by the

uhlans, bullets came from the front, whining and whistling, but fell

spent without taking effect.

The sounds, which he had not heard for so long, had an even more

pleasurable and exhilarating effect on Rostov than the previous sounds

of firing. Drawing himself up, he viewed the field of battle opening out

before him from the hill, and with his whole soul followed the movement

of the uhlans. They swooped down close to the French dragoons, something

confused happened there amid the smoke, and five minutes later our

uhlans were galloping back, not to the place they had occupied but more

to the left, and among the orange-colored uhlans on chestnut horses and

behind them, in a large group, blue French dragoons on gray horses could

be seen.

CHAPTER XV

Rostov, with his keen sportsman's eye, was one of the first to catch

sight of these blue French dragoons pursuing our uhlans. Nearer and

nearer in disorderly crowds came the uhlans and the French dragoons

pursuing them. He could already see how these men, who looked so small

at the foot of the hill, jostled and overtook one another, waving their

arms and their sabers in the air.

Rostov gazed at what was happening before him as at a hunt. He felt

instinctively that if the hussars struck at the French dragoons now, the

latter could not withstand them, but if a charge was to be made it must

be done now, at that very moment, or it would be too late. He looked

around. A captain, standing beside him, was gazing like himself with

eyes fixed on the cavalry below them.

"Andrew Sevastyanych!" said Rostov. "You know, we could crush them...."

"A fine thing too!" replied the captain, "and really..."

Rostov, without waiting to hear him out, touched his horse, galloped to

the front of his squadron, and before he had time to finish giving the

word of command, the whole squadron, sharing his feeling, was following

him. Rostov himself did not know how or why he did it. He acted as he

did when hunting, without reflecting or considering. He saw the dragoons

near and that they were galloping in disorder; he knew they could not

withstand an attack--knew there was only that moment and that if he let

it slip it would not return. The bullets were whining and whistling so

stimulatingly around him and his horse was so eager to go that he could

not restrain himself. He touched his horse, gave the word of command,

and immediately, hearing behind him the tramp of the horses of his

deployed squadron, rode at full trot downhill toward the dragoons.

Hardly had they reached the bottom of the hill before their pace

instinctively changed to a gallop, which grew faster and faster as they

drew nearer to our uhlans and the French dragoons who galloped after

them. The dragoons were now close at hand. On seeing the hussars, the

foremost began to turn, while those behind began to halt. With the same

feeling with which he had galloped across the path of a wolf, Rostov

gave rein to his Donets horse and galloped to intersect the path of the

dragoons' disordered lines. One Uhlan stopped, another who was on foot

flung himself to the ground to avoid being knocked over, and a riderless

horse fell in among the hussars. Nearly all the French dragoons were

galloping back. Rostov, picking out one on a gray horse, dashed after

him. On the way he came upon a bush, his gallant horse cleared it, and

almost before he had righted himself in his saddle he saw that he would

immediately overtake the enemy he had selected. That Frenchman, by his

uniform an officer, was going at a gallop, crouching on his gray horse

and urging it on with his saber. In another moment Rostov's horse dashed

its breast against the hindquarters of the officer's horse, almost

knocking it over, and at the same instant Rostov, without knowing why,

raised his saber and struck the Frenchman with it.

The instant he had done this, all Rostov's animation vanished. The

officer fell, not so much from the blow--which had but slightly cut his

arm above the elbow--as from the shock to his horse and from fright.

Rostov reined in his horse, and his eyes sought his foe to see whom he

had vanquished. The French dragoon officer was hopping with one foot on

the ground, the other being caught in the stirrup. His eyes, screwed up

with fear as if he every moment expected another blow, gazed up at

Rostov with shrinking terror. His pale and mud-stained face--fair and

young, with a dimple in the chin and light-blue eyes--was not an enemy's

face at all suited to a battlefield, but a most ordinary, homelike face.

Before Rostov had decided what to do with him, the officer cried, "I

surrender!" He hurriedly but vainly tried to get his foot out of the

stirrup and did not remove his frightened blue eyes from Rostov's face.

Some hussars who galloped up disengaged his foot and helped him into the

saddle. On all sides, the hussars were busy with the dragoons; one was

wounded, but though his face was bleeding, he would not give up his

horse; another was perched up behind an hussar with his arms round him;

a third was being helped by an hussar to mount his horse. In front, the

French infantry were firing as they ran. The hussars galloped hastily

back with their prisoners. Rostov galloped back with the rest, aware of

an unpleasant feeling of depression in his heart. Something vague and

confused, which he could not at all account for, had come over him with

the capture of that officer and the blow he had dealt him.

Count Ostermann-Tolstoy met the returning hussars, sent for Rostov,

thanked him, and said he would report his gallant deed to the Emperor

and would recommend him for a St. George's Cross. When sent for by Count

Ostermann, Rostov, remembering that he had charged without orders, felt

sure his commander was sending for him to punish him for breach of

discipline. Ostermann's flattering words and promise of a reward should

therefore have struck him all the more pleasantly, but he still felt

that same vaguely disagreeable feeling of moral nausea. "But what on

earth is worrying me?" he asked himself as he rode back from the

general. "Ilyin? No, he's safe. Have I disgraced myself in any way? No,

that's not it." Something else, resembling remorse, tormented him. "Yes,

oh yes, that French officer with the dimple. And I remember how my arm

paused when I raised it."

Rostov saw the prisoners being led away and galloped after them to have

a look at his Frenchman with the dimple on his chin. He was sitting in

his foreign uniform on an hussar packhorse and looked anxiously about

him; The sword cut on his arm could scarcely be called a wound. He

glanced at Rostov with a feigned smile and waved his hand in greeting.

Rostov still had the same indefinite feeling, as of shame.

All that day and the next his friends and comrades noticed that Rostov,

without being dull or angry, was silent, thoughtful, and preoccupied. He

drank reluctantly, tried to remain alone, and kept turning something

over in his mind.

Rostov was always thinking about that brilliant exploit of his, which to

his amazement had gained him the St. George's Cross and even given him a

reputation for bravery, and there was something he could not at all

understand. "So others are even more afraid than I am!" he thought. "So

that's all there is in what is called heroism! And did I do it for my

country's sake? And how was he to blame, with his dimple and blue eyes?

And how frightened he was! He thought that I should kill him. Why should

I kill him? My hand trembled. And they have given me a St. George's

Cross.... I can't make it out at all."

But while Nicholas was considering these questions and still could reach

no clear solution of what puzzled him so, the wheel of fortune in the

service, as often happens, turned in his favor. After the affair at

Ostrovna he was brought into notice, received command of an hussar

battalion, and when a brave officer was needed he was chosen.

CHAPTER XVI

On receiving news of Natasha's illness, the countess, though not quite

well yet and still weak, went to Moscow with Petya and the rest of the

household, and the whole family moved from Marya Dmitrievna's house to

their own and settled down in town.

Natasha's illness was so serious that, fortunately for her and for her

parents, the consideration of all that had caused the illness, her

conduct and the breaking off of her engagement, receded into the

background. She was so ill that it was impossible for them to consider

in how far she was to blame for what had happened. She could not eat or

sleep, grew visibly thinner, coughed, and, as the doctors made them

feel, was in danger. They could not think of anything but how to help

her. Doctors came to see her singly and in consultation, talked much in

French, German, and Latin, blamed one another, and prescribed a great

variety of medicines for all the diseases known to them, but the simple

idea never occurred to any of them that they could not know the disease

Natasha was suffering from, as no disease suffered by a live man can be

known, for every living person has his own peculiarities and always has

his own peculiar, personal, novel, complicated disease, unknown to

medicine--not a disease of the lungs, liver, skin, heart, nerves, and so

on mentioned in medical books, but a disease consisting of one of the

innumerable combinations of the maladies of those organs. This simple

thought could not occur to the doctors (as it cannot occur to a wizard

that he is unable to work his charms) because the business of their

lives was to cure, and they received money for it and had spent the best

years of their lives on that business. But, above all, that thought was

kept out of their minds by the fact that they saw they were really

useful, as in fact they were to the whole Rostov family. Their

usefulness did not depend on making the patient swallow substances for

the most part harmful (the harm was scarcely perceptible, as they were

given in small doses), but they were useful, necessary, and

indispensable because they satisfied a mental need of the invalid and of

those who loved her--and that is why there are, and always will be,

pseudo-healers, wise women, homeopaths, and allopaths. They satisfied

that eternal human need for hope of relief, for sympathy, and that

something should be done, which is felt by those who are suffering. They

satisfied the need seen in its most elementary form in a child, when it

wants to have a place rubbed that has been hurt. A child knocks itself

and runs at once to the arms of its mother or nurse to have the aching

spot rubbed or kissed, and it feels better when this is done. The child

cannot believe that the strongest and wisest of its people have no

remedy for its pain, and the hope of relief and the expression of its

mother's sympathy while she rubs the bump comforts it. The doctors were

of use to Natasha because they kissed and rubbed her bump, assuring her

that it would soon pass if only the coachman went to the chemist's in

the Arbat and got a powder and some pills in a pretty box for a ruble

and seventy kopeks, and if she took those powders in boiled water at

intervals of precisely two hours, neither more nor less.

What would Sonya and the count and countess have done, how would they

have looked, if nothing had been done, if there had not been those pills

to give by the clock, the warm drinks, the chicken cutlets, and all the

other details of life ordered by the doctors, the carrying out of which

supplied an occupation and consolation to the family circle? How would

the count have borne his dearly loved daughter's illness had he not

known that it was costing him a thousand rubles, and that he would not

grudge thousands more to benefit her, or had he not known that if her

illness continued he would not grudge yet other thousands and would take

her abroad for consultations there, and had he not been able to explain

the details of how Metivier and Feller had not understood the symptoms,

but Frise had, and Mudrov had diagnosed them even better? What would the

countess have done had she not been able sometimes to scold the invalid

for not strictly obeying the doctor's orders?

"You'll never get well like that," she would say, forgetting her grief

in her vexation, "if you won't obey the doctor and take your medicine at

the right time! You mustn't trifle with it, you know, or it may turn to

pneumonia," she would go on, deriving much comfort from the utterance of

that foreign word, incomprehensible to others as well as to herself.

What would Sonya have done without the glad consciousness that she had

not undressed during the first three nights, in order to be ready to

carry out all the doctor's injunctions with precision, and that she

still kept awake at night so as not to miss the proper time when the

slightly harmful pills in the little gilt box had to be administered?

Even to Natasha herself it was pleasant to see that so many sacrifices

were being made for her sake, and to know that she had to take medicine

at certain hours, though she declared that no medicine would cure her

and that it was all nonsense. And it was even pleasant to be able to

show, by disregarding the orders, that she did not believe in medical

treatment and did not value her life.

The doctor came every day, felt her pulse, looked at her tongue, and

regardless of her grief-stricken face joked with her. But when he had

gone into another room, to which the countess hurriedly followed him, he

assumed a grave air and thoughtfully shaking his head said that though

there was danger, he had hopes of the effect of this last medicine and

one must wait and see, that the malady was chiefly mental, but... And

the countess, trying to conceal the action from herself and from him,

slipped a gold coin into his hand and always returned to the patient

with a more tranquil mind.

The symptoms of Natasha's illness were that she ate little, slept

little, coughed, and was always low-spirited. The doctors said that she

could not get on without medical treatment, so they kept her in the

stifling atmosphere of the town, and the Rostovs did not move to the

country that summer of 1812.

In spite of the many pills she swallowed and the drops and powders out

of the little bottles and boxes of which Madame Schoss who was fond of

such things made a large collection, and in spite of being deprived of

the country life to which she was accustomed, youth prevailed. Natasha's

grief began to be overlaid by the impressions of daily life, it ceased

to press so painfully on her heart, it gradually faded into the past,

and she began to recover physically.

CHAPTER XVII

Natasha was calmer but no happier. She not merely avoided all external

forms of pleasure--balls, promenades, concerts, and theaters--but she

never laughed without a sound of tears in her laughter. She could not

sing. As soon as she began to laugh, or tried to sing by herself, tears

choked her: tears of remorse, tears at the recollection of those pure

times which could never return, tears of vexation that she should so

uselessly have ruined her young life which might have been so happy.

Laughter and singing in particular seemed to her like a blasphemy, in

face of her sorrow. Without any need of self-restraint, no wish to

coquet ever entered her head. She said and felt at that time that no man

was more to her than Nastasya Ivanovna, the buffoon. Something stood

sentinel within her and forbade her every joy. Besides, she had lost all

the old interests of her carefree girlish life that had been so full of

hope. The previous autumn, the hunting, "Uncle," and the Christmas

holidays spent with Nicholas at Otradnoe were what she recalled oftenest

and most painfully. What would she not have given to bring back even a

single day of that time! But it was gone forever. Her presentiment at

the time had not deceived her--that that state of freedom and readiness

for any enjoyment would not return again. Yet it was necessary to live

on.

It comforted her to reflect that she was not better as she had formerly

imagined, but worse, much worse, than anybody else in the world. But

this was not enough. She knew that, and asked herself, "What next?" But

there was nothing to come. There was no joy in life, yet life was

passing. Natasha apparently tried not to be a burden or a hindrance to

anyone, but wanted nothing for herself. She kept away from everyone in

the house and felt at ease only with her brother Petya. She liked to be

with him better than with the others, and when alone with him she

sometimes laughed. She hardly ever left the house and of those who came

to see them was glad to see only one person, Pierre. It would have been

impossible to treat her with more delicacy, greater care, and at the

same time more seriously than did Count Bezukhov. Natasha unconsciously

felt this delicacy and so found great pleasure in his society. But she

was not even grateful to him for it; nothing good on Pierre's part

seemed to her to be an effort, it seemed so natural for him to be kind

to everyone that there was no merit in his kindness. Sometimes Natasha

noticed embarrassment and awkwardness on his part in her presence,

especially when he wanted to do something to please her, or feared that

something they spoke of would awaken memories distressing to her. She

noticed this and attributed it to his general kindness and shyness,

which she imagined must be the same toward everyone as it was to her.

After those involuntary words--that if he were free he would have asked

on his knees for her hand and her love--uttered at a moment when she was

so strongly agitated, Pierre never spoke to Natasha of his feelings; and

it seemed plain to her that those words, which had then so comforted

her, were spoken as all sorts of meaningless words are spoken to comfort

a crying child. It was not because Pierre was a married man, but because

Natasha felt very strongly with him that moral barrier the absence of

which she had experienced with Kuragin that it never entered her head

that the relations between him and herself could lead to love on her

part, still less on his, or even to the kind of tender, self-conscious,

romantic friendship between a man and a woman of which she had known

several instances.

Before the end of the fast of St. Peter, Agrafena Ivanovna Belova, a

country neighbor of the Rostovs, came to Moscow to pay her devotions at

the shrines of the Moscow saints. She suggested that Natasha should fast

and prepare for Holy Communion, and Natasha gladly welcomed the idea.

Despite the doctor's orders that she should not go out early in the

morning, Natasha insisted on fasting and preparing for the sacrament,

not as they generally prepared for it in the Rostov family by attending

three services in their own house, but as Agrafena Ivanovna did, by

going to church every day for a week and not once missing Vespers,

Matins, or Mass.

The countess was pleased with Natasha's zeal; after the poor results of

the medical treatment, in the depths of her heart she hoped that prayer

might help her daughter more than medicines and, though not without fear

and concealing it from the doctor, she agreed to Natasha's wish and

entrusted her to Belova. Agrafena Ivanovna used to come to wake Natasha

at three in the morning, but generally found her already awake. She was

afraid of being late for Matins. Hastily washing, and meekly putting on

her shabbiest dress and an old mantilla, Natasha, shivering in the fresh

air, went out into the deserted streets lit by the clear light of dawn.

By Agrafena Ivanovna's advice Natasha prepared herself not in their own

parish, but at a church where, according to the devout Agrafena

Ivanovna, the priest was a man of very severe and lofty life. There were

never many people in the church; Natasha always stood beside Belova in

the customary place before an icon of the Blessed Virgin, let into the

screen before the choir on the left side, and a feeling, new to her, of

humility before something great and incomprehensible, seized her when at

that unusual morning hour, gazing at the dark face of the Virgin

illuminated by the candles burning before it and by the morning light

falling from the window, she listened to the words of the service which

she tried to follow with understanding. When she understood them her

personal feeling became interwoven in the prayers with shades of its

own. When she did not understand, it was sweeter still to think that the

wish to understand everything is pride, that it is impossible to

understand all, that it is only necessary to believe and to commit

oneself to God, whom she felt guiding her soul at those moments. She

crossed herself, bowed low, and when she did not understand, in horror

at her own vileness, simply asked God to forgive her everything,

everything, to have mercy upon her. The prayers to which she surrendered

herself most of all were those of repentance. On her way home at an

early hour when she met no one but bricklayers going to work or men

sweeping the street, and everybody within the houses was still asleep,

Natasha experienced a feeling new to her, a sense of the possibility of

correcting her faults, the possibility of a new, clean life, and of

happiness.

During the whole week she spent in this way, that feeling grew every

day. And the happiness of taking communion, or "communing" as Agrafena

Ivanovna, joyously playing with the word, called it, seemed to Natasha

so great that she felt she should never live till that blessed Sunday.

But the happy day came, and on that memorable Sunday, when, dressed in

white muslin, she returned home after communion, for the first time for

many months she felt calm and not oppressed by the thought of the life

that lay before her.

The doctor who came to see her that day ordered her to continue the

powders he had prescribed a fortnight previously.

"She must certainly go on taking them morning and evening," said he,

evidently sincerely satisfied with his success. "Only, please be

particular about it.

"Be quite easy," he continued playfully, as he adroitly took the gold

coin in his palm. "She will soon be singing and frolicking about. The

last medicine has done her a very great deal of good. She has freshened

up very much."

The countess, with a cheerful expression on her face, looked down at her

nails and spat a little for luck as she returned to the drawing room.

CHAPTER XVIII

At the beginning of July more and more disquieting reports about the war

began to spread in Moscow; people spoke of an appeal by the Emperor to

the people, and of his coming himself from the army to Moscow. And as up

to the eleventh of July no manifesto or appeal had been received,

exaggerated reports became current about them and about the position of

Russia. It was said that the Emperor was leaving the army because it was

in danger, it was said that Smolensk had surrendered, that Napoleon had

an army of a million and only a miracle could save Russia.

On the eleventh of July, which was Saturday, the manifesto was received

but was not yet in print, and Pierre, who was at the Rostovs', promised

to come to dinner next day, Sunday, and bring a copy of the manifesto

and appeal, which he would obtain from Count Rostopchin.

That Sunday, the Rostovs went to Mass at the Razumovskis' private chapel

as usual. It was a hot July day. Even at ten o'clock, when the Rostovs

got out of their carriage at the chapel, the sultry air, the shouts of

hawkers, the light and gay summer clothes of the crowd, the dusty leaves

of the trees on the boulevard, the sounds of the band and the white

trousers of a battalion marching to parade, the rattling of wheels on

the cobblestones, and the brilliant, hot sunshine were all full of that

summer languor, that content and discontent with the present, which is

most strongly felt on a bright, hot day in town. All the Moscow

notabilities, all the Rostovs' acquaintances, were at the Razumovskis'

chapel, for, as if expecting something to happen, many wealthy families

who usually left town for their country estates had not gone away that

summer. As Natasha, at her mother's side, passed through the crowd

behind a liveried footman who cleared the way for them, she heard a

young man speaking about her in too loud a whisper.

"That's Rostova, the one who..."

"She's much thinner, but all the same she's pretty!"

She heard, or thought she heard, the names of Kuragin and Bolkonski. But

she was always imagining that. It always seemed to her that everyone who

looked at her was thinking only of what had happened to her. With a

sinking heart, wretched as she always was now when she found herself in

a crowd, Natasha in her lilac silk dress trimmed with black lace walked-

-as women can walk--with the more repose and stateliness the greater the

pain and shame in her soul. She knew for certain that she was pretty,

but this no longer gave her satisfaction as it used to. On the contrary

it tormented her more than anything else of late, and particularly so on

this bright, hot summer day in town. "It's Sunday again--another week

past," she thought, recalling that she had been here the Sunday before,

"and always the same life that is no life, and the same surroundings in

which it used to be so easy to live. I'm pretty, I'm young, and I know

that now I am good. I used to be bad, but now I know I am good," she

thought, "but yet my best years are slipping by and are no good to

anyone." She stood by her mother's side and exchanged nods with

acquaintances near her. From habit she scrutinized the ladies' dresses,

condemned the bearing of a lady standing close by who was not crossing

herself properly but in a cramped manner, and again she thought with

vexation that she was herself being judged and was judging others, and

suddenly, at the sound of the service, she felt horrified at her own

vileness, horrified that the former purity of her soul was again lost to

her.

A comely, fresh-looking old man was conducting the service with that

mild solemnity which has so elevating and soothing an effect on the

souls of the worshipers. The gates of the sanctuary screen were closed,

the curtain was slowly drawn, and from behind it a soft mysterious voice

pronounced some words. Tears, the cause of which she herself did not

understand, made Natasha's breast heave, and a joyous but oppressive

feeling agitated her.

"Teach me what I should do, how to live my life, how I may grow good

forever, forever!" she pleaded.

The deacon came out onto the raised space before the altar screen and,

holding his thumb extended, drew his long hair from under his dalmatic

and, making the sign of the cross on his breast, began in a loud and

solemn voice to recite the words of the prayer...

"In peace let us pray unto the Lord."

"As one community, without distinction of class, without enmity, united

by brotherly love--let us pray!" thought Natasha.

"For the peace that is from above, and for the salvation of our souls."

"For the world of angels and all the spirits who dwell above us," prayed

Natasha.

When they prayed for the warriors, she thought of her brother and

Denisov. When they prayed for all traveling by land and sea, she

remembered Prince Andrew, prayed for him, and asked God to forgive her

all the wrongs she had done him. When they prayed for those who love us,

she prayed for the members of her own family, her father and mother and

Sonya, realizing for the first time how wrongly she had acted toward

them, and feeling all the strength of her love for them. When they

prayed for those who hate us, she tried to think of her enemies and

people who hated her, in order to pray for them. She included among her

enemies the creditors and all who had business dealings with her father,

and always at the thought of enemies and those who hated her she

remembered Anatole who had done her so much harm--and though he did not

hate her she gladly prayed for him as for an enemy. Only at prayer did

she feel able to think clearly and calmly of Prince Andrew and Anatole,

as men for whom her feelings were as nothing compared with her awe and

devotion to God. When they prayed for the Imperial family and the Synod,

she bowed very low and made the sign of the cross, saying to herself

that even if she did not understand, still she could not doubt, and at

any rate loved the governing Synod and prayed for it.

When he had finished the Litany the deacon crossed the stole over his

breast and said, "Let us commit ourselves and our whole lives to Christ

the Lord!"

"Commit ourselves to God," Natasha inwardly repeated. "Lord God, I

submit myself to Thy will!" she thought. "I want nothing, wish for

nothing; teach me what to do and how to use my will! Take me, take me!"

prayed Natasha, with impatient emotion in her heart, not crossing

herself but letting her slender arms hang down as if expecting some

invisible power at any moment to take her and deliver her from herself,

from her regrets, desires, remorse, hopes, and sins.

The countess looked round several times at her daughter's softened face

and shining eyes and prayed God to help her.

Unexpectedly, in the middle of the service, and not in the usual order

Natasha knew so well, the deacon brought out a small stool, the one he

knelt on when praying on Trinity Sunday, and placed it before the doors

of the sanctuary screen. The priest came out with his purple velvet

biretta on his head, adjusted his hair, and knelt down with an effort.

Everybody followed his example and they looked at one another in

surprise. Then came the prayer just received from the Synod--a prayer

for the deliverance of Russia from hostile invasion.

"Lord God of might, God of our salvation!" began the priest in that

voice, clear, not grandiloquent but mild, in which only the Slav clergy

read and which acts so irresistibly on a Russian heart.

"Lord God of might, God of our salvation! Look this day in mercy and

blessing on Thy humble people, and graciously hear us, spare us, and

have mercy upon us! This foe confounding Thy land, desiring to lay waste

the whole world, rises against us; these lawless men are gathered

together to overthrow Thy kingdom, to destroy Thy dear Jerusalem, Thy

beloved Russia; to defile Thy temples, to overthrow Thine altars, and to

desecrate our holy shrines. How long, O Lord, how long shall the wicked

triumph? How long shall they wield unlawful power?

"Lord God! Hear us when we pray to Thee; strengthen with Thy might our

most gracious sovereign lord, the Emperor Alexander Pavlovich; be

mindful of his uprightness and meekness, reward him according to his

righteousness, and let it preserve us, Thy chosen Israel! Bless his

counsels, his undertakings, and his work; strengthen his kingdom by

Thine almighty hand, and give him victory over his enemy, even as Thou

gavest Moses the victory over Amalek, Gideon over Midian, and David over

Goliath. Preserve his army, put a bow of brass in the hands of those who

have armed themselves in Thy Name, and gird their loins with strength

for the fight. Take up the spear and shield and arise to help us;

confound and put to shame those who have devised evil against us, may

they be before the faces of Thy faithful warriors as dust before the

wind, and may Thy mighty Angel confound them and put them to flight; may

they be ensnared when they know it not, and may the plots they have laid

in secret be turned against them; let them fall before Thy servants'

feet and be laid low by our hosts! Lord, Thou art able to save both

great and small; Thou art God, and man cannot prevail against Thee!

"God of our fathers! Remember Thy bounteous mercy and loving-kindness

which are from of old; turn not Thy face from us, but be gracious to our

unworthiness, and in Thy great goodness and Thy many mercies regard not

our transgressions and iniquities! Create in us a clean heart and renew

a right spirit within us, strengthen us all in Thy faith, fortify our

hope, inspire us with true love one for another, arm us with unity of

spirit in the righteous defense of the heritage Thou gavest to us and to

our fathers, and let not the scepter of the wicked be exalted against

the destiny of those Thou hast sanctified.

"O Lord our God, in whom we believe and in whom we put our trust, let us

not be confounded in our hope of Thy mercy, and give us a token of Thy

blessing, that those who hate us and our Orthodox faith may see it and

be put to shame and perish, and may all the nations know that Thou art

the Lord and we are Thy people. Show Thy mercy upon us this day, O Lord,

and grant us Thy salvation; make the hearts of Thy servants to rejoice

in Thy mercy; smite down our enemies and destroy them swiftly beneath

the feet of Thy faithful servants! For Thou art the defense, the succor,

and the victory of them that put their trust in Thee, and to Thee be all

glory, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, now and forever, world without

end. Amen."

In Natasha's receptive condition of soul this prayer affected her

strongly. She listened to every word about the victory of Moses over

Amalek, of Gideon over Midian, and of David over Goliath, and about the

destruction of "Thy Jerusalem," and she prayed to God with the

tenderness and emotion with which her heart was overflowing, but without

fully understanding what she was asking of God in that prayer. She

shared with all her heart in the prayer for the spirit of righteousness,

for the strengthening of the heart by faith and hope, and its animation

by love. But she could not pray that her enemies might be trampled under

foot when but a few minutes before she had been wishing she had more of

them that she might pray for them. But neither could she doubt the

righteousness of the prayer that was being read on bended knees. She

felt in her heart a devout and tremulous awe at the thought of the

punishment that overtakes men for their sins, and especially of her own

sins, and she prayed to God to forgive them all, and her too, and to

give them all, and her too, peace and happiness. And it seemed to her

that God heard her prayer.

CHAPTER XIX

From the day when Pierre, after leaving the Rostovs' with Natasha's

grateful look fresh in his mind, had gazed at the comet that seemed to

be fixed in the sky and felt that something new was appearing on his own

horizon--from that day the problem of the vanity and uselessness of all

earthly things, that had incessantly tormented him, no longer presented

itself. That terrible question "Why?" "Wherefore?" which had come to him

amid every occupation, was now replaced, not by another question or by a

reply to the former question, but by her image. When he listened to, or

himself took part in, trivial conversations, when he read or heard of

human baseness or folly, he was not horrified as formerly, and did not

ask himself why men struggled so about these things when all is so

transient and incomprehensible--but he remembered her as he had last

seen her, and all his doubts vanished--not because she had answered the

questions that had haunted him, but because his conception of her

transferred him instantly to another, a brighter, realm of spiritual

activity in which no one could be justified or guilty--a realm of beauty

and love which it was worth living for. Whatever worldly baseness

presented itself to him, he said to himself:

"Well, supposing N. N. swindled the country and the Tsar, and the

country and the Tsar confer honors upon him, what does that matter? She

smiled at me yesterday and asked me to come again, and I love her, and

no one will ever know it." And his soul felt calm and peaceful.

Pierre still went into society, drank as much and led the same idle and

dissipated life, because besides the hours he spent at the Rostovs'

there were other hours he had to spend somehow, and the habits and

acquaintances he had made in Moscow formed a current that bore him along

irresistibly. But latterly, when more and more disquieting reports came

from the seat of war and Natasha's health began to improve and she no

longer aroused in him the former feeling of careful pity, an ever-

increasing restlessness, which he could not explain, took possession of

him. He felt that the condition he was in could not continue long, that

a catastrophe was coming which would change his whole life, and he

impatiently sought everywhere for signs of that approaching catastrophe.

One of his brother Masons had revealed to Pierre the following prophecy

concerning Napoleon, drawn from the Revelation of St. John.

In chapter 13, verse 18, of the Apocalypse, it is said:

Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the

beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred

threescore and six.

And in the fifth verse of the same chapter:

And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and

blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two

months.

The French alphabet, written out with the same numerical values as the

Hebrew, in which the first nine letters denote units and the others

tens, will have the following significance:

a b c d e f g h i k 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

10 l m n o p q r s 20 30 40 50 60 70 80

90 t u v w x y 100 110 120 130 140 150 z 160

Writing the words L'Empereur Napoleon in numbers, it appears that the

sum of them is 666, and that Napoleon was therefore the beast foretold

in the Apocalypse. Moreover, by applying the same system to the words

quarante-deux, \* which was the term allowed to the beast that "spoke

great things and blasphemies," the same number 666 was obtained; from

which it followed that the limit fixed for Napoleon's power had come in

the year 1812 when the French emperor was forty-two. This prophecy

pleased Pierre very much and he often asked himself what would put an

end to the power of the beast, that is, of Napoleon, and tried by the

same system of using letters as numbers and adding them up, to find an

answer to the question that engrossed him. He wrote the words L'Empereur

Alexandre, La nation russe and added up their numbers, but the sums were

either more or less than 666. Once when making such calculations he

wrote down his own name in French, Comte Pierre Besouhoff, but the sum

of the numbers did not come right. Then he changed the spelling,

substituting a z for the s and adding de and the article le, still

without obtaining the desired result. Then it occurred to him: if the

answer to the question were contained in his name, his nationality would

also be given in the answer. So he wrote Le russe Besuhof and adding up

the numbers got 671. This was only five too much, and five was

represented by e, the very letter elided from the article le before the

word Empereur. By omitting the e, though incorrectly, Pierre got the

answer he sought. L'russe Besuhof made 666. This discovery excited him.

How, or by what means, he was connected with the great event foretold in

the Apocalypse he did not know, but he did not doubt that connection for

a moment. His love for Natasha, Antichrist, Napoleon, the invasion, the

comet, 666, L'Empereur Napoleon, and L'russe Besuhof--all this had to

mature and culminate, to lift him out of that spellbound, petty sphere

of Moscow habits in which he felt himself held captive and lead him to a

great achievement and great happiness.

\* Forty-two.

On the eve of the Sunday when the special prayer was read, Pierre had

promised the Rostovs to bring them, from Count Rostopchin whom he knew

well, both the appeal to the people and the news from the army. In the

morning, when he went to call at Rostopchin's he met there a courier

fresh from the army, an acquaintance of his own, who often danced at

Moscow balls.

"Do, please, for heaven's sake, relieve me of something!" said the

courier. "I have a sackful of letters to parents."

Among these letters was one from Nicholas Rostov to his father. Pierre

took that letter, and Rostopchin also gave him the Emperor's appeal to

Moscow, which had just been printed, the last army orders, and his own

most recent bulletin. Glancing through the army orders, Pierre found in

one of them, in the lists of killed, wounded, and rewarded, the name of

Nicholas Rostov, awarded a St. George's Cross of the Fourth Class for

courage shown in the Ostrovna affair, and in the same order the name of

Prince Andrew Bolkonski, appointed to the command of a regiment of

Chasseurs. Though he did not want to remind the Rostovs of Bolkonski,

Pierre could not refrain from making them happy by the news of their

son's having received a decoration, so he sent that printed army order

and Nicholas' letter to the Rostovs, keeping the appeal, the bulletin,

and the other orders to take with him when he went to dinner.

His conversation with Count Rostopchin and the latter's tone of anxious

hurry, the meeting with the courier who talked casually of how badly

things were going in the army, the rumors of the discovery of spies in

Moscow and of a leaflet in circulation stating that Napoleon promised to

be in both the Russian capitals by the autumn, and the talk of the

Emperor's being expected to arrive next day--all aroused with fresh

force that feeling of agitation and expectation in Pierre which he had

been conscious of ever since the appearance of the comet, and especially

since the beginning of the war.

He had long been thinking of entering the army and would have done so

had he not been hindered, first, by his membership of the Society of

Freemasons to which he was bound by oath and which preached perpetual

peace and the abolition of war, and secondly, by the fact that when he

saw the great mass of Muscovites who had donned uniform and were talking

patriotism, he somehow felt ashamed to take the step. But the chief

reason for not carrying out his intention to enter the army lay in the

vague idea that he was L'russe Besuhof who had the number of the beast,

666; that his part in the great affair of setting a limit to the power

of the beast that spoke great and blasphemous things had been

predestined from eternity, and that therefore he ought not to undertake

anything, but wait for what was bound to come to pass.

CHAPTER XX

A few intimate friends were dining with the Rostovs that day, as usual

on Sundays.

Pierre came early so as to find them alone.

He had grown so stout this year that he would have been abnormal had he

not been so tall, so broad of limb, and so strong that he carried his

bulk with evident ease.

He went up the stairs, puffing and muttering something. His coachman did

not even ask whether he was to wait. He knew that when his master was at

the Rostovs' he stayed till midnight. The Rostovs' footman rushed

eagerly forward to help him off with his cloak and take his hat and

stick. Pierre, from club habit, always left both hat and stick in the

anteroom.

The first person he saw in the house was Natasha. Even before he saw

her, while taking off his cloak, he heard her. She was practicing solfa

exercises in the music room. He knew that she had not sung since her

illness, and so the sound of her voice surprised and delighted him. He

opened the door softly and saw her, in the lilac dress she had worn at

church, walking about the room singing. She had her back to him when he

opened the door, but when, turning quickly, she saw his broad, surprised

face, she blushed and came rapidly up to him.

"I want to try to sing again," she said, adding as if by way of excuse,

"it is, at least, something to do."

"That's capital!"

"How glad I am you've come! I am so happy today," she said, with the old

animation Pierre had not seen in her for a long time. "You know Nicholas

has received a St. George's Cross? I am so proud of him."

"Oh yes, I sent that announcement. But I don't want to interrupt you,"

he added, and was about to go to the drawing room.

Natasha stopped him.

"Count, is it wrong of me to sing?" she said blushing, and fixing her

eyes inquiringly on him.

"No... Why should it be? On the contrary... But why do you ask me?"

"I don't know myself," Natasha answered quickly, "but I should not like

to do anything you disapproved of. I believe in you completely. You

don't know how important you are to me, how much you've done for me...."

She spoke rapidly and did not notice how Pierre flushed at her words. "I

saw in that same army order that he, Bolkonski" (she whispered the name

hastily), "is in Russia, and in the army again. What do you think?"--she

was speaking hurriedly, evidently afraid her strength might fail her--

"Will he ever forgive me? Will he not always have a bitter feeling

toward me? What do you think? What do you think?"

"I think..." Pierre replied, "that he has nothing to forgive.... If I

were in his place..."

By association of ideas, Pierre was at once carried back to the day

when, trying to comfort her, he had said that if he were not himself but

the best man in the world and free, he would ask on his knees for her

hand; and the same feeling of pity, tenderness, and love took possession

of him and the same words rose to his lips. But she did not give him

time to say them.

"Yes, you... you..." she said, uttering the word you rapturously--

"that's a different thing. I know no one kinder, more generous, or

better than you; nobody could be! Had you not been there then, and now

too, I don't know what would have become of me, because..."

Tears suddenly rose in her eyes, she turned away, lifted her music

before her eyes, began singing again, and again began walking up and

down the room.

Just then Petya came running in from the drawing room.

Petya was now a handsome rosy lad of fifteen with full red lips and

resembled Natasha. He was preparing to enter the university, but he and

his friend Obolenski had lately, in secret, agreed to join the hussars.

Petya had come rushing out to talk to his namesake about this affair. He

had asked Pierre to find out whether he would be accepted in the

hussars.

Pierre walked up and down the drawing room, not listening to what Petya

was saying.

Petya pulled him by the arm to attract his attention.

"Well, what about my plan? Peter Kirilych, for heaven's sake! You are my

only hope," said Petya.

"Oh yes, your plan. To join the hussars? I'll mention it, I'll bring it

all up today."

"Well, mon cher, have you got the manifesto?" asked the old count. "The

countess has been to Mass at the Razumovskis' and heard the new prayer.

She says it's very fine."

"Yes, I've got it," said Pierre. "The Emperor is to be here tomorrow...

there's to be an Extraordinary Meeting of the nobility, and they are

talking of a levy of ten men per thousand. Oh yes, let me congratulate

you!"

"Yes, yes, thank God! Well, and what news from the army?"

"We are again retreating. They say we're already near Smolensk," replied

Pierre.

"O Lord, O Lord!" exclaimed the count. "Where is the manifesto?"

"The Emperor's appeal? Oh yes!"

Pierre began feeling in his pockets for the papers, but could not find

them. Still slapping his pockets, he kissed the hand of the countess who

entered the room and glanced uneasily around, evidently expecting

Natasha, who had left off singing but had not yet come into the drawing

room.

"On my word, I don't know what I've done with it," he said.

"There he is, always losing everything!" remarked the countess.

Natasha entered with a softened and agitated expression of face and sat

down looking silently at Pierre. As soon as she entered, Pierre's

features, which had been gloomy, suddenly lighted up, and while still

searching for the papers he glanced at her several times.

"No, really! I'll drive home, I must have left them there. I'll

certainly..."

"But you'll be late for dinner."

"Oh! And my coachman has gone."

But Sonya, who had gone to look for the papers in the anteroom, had

found them in Pierre's hat, where he had carefully tucked them under the

lining. Pierre was about to begin reading.

"No, after dinner," said the old count, evidently expecting much

enjoyment from that reading.

At dinner, at which champagne was drunk to the health of the new

chevalier of St. George, Shinshin told them the town news, of the

illness of the old Georgian princess, of Metivier's disappearance from

Moscow, and of how some German fellow had been brought to Rostopchin and

accused of being a French "spyer" (so Count Rostopchin had told the

story), and how Rostopchin let him go and assured the people that he was

"not a spire at all, but only an old German ruin."

"People are being arrested..." said the count. "I've told the countess

she should not speak French so much. It's not the time for it now."

"And have you heard?" Shinshin asked. "Prince Golitsyn has engaged a

master to teach him Russian. It is becoming dangerous to speak French in

the streets."

"And how about you, Count Peter Kirilych? If they call up the militia,

you too will have to mount a horse," remarked the old count, addressing

Pierre.

Pierre had been silent and preoccupied all through dinner, seeming not

to grasp what was said. He looked at the count.

"Oh yes, the war," he said. "No! What sort of warrior should I make? And

yet everything is so strange, so strange! I can't make it out. I don't

know, I am very far from having military tastes, but in these times no

one can answer for himself."

After dinner the count settled himself comfortably in an easy chair and

with a serious face asked Sonya, who was considered an excellent reader,

to read the appeal.

"To Moscow, our ancient Capital!

"The enemy has entered the borders of Russia with immense forces. He

comes to despoil our beloved country."

Sonya read painstakingly in her high-pitched voice. The count listened

with closed eyes, heaving abrupt sighs at certain passages.

Natasha sat erect, gazing with a searching look now at her father and

now at Pierre.

Pierre felt her eyes on him and tried not to look round. The countess

shook her head disapprovingly and angrily at every solemn expression in

the manifesto. In all these words she saw only that the danger

threatening her son would not soon be over. Shinshin, with a sarcastic

smile on his lips, was evidently preparing to make fun of anything that

gave him the opportunity: Sonya's reading, any remark of the count's, or

even the manifesto itself should no better pretext present itself.

After reading about the dangers that threatened Russia, the hopes the

Emperor placed on Moscow and especially on its illustrious nobility,

Sonya, with a quiver in her voice due chiefly to the attention that was

being paid to her, read the last words:

"We ourselves will not delay to appear among our people in that Capital

and in other parts of our realm for consultation, and for the direction

of all our levies, both those now barring the enemy's path and those

freshly formed to defeat him wherever he may appear. May the ruin he

hopes to bring upon us recoil on his own head, and may Europe delivered

from bondage glorify the name of Russia!"

"Yes, that's it!" cried the count, opening his moist eyes and sniffing

repeatedly, as if a strong vinaigrette had been held to his nose; and he

added, "Let the Emperor but say the word and we'll sacrifice everything

and begrudge nothing."

Before Shinshin had time to utter the joke he was ready to make on the

count's patriotism, Natasha jumped up from her place and ran to her

father.

"What a darling our Papa is!" she cried, kissing him, and she again

looked at Pierre with the unconscious coquetry that had returned to her

with her better spirits.

"There! Here's a patriot for you!" said Shinshin.

"Not a patriot at all, but simply..." Natasha replied in an injured

tone. "Everything seems funny to you, but this isn't at all a joke...."

"A joke indeed!" put in the count. "Let him but say the word and we'll

all go.... We're not Germans!"

"But did you notice, it says, 'for consultation'?" said Pierre.

"Never mind what it's for...."

At this moment, Petya, to whom nobody was paying any attention, came up

to his father with a very flushed face and said in his breaking voice

that was now deep and now shrill:

"Well, Papa, I tell you definitely, and Mamma too, it's as you please,

but I say definitely that you must let me enter the army, because I

can't... that's all...."

The countess, in dismay, looked up to heaven, clasped her hands, and

turned angrily to her husband.

"That comes of your talking!" said she.

But the count had already recovered from his excitement.

"Come, come!" said he. "Here's a fine warrior! No! Nonsense! You must

study."

"It's not nonsense, Papa. Fedya Obolenski is younger than I, and he's

going too. Besides, all the same I can't study now when..." Petya

stopped short, flushed till he perspired, but still got out the words,

"when our Fatherland is in danger."

"That'll do, that'll do--nonsense...."

"But you said yourself that we would sacrifice everything."

"Petya! Be quiet, I tell you!" cried the count, with a glance at his

wife, who had turned pale and was staring fixedly at her son.

"And I tell you--Peter Kirilych here will also tell you..."

"Nonsense, I tell you. Your mother's milk has hardly dried on your lips

and you want to go into the army! There, there, I tell you," and the

count moved to go out of the room, taking the papers, probably to reread

them in his study before having a nap.

"Well, Peter Kirilych, let's go and have a smoke," he said.

Pierre was agitated and undecided. Natasha's unwontedly brilliant eyes,

continually glancing at him with a more than cordial look, had reduced

him to this condition.

"No, I think I'll go home."

"Home? Why, you meant to spend the evening with us.... You don't often

come nowadays as it is, and this girl of mine," said the count good-

naturedly, pointing to Natasha, "only brightens up when you're here."

"Yes, I had forgotten... I really must go home... business..." said

Pierre hurriedly.

"Well, then, au revoir!" said the count, and went out of the room.

"Why are you going? Why are you upset?" asked Natasha, and she looked

challengingly into Pierre's eyes.

"Because I love you!" was what he wanted to say, but he did not say it,

and only blushed till the tears came, and lowered his eyes.

"Because it is better for me to come less often... because... No, simply

I have business...."

"Why? No, tell me!" Natasha began resolutely and suddenly stopped.

They looked at each other with dismayed and embarrassed faces. He tried

to smile but could not: his smile expressed suffering, and he silently

kissed her hand and went out.

Pierre made up his mind not to go to the Rostovs' any more.

CHAPTER XXI

After the definite refusal he had received, Petya went to his room and

there locked himself in and wept bitterly. When he came in to tea,

silent, morose, and with tear-stained face, everybody pretended not to

notice anything.

Next day the Emperor arrived in Moscow, and several of the Rostovs'

domestic serfs begged permission to go to have a look at him. That

morning Petya was a long time dressing and arranging his hair and collar

to look like a grown-up man. He frowned before his looking glass,

gesticulated, shrugged his shoulders, and finally, without saying a word

to anyone, took his cap and left the house by the back door, trying to

avoid notice. Petya decided to go straight to where the Emperor was and

to explain frankly to some gentleman-in-waiting (he imagined the Emperor

to be always surrounded by gentlemen-in-waiting) that he, Count Rostov,

in spite of his youth wished to serve his country; that youth could be

no hindrance to loyalty, and that he was ready to... While dressing,

Petya had prepared many fine things he meant to say to the gentleman-in-

waiting.

It was on the very fact of being so young that Petya counted for success

in reaching the Emperor--he even thought how surprised everyone would be

at his youthfulness--and yet in the arrangement of his collar and hair

and by his sedate deliberate walk he wished to appear a grown-up man.

But the farther he went and the more his attention was diverted by the

ever-increasing crowds moving toward the Kremlin, the less he remembered

to walk with the sedateness and deliberation of a man. As he approached

the Kremlin he even began to avoid being crushed and resolutely stuck

out his elbows in a menacing way. But within the Trinity Gateway he was

so pressed to the wall by people who probably were unaware of the

patriotic intentions with which he had come that in spite of all his

determination he had to give in, and stop while carriages passed in,

rumbling beneath the archway. Beside Petya stood a peasant woman, a

footman, two tradesmen, and a discharged soldier. After standing some

time in the gateway, Petya tried to move forward in front of the others

without waiting for all the carriages to pass, and he began resolutely

working his way with his elbows, but the woman just in front of him, who

was the first against whom he directed his efforts, angrily shouted at

him:

"What are you shoving for, young lordling? Don't you see we're all

standing still? Then why push?"

"Anybody can shove," said the footman, and also began working his elbows

to such effect that he pushed Petya into a very filthy corner of the

gateway.

Petya wiped his perspiring face with his hands and pulled up the damp

collar which he had arranged so well at home to seem like a man's.

He felt that he no longer looked presentable, and feared that if he were

now to approach the gentlemen-in-waiting in that plight he would not be

admitted to the Emperor. But it was impossible to smarten oneself up or

move to another place, because of the crowd. One of the generals who

drove past was an acquaintance of the Rostovs', and Petya thought of

asking his help, but came to the conclusion that that would not be a

manly thing to do. When the carriages had all passed in, the crowd,

carrying Petya with it, streamed forward into the Kremlin Square which

was already full of people. There were people not only in the square,

but everywhere--on the slopes and on the roofs. As soon as Petya found

himself in the square he clearly heard the sound of bells and the joyous

voices of the crowd that filled the whole Kremlin.

For a while the crowd was less dense, but suddenly all heads were bared,

and everyone rushed forward in one direction. Petya was being pressed so

that he could scarcely breathe, and everybody shouted, "Hurrah! hurrah!

hurrah!" Petya stood on tiptoe and pushed and pinched, but could see

nothing except the people about him.

All the faces bore the same expression of excitement and enthusiasm. A

tradesman's wife standing beside Petya sobbed, and the tears ran down

her cheeks.

"Father! Angel! Dear one!" she kept repeating, wiping away her tears

with her fingers.

"Hurrah!" was heard on all sides.

For a moment the crowd stood still, but then it made another rush

forward.

Quite beside himself, Petya, clinching his teeth and rolling his eyes

ferociously, pushed forward, elbowing his way and shouting "hurrah!" as

if he were prepared that instant to kill himself and everyone else, but

on both sides of him other people with similarly ferocious faces pushed

forward and everybody shouted "hurrah!"

"So this is what the Emperor is!" thought Petya. "No, I can't petition

him myself--that would be too bold." But in spite of this he continued

to struggle desperately forward, and from between the backs of those in

front he caught glimpses of an open space with a strip of red cloth

spread out on it; but just then the crowd swayed back--the police in

front were pushing back those who had pressed too close to the

procession: the Emperor was passing from the palace to the Cathedral of

the Assumption--and Petya unexpectedly received such a blow on his side

and ribs and was squeezed so hard that suddenly everything grew dim

before his eyes and he lost consciousness. When he came to himself, a

man of clerical appearance with a tuft of gray hair at the back of his

head and wearing a shabby blue cassock--probably a church clerk and

chanter--was holding him under the arm with one hand while warding off

the pressure of the crowd with the other.

"You've crushed the young gentleman!" said the clerk. "What are you up

to? Gently!... They've crushed him, crushed him!"

The Emperor entered the Cathedral of the Assumption. The crowd spread

out again more evenly, and the clerk led Petya--pale and breathless--to

the Tsar-cannon. Several people were sorry for Petya, and suddenly a

crowd turned toward him and pressed round him. Those who stood nearest

him attended to him, unbuttoned his coat, seated him on the raised

platform of the cannon, and reproached those others (whoever they might

be) who had crushed him.

"One might easily get killed that way! What do they mean by it? Killing

people! Poor dear, he's as white as a sheet!"--various voices were heard

saying.

Petya soon came to himself, the color returned to his face, the pain had

passed, and at the cost of that temporary unpleasantness he had obtained

a place by the cannon from where he hoped to see the Emperor who would

be returning that way. Petya no longer thought of presenting his

petition. If he could only see the Emperor he would be happy!

While the service was proceeding in the Cathedral of the Assumption--it

was a combined service of prayer on the occasion of the Emperor's

arrival and of thanksgiving for the conclusion of peace with the Turks--

the crowd outside spread out and hawkers appeared, selling kvas,

gingerbread, and poppyseed sweets (of which Petya was particularly

fond), and ordinary conversation could again be heard. A tradesman's

wife was showing a rent in her shawl and telling how much the shawl had

cost; another was saying that all silk goods had now got dear. The clerk

who had rescued Petya was talking to a functionary about the priests who

were officiating that day with the bishop. The clerk several times used

the word "plenary" (of the service), a word Petya did not understand.

Two young citizens were joking with some serf girls who were cracking

nuts. All these conversations, especially the joking with the girls,

were such as might have had a particular charm for Petya at his age, but

they did not interest him now. He sat on his elevation--the pedestal of

the cannon--still agitated as before by the thought of the Emperor and

by his love for him. The feeling of pain and fear he had experienced

when he was being crushed, together with that of rapture, still further

intensified his sense of the importance of the occasion.

Suddenly the sound of a firing of cannon was heard from the embankment,

to celebrate the signing of peace with the Turks, and the crowd rushed

impetuously toward the embankment to watch the firing. Petya too would

have run there, but the clerk who had taken the young gentleman under

his protection stopped him. The firing was still proceeding when

officers, generals, and gentlemen-in-waiting came running out of the

cathedral, and after them others in a more leisurely manner: caps were

again raised, and those who had run to look at the cannon ran back

again. At last four men in uniforms and sashes emerged from the

cathedral doors. "Hurrah! hurrah!" shouted the crowd again.

"Which is he? Which?" asked Petya in a tearful voice, of those around

him, but no one answered him, everybody was too excited; and Petya,

fixing on one of those four men, whom he could not clearly see for the

tears of joy that filled his eyes, concentrated all his enthusiasm on

him--though it happened not to be the Emperor--frantically shouted

"Hurrah!" and resolved that tomorrow, come what might, he would join the

army.

The crowd ran after the Emperor, followed him to the palace, and began

to disperse. It was already late, and Petya had not eaten anything and

was drenched with perspiration, yet he did not go home but stood with

that diminishing, but still considerable, crowd before the palace while

the Emperor dined--looking in at the palace windows, expecting he knew

not what, and envying alike the notables he saw arriving at the entrance

to dine with the Emperor and the court footmen who served at table,

glimpses of whom could be seen through the windows.

While the Emperor was dining, Valuev, looking out of the window, said:

"The people are still hoping to see Your Majesty again."

The dinner was nearly over, and the Emperor, munching a biscuit, rose

and went out onto the balcony. The people, with Petya among them, rushed

toward the balcony.

"Angel! Dear one! Hurrah! Father!..." cried the crowd, and Petya with

it, and again the women and men of weaker mold, Petya among them, wept

with joy.

A largish piece of the biscuit the Emperor was holding in his hand broke

off, fell on the balcony parapet, and then to the ground. A coachman in

a jerkin, who stood nearest, sprang forward and snatched it up. Several

people in the crowd rushed at the coachman. Seeing this the Emperor had

a plateful of biscuits brought him and began throwing them down from the

balcony. Petya's eyes grew bloodshot, and still more excited by the

danger of being crushed, he rushed at the biscuits. He did not know why,

but he had to have a biscuit from the Tsar's hand and he felt that he

must not give way. He sprang forward and upset an old woman who was

catching at a biscuit; the old woman did not consider herself defeated

though she was lying on the ground--she grabbed at some biscuits but her

hand did not reach them. Petya pushed her hand away with his knee,

seized a biscuit, and as if fearing to be too late, again shouted

"Hurrah!" with a voice already hoarse.

The Emperor went in, and after that the greater part of the crowd began

to disperse.

"There! I said if only we waited--and so it was!" was being joyfully

said by various people.

Happy as Petya was, he felt sad at having to go home knowing that all

the enjoyment of that day was over. He did not go straight home from the

Kremlin, but called on his friend Obolenski, who was fifteen and was

also entering the regiment. On returning home Petya announced resolutely

and firmly that if he was not allowed to enter the service he would run

away. And next day, Count Ilya Rostov--though he had not yet quite

yielded--went to inquire how he could arrange for Petya to serve where

there would be least danger.

CHAPTER XXII

Two days later, on the fifteenth of July, an immense number of carriages

were standing outside the Sloboda Palace.

The great halls were full. In the first were the nobility and gentry in

their uniforms, in the second bearded merchants in full-skirted coats of

blue cloth and wearing medals. In the noblemen's hall there was an

incessant movement and buzz of voices. The chief magnates sat on high-

backed chairs at a large table under the portrait of the Emperor, but

most of the gentry were strolling about the room.

All these nobles, whom Pierre met every day at the club or in their own

houses, were in uniform--some in that of Catherine's day, others in that

of Emperor Paul, others again in the new uniforms of Alexander's time or

the ordinary uniform of the nobility, and the general characteristic of

being in uniform imparted something strange and fantastic to these

diverse and familiar personalities, both old and young. The old men,

dim-eyed, toothless, bald, sallow, and bloated, or gaunt and wrinkled,

were especially striking. For the most part they sat quietly in their

places and were silent, or, if they walked about and talked, attached

themselves to someone younger. On all these faces, as on the faces of

the crowd Petya had seen in the Square, there was a striking

contradiction: the general expectation of a solemn event, and at the

same time the everyday interests in a boston card party, Peter the cook,

Zinaida Dmitrievna's health, and so on.

Pierre was there too, buttoned up since early morning in a nobleman's

uniform that had become too tight for him. He was agitated; this

extraordinary gathering not only of nobles but also of the merchant-

class--les etats generaux (States-General)--evoked in him a whole series

of ideas he had long laid aside but which were deeply graven in his

soul: thoughts of the Contrat Social and the French Revolution. The

words that had struck him in the Emperor's appeal--that the sovereign

was coming to the capital for consultation with his people--strengthened

this idea. And imagining that in this direction something important

which he had long awaited was drawing near, he strolled about watching

and listening to conversations, but nowhere finding any confirmation of

the ideas that occupied him.

The Emperor's manifesto was read, evoking enthusiasm, and then all moved

about discussing it. Besides the ordinary topics of conversation, Pierre

heard questions of where the marshals of the nobility were to stand when

the Emperor entered, when a ball should be given in the Emperor's honor,

whether they should group themselves by districts or by whole

provinces... and so on; but as soon as the war was touched on, or what

the nobility had been convened for, the talk became undecided and

indefinite. Then all preferred listening to speaking.

A middle-aged man, handsome and virile, in the uniform of a retired

naval officer, was speaking in one of the rooms, and a small crowd was

pressing round him. Pierre went up to the circle that had formed round

the speaker and listened. Count Ilya Rostov, in a military uniform of

Catherine's time, was sauntering with a pleasant smile among the crowd,

with all of whom he was acquainted. He too approached that group and

listened with a kindly smile and nods of approval, as he always did, to

what the speaker was saying. The retired naval man was speaking very

boldly, as was evident from the expression on the faces of the listeners

and from the fact that some people Pierre knew as the meekest and

quietest of men walked away disapprovingly or expressed disagreement

with him. Pierre pushed his way into the middle of the group, listened,

and convinced himself that the man was indeed a liberal, but of views

quite different from his own. The naval officer spoke in a particularly

sonorous, musical, and aristocratic baritone voice, pleasantly

swallowing his r's and generally slurring his consonants: the voice of a

man calling out to his servant, "Heah! Bwing me my pipe!" It was

indicative of dissipation and the exercise of authority.

"What if the Smolensk people have offahd to waise militia for the

Empewah? Ah we to take Smolensk as our patte'n? If the noble awistocwacy

of the pwovince of Moscow thinks fit, it can show its loyalty to our

sov'weign the Empewah in other ways. Have we fo'gotten the waising of

the militia in the yeah 'seven? All that did was to enwich the pwiests'

sons and thieves and wobbahs...."

Count Ilya Rostov smiled blandly and nodded approval.

"And was our militia of any use to the Empia? Not at all! It only wuined

our farming! Bettah have another conscwiption... o' ou' men will wetu'n

neithah soldiers no' peasants, and we'll get only depwavity fwom them.

The nobility don't gwudge theah lives--evewy one of us will go and bwing

in more wecwuits, and the sov'weign" (that was the way he referred to

the Emperor) "need only say the word and we'll all die fo' him!" added

the orator with animation.

Count Rostov's mouth watered with pleasure and he nudged Pierre, but

Pierre wanted to speak himself. He pushed forward, feeling stirred, but

not yet sure what stirred him or what he would say. Scarcely had he

opened his mouth when one of the senators, a man without a tooth in his

head, with a shrewd though angry expression, standing near the first

speaker, interrupted him. Evidently accustomed to managing debates and

to maintaining an argument, he began in low but distinct tones:

"I imagine, sir," said he, mumbling with his toothless mouth, "that we

have been summoned here not to discuss whether it's best for the empire

at the present moment to adopt conscription or to call out the militia.

We have been summoned to reply to the appeal with which our sovereign

the Emperor has honored us. But to judge what is best--conscription or

the militia--we can leave to the supreme authority...."

Pierre suddenly saw an outlet for his excitement. He hardened his heart

against the senator who was introducing this set and narrow attitude

into the deliberations of the nobility. Pierre stepped forward and

interrupted him. He himself did not yet know what he would say, but he

began to speak eagerly, occasionally lapsing into French or expressing

himself in bookish Russian.

"Excuse me, your excellency," he began. (He was well acquainted with the

senator, but thought it necessary on this occasion to address him

formally.) "Though I don't agree with the gentleman..." (he hesitated:

he wished to say, "Mon tres honorable preopinant"--"My very honorable

opponent") "with the gentleman... whom I have not the honor of knowing,

I suppose that the nobility have been summoned not merely to express

their sympathy and enthusiasm but also to consider the means by which we

can assist our Fatherland! I imagine," he went on, warming to his

subject, "that the Emperor himself would not be satisfied to find in us

merely owners of serfs whom we are willing to devote to his service, and

chair a canon \* we are ready to make of ourselves--and not to obtain

from us any co-co-counsel."

\* "Food for cannon."

Many persons withdrew from the circle, noticing the senator's sarcastic

smile and the freedom of Pierre's remarks. Only Count Rostov was pleased

with them as he had been pleased with those of the naval officer, the

senator, and in general with whatever speech he had last heard.

"I think that before discussing these questions," Pierre continued, "we

should ask the Emperor--most respectfully ask His Majesty--to let us

know the number of our troops and the position in which our army and our

forces now are, and then..."

But scarcely had Pierre uttered these words before he was attacked from

three sides. The most vigorous attack came from an old acquaintance, a

boston player who had always been well disposed toward him, Stepan

Stepanovich Adraksin. Adraksin was in uniform, and whether as a result

of the uniform or from some other cause Pierre saw before him quite a

different man. With a sudden expression of malevolence on his aged face,

Adraksin shouted at Pierre:

"In the first place, I tell you we have no right to question the Emperor

about that, and secondly, if the Russian nobility had that right, the

Emperor could not answer such a question. The troops are moved according

to the enemy's movements and the number of men increases and

decreases..."

Another voice, that of a nobleman of medium height and about forty years

of age, whom Pierre had formerly met at the gypsies' and knew as a bad

cardplayer, and who, also transformed by his uniform, came up to Pierre,

interrupted Adraksin.

"Yes, and this is not a time for discussing," he continued, "but for

acting: there is war in Russia! The enemy is advancing to destroy

Russia, to desecrate the tombs of our fathers, to carry off our wives

and children." The nobleman smote his breast. "We will all arise, every

one of us will go, for our father the Tsar!" he shouted, rolling his

bloodshot eyes. Several approving voices were heard in the crowd. "We

are Russians and will not grudge our blood in defense of our faith, the

throne, and the Fatherland! We must cease raving if we are sons of our

Fatherland! We will show Europe how Russia rises to the defense of

Russia!"

Pierre wished to reply, but could not get in a word. He felt that his

words, apart from what meaning they conveyed, were less audible than the

sound of his opponent's voice.

Count Rostov at the back of the crowd was expressing approval; several

persons, briskly turning a shoulder to the orator at the end of a

phrase, said:

"That's right, quite right! Just so!"

Pierre wished to say that he was ready to sacrifice his money, his

serfs, or himself, only one ought to know the state of affairs in order

to be able to improve it, but he was unable to speak. Many voices

shouted and talked at the same time, so that Count Rostov had not time

to signify his approval of them all, and the group increased, dispersed,

re-formed, and then moved with a hum of talk into the largest hall and

to the big table. Not only was Pierre's attempt to speak unsuccessful,

but he was rudely interrupted, pushed aside, and people turned away from

him as from a common enemy. This happened not because they were

displeased by the substance of his speech, which had even been forgotten

after the many subsequent speeches, but to animate it the crowd needed a

tangible object to love and a tangible object to hate. Pierre became the

latter. Many other orators spoke after the excited nobleman, and all in

the same tone. Many spoke eloquently and with originality.

Glinka, the editor of the Russian Messenger, who was recognized (cries

of "author! author!" were heard in the crowd), said that "hell must be

repulsed by hell," and that he had seen a child smiling at lightning

flashes and thunderclaps, but "we will not be that child."

"Yes, yes, at thunderclaps!" was repeated approvingly in the back rows

of the crowd.

The crowd drew up to the large table, at which sat gray-haired or bald

seventy-year-old magnates, uniformed and besashed almost all of whom

Pierre had seen in their own homes with their buffoons, or playing

boston at the clubs. With an incessant hum of voices the crowd advanced

to the table. Pressed by the throng against the high backs of the

chairs, the orators spoke one after another and sometimes two together.

Those standing behind noticed what a speaker omitted to say and hastened

to supply it. Others in that heat and crush racked their brains to find

some thought and hastened to utter it. The old magnates, whom Pierre

knew, sat and turned to look first at one and then at another, and their

faces for the most part only expressed the fact that they found it very

hot. Pierre, however, felt excited, and the general desire to show that

they were ready to go to all lengths--which found expression in the

tones and looks more than in the substance of the speeches--infected him

too. He did not renounce his opinions, but felt himself in some way to

blame and wished to justify himself.

"I only said that it would be more to the purpose to make sacrifices

when we know what is needed!" said he, trying to be heard above the

other voices.

One of the old men nearest to him looked round, but his attention was

immediately diverted by an exclamation at the other side of the table.

"Yes, Moscow will be surrendered! She will be our expiation!" shouted

one man.

"He is the enemy of mankind!" cried another. "Allow me to speak...."

"Gentlemen, you are crushing me!..."

CHAPTER XXIII

At that moment Count Rostopchin with his protruding chin and alert eyes,

wearing the uniform of a general with sash over his shoulder, entered

the room, stepping briskly to the front of the crowd of gentry.

"Our sovereign the Emperor will be here in a moment," said Rostopchin.

"I am straight from the palace. Seeing the position we are in, I think

there is little need for discussion. The Emperor has deigned to summon

us and the merchants. Millions will pour forth from there"--he pointed

to the merchants' hall--"but our business is to supply men and not spare

ourselves... That is the least we can do!"

A conference took place confined to the magnates sitting at the table.

The whole consultation passed more than quietly. After all the preceding

noise the sound of their old voices saying one after another, "I agree,"

or for variety, "I too am of that opinion," and so on had even a

mournful effect.

The secretary was told to write down the resolution of the Moscow

nobility and gentry, that they would furnish ten men, fully equipped,

out of every thousand serfs, as the Smolensk gentry had done. Their

chairs made a scraping noise as the gentlemen who had conferred rose

with apparent relief, and began walking up and down, arm in arm, to

stretch their legs and converse in couples.

"The Emperor! The Emperor!" a sudden cry resounded through the halls and

the whole throng hurried to the entrance.

The Emperor entered the hall through a broad path between two lines of

nobles. Every face expressed respectful, awe-struck curiosity. Pierre

stood rather far off and could not hear all that the Emperor said. From

what he did hear he understood that the Emperor spoke of the danger

threatening the empire and of the hopes he placed on the Moscow

nobility. He was answered by a voice which informed him of the

resolution just arrived at.

"Gentlemen!" said the Emperor with a quivering voice.

There was a rustling among the crowd and it again subsided, so that

Pierre distinctly heard the pleasantly human voice of the Emperor saying

with emotion:

"I never doubted the devotion of the Russian nobles, but today it has

surpassed my expectations. I thank you in the name of the Fatherland!

Gentlemen, let us act! Time is most precious..."

The Emperor ceased speaking, the crowd began pressing round him, and

rapturous exclamations were heard from all sides.

"Yes, most precious... a royal word," said Count Rostov, with a sob. He

stood at the back, and, though he had heard hardly anything, understood

everything in his own way.

From the hall of the nobility the Emperor went to that of the merchants.

There he remained about ten minutes. Pierre was among those who saw him

come out from the merchants' hall with tears of emotion in his eyes. As

became known later, he had scarcely begun to address the merchants

before tears gushed from his eyes and he concluded in a trembling voice.

When Pierre saw the Emperor he was coming out accompanied by two

merchants, one of whom Pierre knew, a fat otkupshchik. The other was the

mayor, a man with a thin sallow face and narrow beard. Both were

weeping. Tears filled the thin man's eyes, and the fat otkupshchik

sobbed outright like a child and kept repeating:

"Our lives and property--take them, Your Majesty!"

Pierre's one feeling at the moment was a desire to show that he was

ready to go all lengths and was prepared to sacrifice everything. He now

felt ashamed of his speech with its constitutional tendency and sought

an opportunity of effacing it. Having heard that Count Mamonov was

furnishing a regiment, Bezukhov at once informed Rostopchin that he

would give a thousand men and their maintenance.

Old Rostov could not tell his wife of what had passed without tears, and

at once consented to Petya's request and went himself to enter his name.

Next day the Emperor left Moscow. The assembled nobles all took off

their uniforms and settled down again in their homes and clubs, and not

without some groans gave orders to their stewards about the enrollment,

feeling amazed themselves at what they had done.

BOOK TEN: 1812

CHAPTER I

Napoleon began the war with Russia because he could not resist going to

Dresden, could not help having his head turned by the homage he

received, could not help donning a Polish uniform and yielding to the

stimulating influence of a June morning, and could not refrain from

bursts of anger in the presence of Kurakin and then of Balashev.

Alexander refused negotiations because he felt himself to be personally

insulted. Barclay de Tolly tried to command the army in the best way,

because he wished to fulfill his duty and earn fame as a great

commander. Rostov charged the French because he could not restrain his

wish for a gallop across a level field; and in the same way the

innumerable people who took part in the war acted in accord with their

personal characteristics, habits, circumstances, and aims. They were

moved by fear or vanity, rejoiced or were indignant, reasoned, imagining

that they knew what they were doing and did it of their own free will,

but they all were involuntary tools of history, carrying on a work

concealed from them but comprehensible to us. Such is the inevitable

fate of men of action, and the higher they stand in the social hierarchy

the less are they free.

The actors of 1812 have long since left the stage, their personal

interests have vanished leaving no trace, and nothing remains of that

time but its historic results.

Providence compelled all these men, striving to attain personal aims, to

further the accomplishment of a stupendous result no one of them at all

expected--neither Napoleon, nor Alexander, nor still less any of those

who did the actual fighting.

The cause of the destruction of the French army in 1812 is clear to us

now. No one will deny that that cause was, on the one hand, its advance

into the heart of Russia late in the season without any preparation for

a winter campaign and, on the other, the character given to the war by

the burning of Russian towns and the hatred of the foe this aroused

among the Russian people. But no one at the time foresaw (what now seems

so evident) that this was the only way an army of eight hundred thousand

men--the best in the world and led by the best general--could be

destroyed in conflict with a raw army of half its numerical strength,

and led by inexperienced commanders as the Russian army was. Not only

did no one see this, but on the Russian side every effort was made to

hinder the only thing that could save Russia, while on the French side,

despite Napoleon's experience and so-called military genius, every

effort was directed to pushing on to Moscow at the end of the summer,

that is, to doing the very thing that was bound to lead to destruction.

In historical works on the year 1812 French writers are very fond of

saying that Napoleon felt the danger of extending his line, that he

sought a battle and that his marshals advised him to stop at Smolensk,

and of making similar statements to show that the danger of the campaign

was even then understood. Russian authors are still fonder of telling us

that from the commencement of the campaign a Scythian war plan was

adopted to lure Napoleon into the depths of Russia, and this plan some

of them attribute to Pfuel, others to a certain Frenchman, others to

Toll, and others again to Alexander himself--pointing to notes,

projects, and letters which contain hints of such a line of action. But

all these hints at what happened, both from the French side and the

Russian, are advanced only because they fit in with the event. Had that

event not occurred these hints would have been forgotten, as we have

forgotten the thousands and millions of hints and expectations to the

contrary which were current then but have now been forgotten because the

event falsified them. There are always so many conjectures as to the

issue of any event that however it may end there will always be people

to say: "I said then that it would be so," quite forgetting that amid

their innumerable conjectures many were to quite the contrary effect.

Conjectures as to Napoleon's awareness of the danger of extending his

line, and (on the Russian side) as to luring the enemy into the depths

of Russia, are evidently of that kind, and only by much straining can

historians attribute such conceptions to Napoleon and his marshals, or

such plans to the Russian commanders. All the facts are in flat

contradiction to such conjectures. During the whole period of the war

not only was there no wish on the Russian side to draw the French into

the heart of the country, but from their first entry into Russia

everything was done to stop them. And not only was Napoleon not afraid

to extend his line, but he welcomed every step forward as a triumph and

did not seek battle as eagerly as in former campaigns, but very lazily.

At the very beginning of the war our armies were divided, and our sole

aim was to unite them, though uniting the armies was no advantage if we

meant to retire and lure the enemy into the depths of the country. Our

Emperor joined the army to encourage it to defend every inch of Russian

soil and not to retreat. The enormous Drissa camp was formed on Pfuel's

plan, and there was no intention of retiring farther. The Emperor

reproached the commanders in chief for every step they retired. He could

not bear the idea of letting the enemy even reach Smolensk, still less

could he contemplate the burning of Moscow, and when our armies did

unite he was displeased that Smolensk was abandoned and burned without a

general engagement having been fought under its walls.

So thought the Emperor, and the Russian commanders and people were still

more provoked at the thought that our forces were retreating into the

depths of the country.

Napoleon having cut our armies apart advanced far into the country and

missed several chances of forcing an engagement. In August he was at

Smolensk and thought only of how to advance farther, though as we now

see that advance was evidently ruinous to him.

The facts clearly show that Napoleon did not foresee the danger of the

advance on Moscow, nor did Alexander and the Russian commanders then

think of luring Napoleon on, but quite the contrary. The luring of

Napoleon into the depths of the country was not the result of any plan,

for no one believed it to be possible; it resulted from a most complex

interplay of intrigues, aims, and wishes among those who took part in

the war and had no perception whatever of the inevitable, or of the one

way of saving Russia. Everything came about fortuitously. The armies

were divided at the commencement of the campaign. We tried to unite

them, with the evident intention of giving battle and checking the

enemy's advance, and by this effort to unite them while avoiding battle

with a much stronger enemy, and necessarily withdrawing the armies at an

acute angle--we led the French on to Smolensk. But we withdrew at an

acute angle not only because the French advanced between our two armies;

the angle became still more acute and we withdrew still farther, because

Barclay de Tolly was an unpopular foreigner disliked by Bagration (who

would come under his command), and Bagration--being in command of the

second army--tried to postpone joining up and coming under Barclay's

command as long as he could. Bagration was slow in effecting the

junction--though that was the chief aim of all at headquarters--because,

as he alleged, he exposed his army to danger on this march, and it was

best for him to retire more to the left and more to the south, worrying

the enemy from flank and rear and securing from the Ukraine recruits for

his army; and it looks as if he planned this in order not to come under

the command of the detested foreigner Barclay, whose rank was inferior

to his own.

The Emperor was with the army to encourage it, but his presence and

ignorance of what steps to take, and the enormous number of advisers and

plans, destroyed the first army's energy and it retired.

The intention was to make a stand at the Drissa camp, but Paulucci,

aiming at becoming commander-in-chief, unexpectedly employed his energy

to influence Alexander, and Pfuel's whole plan was abandoned and the

command entrusted to Barclay. But as Barclay did not inspire confidence

his power was limited. The armies were divided, there was no unity of

command, and Barclay was unpopular; but from this confusion, division,

and the unpopularity of the foreign commander-in-chief, there resulted

on the one hand indecision and the avoidance of a battle (which we could

not have refrained from had the armies been united and had someone else,

instead of Barclay, been in command) and on the other an ever-increasing

indignation against the foreigners and an increase in patriotic zeal.

At last the Emperor left the army, and as the most convenient and indeed

the only pretext for his departure it was decided that it was necessary

for him to inspire the people in the capitals and arouse the nation in

general to a patriotic war. And by this visit of the Emperor to Moscow

the strength of the Russian army was trebled.

He left in order not to obstruct the commander-in-chief's undivided

control of the army, and hoping that more decisive action would then be

taken, but the command of the armies became still more confused and

enfeebled. Bennigsen, the Tsarevich, and a swarm of adjutants general

remained with the army to keep the commander-in-chief under observation

and arouse his energy, and Barclay, feeling less free than ever under

the observation of all these "eyes of the Emperor," became still more

cautious of undertaking any decisive action and avoided giving battle.

Barclay stood for caution. The Tsarevich hinted at treachery and

demanded a general engagement. Lubomirski, Bronnitski, Wlocki, and the

others of that group stirred up so much trouble that Barclay, under

pretext of sending papers to the Emperor, dispatched these Polish

adjutants general to Petersburg and plunged into an open struggle with

Bennigsen and the Tsarevich.

At Smolensk the armies at last reunited, much as Bagration disliked it.

Bagration drove up in a carriage to the house occupied by Barclay.

Barclay donned his sash and came out to meet and report to his senior

officer Bagration.

Despite his seniority in rank Bagration, in this contest of magnanimity,

took his orders from Barclay, but, having submitted, agreed with him

less than ever. By the Emperor's orders Bagration reported direct to

him. He wrote to Arakcheev, the Emperor's confidant: "It must be as my

sovereign pleases, but I cannot work with the Minister (meaning

Barclay). For God's sake send me somewhere else if only in command of a

regiment. I cannot stand it here. Headquarters are so full of Germans

that a Russian cannot exist and there is no sense in anything. I thought

I was really serving my sovereign and the Fatherland, but it turns out

that I am serving Barclay. I confess I do not want to."

The swarm of Bronnitskis and Wintzingerodes and their like still further

embittered the relations between the commanders in chief, and even less

unity resulted. Preparations were made to fight the French before

Smolensk. A general was sent to survey the position. This general,

hating Barclay, rode to visit a friend of his own, a corps commander,

and, having spent the day with him, returned to Barclay and condemned,

as unsuitable from every point of view, the battleground he had not

seen.

While disputes and intrigues were going on about the future field of

battle, and while we were looking for the French--having lost touch with

them--the French stumbled upon Neverovski's division and reached the

walls of Smolensk.

It was necessary to fight an unexpected battle at Smolensk to save our

lines of communication. The battle was fought and thousands were killed

on both sides.

Smolensk was abandoned contrary to the wishes of the Emperor and of the

whole people. But Smolensk was burned by its own inhabitants-who had

been misled by their governor. And these ruined inhabitants, setting an

example to other Russians, went to Moscow thinking only of their own

losses but kindling hatred of the foe. Napoleon advanced farther and we

retired, thus arriving at the very result which caused his destruction.

CHAPTER II

The day after his son had left, Prince Nicholas sent for Princess Mary

to come to his study.

"Well? Are you satisfied now?" said he. "You've made me quarrel with my

son! Satisfied, are you? That's all you wanted! Satisfied?... It hurts

me, it hurts. I'm old and weak and this is what you wanted. Well then,

gloat over it! Gloat over it!"

After that Princess Mary did not see her father for a whole week. He was

ill and did not leave his study.

Princess Mary noticed to her surprise that during this illness the old

prince not only excluded her from his room, but did not admit

Mademoiselle Bourienne either. Tikhon alone attended him.

At the end of the week the prince reappeared and resumed his former way

of life, devoting himself with special activity to building operations

and the arrangement of the gardens and completely breaking off his

relations with Mademoiselle Bourienne. His looks and cold tone to his

daughter seemed to say: "There, you see? You plotted against me, you

lied to Prince Andrew about my relations with that Frenchwoman and made

me quarrel with him, but you see I need neither her nor you!"

Princess Mary spent half of every day with little Nicholas, watching his

lessons, teaching him Russian and music herself, and talking to

Dessalles; the rest of the day she spent over her books, with her old

nurse, or with "God's folk" who sometimes came by the back door to see

her.

Of the war Princess Mary thought as women do think about wars. She

feared for her brother who was in it, was horrified by and amazed at the

strange cruelty that impels men to kill one another, but she did not

understand the significance of this war, which seemed to her like all

previous wars. She did not realize the significance of this war, though

Dessalles with whom she constantly conversed was passionately interested

in its progress and tried to explain his own conception of it to her,

and though the "God's folk" who came to see her reported, in their own

way, the rumors current among the people of an invasion by Antichrist,

and though Julie (now Princess Drubetskaya), who had resumed

correspondence with her, wrote patriotic letters from Moscow.

"I write you in Russian, my good friend," wrote Julie in her Frenchified

Russian, "because I have a detestation for all the French, and the same

for their language which I cannot support to hear spoken.... We in

Moscow are elated by enthusiasm for our adored Emperor.

"My poor husband is enduring pains and hunger in Jewish taverns, but the

news which I have inspires me yet more.

"You heard probably of the heroic exploit of Raevski, embracing his two

sons and saying: 'I will perish with them but we will not be shaken!'

And truly though the enemy was twice stronger than we, we were

unshakable. We pass the time as we can, but in war as in war! The

princesses Aline and Sophie sit whole days with me, and we, unhappy

widows of live men, make beautiful conversations over our 'charpie',

only you, my friend, are missing..." and so on.

The chief reason Princess Mary did not realize the full significance of

this war was that the old prince never spoke of it, did not recognize

it, and laughed at Dessalles when he mentioned it at dinner. The

prince's tone was so calm and confident that Princess Mary

unhesitatingly believed him.

All that July the old prince was exceedingly active and even animated.

He planned another garden and began a new building for the domestic

serfs. The only thing that made Princess Mary anxious about him was that

he slept very little and, instead of sleeping in his study as usual,

changed his sleeping place every day. One day he would order his camp

bed to be set up in the glass gallery, another day he remained on the

couch or on the lounge chair in the drawing room and dozed there without

undressing, while--instead of Mademoiselle Bourienne--a serf boy read to

him. Then again he would spend a night in the dining room.

On August 1, a second letter was received from Prince Andrew. In his

first letter which came soon after he had left home, Prince Andrew had

dutifully asked his father's forgiveness for what he had allowed himself

to say and begged to be restored to his favor. To this letter the old

prince had replied affectionately, and from that time had kept the

Frenchwoman at a distance. Prince Andrew's second letter, written near

Vitebsk after the French had occupied that town, gave a brief account of

the whole campaign, enclosed for them a plan he had drawn and forecasts

as to the further progress of the war. In this letter Prince Andrew

pointed out to his father the danger of staying at Bald Hills, so near

the theater of war and on the army's direct line of march, and advised

him to move to Moscow.

At dinner that day, on Dessalles' mentioning that the French were said

to have already entered Vitebsk, the old prince remembered his son's

letter.

"There was a letter from Prince Andrew today," he said to Princess Mary-

-"Haven't you read it?"

"No, Father," she replied in a frightened voice.

She could not have read the letter as she did not even know it had

arrived.

"He writes about this war," said the prince, with the ironic smile that

had become habitual to him in speaking of the present war.

"That must be very interesting," said Dessalles. "Prince Andrew is in a

position to know..."

"Oh, very interesting!" said Mademoiselle Bourienne.

"Go and get it for me," said the old prince to Mademoiselle Bourienne.

"You know--under the paperweight on the little table."

Mademoiselle Bourienne jumped up eagerly.

"No, don't!" he exclaimed with a frown. "You go, Michael Ivanovich."

Michael Ivanovich rose and went to the study. But as soon as he had left

the room the old prince, looking uneasily round, threw down his napkin

and went himself.

"They can't do anything... always make some muddle," he muttered.

While he was away Princess Mary, Dessalles, Mademoiselle Bourienne, and

even little Nicholas exchanged looks in silence. The old prince returned

with quick steps, accompanied by Michael Ivanovich, bringing the letter

and a plan. These he put down beside him--not letting anyone read them

at dinner.

On moving to the drawing room he handed the letter to Princess Mary and,

spreading out before him the plan of the new building and fixing his

eyes upon it, told her to read the letter aloud. When she had done so

Princess Mary looked inquiringly at her father. He was examining the

plan, evidently engrossed in his own ideas.

"What do you think of it, Prince?" Dessalles ventured to ask.

"I? I?..." said the prince as if unpleasantly awakened, and not taking

his eyes from the plan of the building.

"Very possibly the theater of war will move so near to us that..."

"Ha ha ha! The theater of war!" said the prince. "I have said and still

say that the theater of war is Poland and the enemy will never get

beyond the Niemen."

Dessalles looked in amazement at the prince, who was talking of the

Niemen when the enemy was already at the Dnieper, but Princess Mary,

forgetting the geographical position of the Niemen, thought that what

her father was saying was correct.

"When the snow melts they'll sink in the Polish swamps. Only they could

fail to see it," the prince continued, evidently thinking of the

campaign of 1807 which seemed to him so recent. "Bennigsen should have

advanced into Prussia sooner, then things would have taken a different

turn..."

"But, Prince," Dessalles began timidly, "the letter mentions

Vitebsk...."

"Ah, the letter? Yes..." replied the prince peevishly. "Yes... yes..."

His face suddenly took on a morose expression. He paused. "Yes, he

writes that the French were beaten at... at... what river is it?"

Dessalles dropped his eyes.

"The prince says nothing about that," he remarked gently.

"Doesn't he? But I didn't invent it myself."

No one spoke for a long time.

"Yes... yes... Well, Michael Ivanovich," he suddenly went on, raising

his head and pointing to the plan of the building, "tell me how you mean

to alter it...."

Michael Ivanovich went up to the plan, and the prince after speaking to

him about the building looked angrily at Princess Mary and Dessalles and

went to his own room.

Princess Mary saw Dessalles' embarrassed and astonished look fixed on

her father, noticed his silence, and was struck by the fact that her

father had forgotten his son's letter on the drawing-room table; but she

was not only afraid to speak of it and ask Dessalles the reason of his

confusion and silence, but was afraid even to think about it.

In the evening Michael Ivanovich, sent by the prince, came to Princess

Mary for Prince Andrew's letter which had been forgotten in the drawing

room. She gave it to him and, unpleasant as it was to her to do so,

ventured to ask him what her father was doing.

"Always busy," replied Michael Ivanovich with a respectfully ironic

smile which caused Princess Mary to turn pale. "He's worrying very much

about the new building. He has been reading a little, but now"--Michael

Ivanovich went on, lowering his voice--"now he's at his desk, busy with

his will, I expect." (One of the prince's favorite occupations of late

had been the preparation of some papers he meant to leave at his death

and which he called his "will.")

"And Alpatych is being sent to Smolensk?" asked Princess Mary.

"Oh, yes, he has been waiting to start for some time."

CHAPTER III

When Michael Ivanovich returned to the study with the letter, the old

prince, with spectacles on and a shade over his eyes, was sitting at his

open bureau with screened candles, holding a paper in his outstretched

hand, and in a somewhat dramatic attitude was reading his manuscript--

his "Remarks" as he termed it--which was to be transmitted to the

Emperor after his death.

When Michael Ivanovich went in there were tears in the prince's eyes

evoked by the memory of the time when the paper he was now reading had

been written. He took the letter from Michael Ivanovich's hand, put it

in his pocket, folded up his papers, and called in Alpatych who had long

been waiting.

The prince had a list of things to be bought in Smolensk and, walking up

and down the room past Alpatych who stood by the door, he gave his

instructions.

"First, notepaper--do you hear? Eight quires, like this sample, gilt-

edged... it must be exactly like the sample. Varnish, sealing wax, as in

Michael Ivanovich's list."

He paced up and down for a while and glanced at his notes.

"Then hand to the governor in person a letter about the deed."

Next, bolts for the doors of the new building were wanted and had to be

of a special shape the prince had himself designed, and a leather case

had to be ordered to keep the "will" in.

The instructions to Alpatych took over two hours and still the prince

did not let him go. He sat down, sank into thought, closed his eyes, and

dozed off. Alpatych made a slight movement.

"Well, go, go! If anything more is wanted I'll send after you."

Alpatych went out. The prince again went to his bureau, glanced into it,

fingered his papers, closed the bureau again, and sat down at the table

to write to the governor.

It was already late when he rose after sealing the letter. He wished to

sleep, but he knew he would not be able to and that most depressing

thoughts came to him in bed. So he called Tikhon and went through the

rooms with him to show him where to set up the bed for that night.

He went about looking at every corner. Every place seemed

unsatisfactory, but worst of all was his customary couch in the study.

That couch was dreadful to him, probably because of the oppressive

thoughts he had had when lying there. It was unsatisfactory everywhere,

but the corner behind the piano in the sitting room was better than

other places: he had never slept there yet.

With the help of a footman Tikhon brought in the bedstead and began

putting it up.

"That's not right! That's not right!" cried the prince, and himself

pushed it a few inches from the corner and then closer in again.

"Well, at last I've finished, now I'll rest," thought the prince, and

let Tikhon undress him.

Frowning with vexation at the effort necessary to divest himself of his

coat and trousers, the prince undressed, sat down heavily on the bed,

and appeared to be meditating as he looked contemptuously at his

withered yellow legs. He was not meditating, but only deferring the

moment of making the effort to lift those legs up and turn over on the

bed. "Ugh, how hard it is! Oh, that this toil might end and you would

release me!" thought he. Pressing his lips together he made that effort

for the twenty-thousandth time and lay down. But hardly had he done so

before he felt the bed rocking backwards and forwards beneath him as if

it were breathing heavily and jolting. This happened to him almost every

night. He opened his eyes as they were closing.

"No peace, damn them!" he muttered, angry he knew not with whom. "Ah

yes, there was something else important, very important, that I was

keeping till I should be in bed. The bolts? No, I told him about them.

No, it was something, something in the drawing room. Princess Mary

talked some nonsense. Dessalles, that fool, said something. Something in

my pocket--can't remember..."

"Tikhon, what did we talk about at dinner?"

"About Prince Michael..."

"Be quiet, quiet!" The prince slapped his hand on the table. "Yes, I

know, Prince Andrew's letter! Princess Mary read it. Dessalles said

something about Vitebsk. Now I'll read it."

He had the letter taken from his pocket and the table--on which stood a

glass of lemonade and a spiral wax candle--moved close to the bed, and

putting on his spectacles he began reading. Only now in the stillness of

the night, reading it by the faint light under the green shade, did he

grasp its meaning for a moment.

"The French at Vitebsk, in four days' march they may be at Smolensk;

perhaps are already there! Tikhon!" Tikhon jumped up. "No, no, I don't

want anything!" he shouted.

He put the letter under the candlestick and closed his eyes. And there

rose before him the Danube at bright noonday: reeds, the Russian camp,

and himself a young general without a wrinkle on his ruddy face,

vigorous and alert, entering Potemkin's gaily colored tent, and a

burning sense of jealousy of "the favorite" agitated him now as strongly

as it had done then. He recalled all the words spoken at that first

meeting with Potemkin. And he saw before him a plump, rather sallow-

faced, short, stout woman, the Empress Mother, with her smile and her

words at her first gracious reception of him, and then that same face on

the catafalque, and the encounter he had with Zubov over her coffin

about his right to kiss her hand.

"Oh, quicker, quicker! To get back to that time and have done with all

the present! Quicker, quicker--and that they should leave me in peace!"

CHAPTER IV

Bald Hills, Prince Nicholas Bolkonski's estate, lay forty miles east

from Smolensk and two miles from the main road to Moscow.

The same evening that the prince gave his instructions to Alpatych,

Dessalles, having asked to see Princess Mary, told her that, as the

prince was not very well and was taking no steps to secure his safety,

though from Prince Andrew's letter it was evident that to remain at Bald

Hills might be dangerous, he respectfully advised her to send a letter

by Alpatych to the Provincial Governor at Smolensk, asking him to let

her know the state of affairs and the extent of the danger to which Bald

Hills was exposed. Dessalles wrote this letter to the Governor for

Princess Mary, she signed it, and it was given to Alpatych with

instructions to hand it to the Governor and to come back as quickly as

possible if there was danger.

Having received all his orders Alpatych, wearing a white beaver hat--a

present from the prince--and carrying a stick as the prince did, went

out accompanied by his family. Three well-fed roans stood ready

harnessed to a small conveyance with a leather hood.

The larger bell was muffled and the little bells on the harness stuffed

with paper. The prince allowed no one at Bald Hills to drive with

ringing bells; but on a long journey Alpatych liked to have them. His

satellites--the senior clerk, a countinghouse clerk, a scullery maid, a

cook, two old women, a little pageboy, the coachman, and various

domestic serfs--were seeing him off.

His daughter placed chintz-covered down cushions for him to sit on and

behind his back. His old sister-in-law popped in a small bundle, and one

of the coachmen helped him into the vehicle.

"There! There! Women's fuss! Women, women!" said Alpatych, puffing and

speaking rapidly just as the prince did, and he climbed into the trap.

After giving the clerk orders about the work to be done, Alpatych, not

trying to imitate the prince now, lifted the hat from his bald head and

crossed himself three times.

"If there is anything... come back, Yakov Alpatych! For Christ's sake

think of us!" cried his wife, referring to the rumors of war and the

enemy.

"Women, women! Women's fuss!" muttered Alpatych to himself and started

on his journey, looking round at the fields of yellow rye and the still-

green, thickly growing oats, and at other quite black fields just being

plowed a second time.

As he went along he looked with pleasure at the year's splendid crop of

corn, scrutinized the strips of ryefield which here and there were

already being reaped, made his calculations as to the sowing and the

harvest, and asked himself whether he had not forgotten any of the

prince's orders.

Having baited the horses twice on the way, he arrived at the town toward

evening on the fourth of August.

Alpatych kept meeting and overtaking baggage trains and troops on the

road. As he approached Smolensk he heard the sounds of distant firing,

but these did not impress him. What struck him most was the sight of a

splendid field of oats in which a camp had been pitched and which was

being mown down by the soldiers, evidently for fodder. This fact

impressed Alpatych, but in thinking about his own business he soon

forgot it.

All the interests of his life for more than thirty years had been

bounded by the will of the prince, and he never went beyond that limit.

Everything not connected with the execution of the prince's orders did

not interest and did not even exist for Alpatych.

On reaching Smolensk on the evening of the fourth of August he put up in

the Gachina suburb across the Dnieper, at the inn kept by Ferapontov,

where he had been in the habit of putting up for the last thirty years.

Some thirty years ago Ferapontov, by Alpatych's advice, had bought a

wood from the prince, had begun to trade, and now had a house, an inn,

and a corn dealer's shop in that province. He was a stout, dark, red-

faced peasant in the forties, with thick lips, a broad knob of a nose,

similar knobs over his black frowning brows, and a round belly.

Wearing a waistcoat over his cotton shirt, Ferapontov was standing

before his shop which opened onto the street. On seeing Alpatych he went

up to him.

"You're welcome, Yakov Alpatych. Folks are leaving the town, but you

have come to it," said he.

"Why are they leaving the town?" asked Alpatych.

"That's what I say. Folks are foolish! Always afraid of the French."

"Women's fuss, women's fuss!" said Alpatych.

"Just what I think, Yakov Alpatych. What I say is: orders have been

given not to let them in, so that must be right. And the peasants are

asking three rubles for carting--it isn't Christian!"

Yakov Alpatych heard without heeding. He asked for a samovar and for hay

for his horses, and when he had had his tea he went to bed.

All night long troops were moving past the inn. Next morning Alpatych

donned a jacket he wore only in town and went out on business. It was a

sunny morning and by eight o'clock it was already hot. "A good day for

harvesting," thought Alpatych.

From beyond the town firing had been heard since early morning. At eight

o'clock the booming of cannon was added to the sound of musketry. Many

people were hurrying through the streets and there were many soldiers,

but cabs were still driving about, tradesmen stood at their shops, and

service was being held in the churches as usual. Alpatych went to the

shops, to government offices, to the post office, and to the Governor's.

In the offices and shops and at the post office everyone was talking

about the army and about the enemy who was already attacking the town,

everybody was asking what should be done, and all were trying to calm

one another.

In front of the Governor's house Alpatych found a large number of

people, Cossacks, and a traveling carriage of the Governor's. At the

porch he met two of the landed gentry, one of whom he knew. This man, an

ex-captain of police, was saying angrily:

"It's no joke, you know! It's all very well if you're single. 'One man

though undone is but one,' as the proverb says, but with thirteen in

your family and all the property... They've brought us to utter ruin!

What sort of governors are they to do that? They ought to be hanged--the

brigands!..."

"Oh come, that's enough!" said the other.

"What do I care? Let him hear! We're not dogs," said the ex-captain of

police, and looking round he noticed Alpatych.

"Oh, Yakov Alpatych! What have you come for?"

"To see the Governor by his excellency's order," answered Alpatych,

lifting his head and proudly thrusting his hand into the bosom of his

coat as he always did when he mentioned the prince.... "He has ordered

me to inquire into the position of affairs," he added.

"Yes, go and find out!" shouted the angry gentleman. "They've brought

things to such a pass that there are no carts or anything!... There it

is again, do you hear?" said he, pointing in the direction whence came

the sounds of firing.

"They've brought us all to ruin... the brigands!" he repeated, and

descended the porch steps.

Alpatych swayed his head and went upstairs. In the waiting room were

tradesmen, women, and officials, looking silently at one another. The

door of the Governor's room opened and they all rose and moved forward.

An official ran out, said some words to a merchant, called a stout

official with a cross hanging on his neck to follow him, and vanished

again, evidently wishing to avoid the inquiring looks and questions

addressed to him. Alpatych moved forward and next time the official came

out addressed him, one hand placed in the breast of his buttoned coat,

and handed him two letters.

"To his Honor Baron Asch, from General-in-Chief Prince Bolkonski," he

announced with such solemnity and significance that the official turned

to him and took the letters.

A few minutes later the Governor received Alpatych and hurriedly said to

him:

"Inform the prince and princess that I knew nothing: I acted on the

highest instructions--here..." and he handed a paper to Alpatych.

"Still, as the prince is unwell my advice is that they should go to

Moscow. I am just starting myself. Inform them..."

But the Governor did not finish: a dusty perspiring officer ran into the

room and began to say something in French. The Governor's face expressed

terror.

"Go," he said, nodding his head to Alpatych, and began questioning the

officer.

Eager, frightened, helpless glances were turned on Alpatych when he came

out of the Governor's room. Involuntarily listening now to the firing,

which had drawn nearer and was increasing in strength, Alpatych hurried

to his inn. The paper handed to him by the Governor said this:

"I assure you that the town of Smolensk is not in the slightest danger

as yet and it is unlikely that it will be threatened with any. I from

the one side and Prince Bagration from the other are marching to unite

our forces before Smolensk, which junction will be effected on the 22nd

instant, and both armies with their united forces will defend our

compatriots of the province entrusted to your care till our efforts

shall have beaten back the enemies of our Fatherland, or till the last

warrior in our valiant ranks has perished. From this you will see that

you have a perfect right to reassure the inhabitants of Smolensk, for

those defended by two such brave armies may feel assured of victory."

(Instructions from Barclay de Tolly to Baron Asch, the civil governor of

Smolensk, 1812.)

People were anxiously roaming about the streets.

Carts piled high with household utensils, chairs, and cupboards kept

emerging from the gates of the yards and moving along the streets.

Loaded carts stood at the house next to Ferapontov's and women were

wailing and lamenting as they said good-by. A small watchdog ran round

barking in front of the harnessed horses.

Alpatych entered the innyard at a quicker pace than usual and went

straight to the shed where his horses and trap were. The coachman was

asleep. He woke him up, told him to harness, and went into the passage.

From the host's room came the sounds of a child crying, the despairing

sobs of a woman, and the hoarse angry shouting of Ferapontov. The cook

began running hither and thither in the passage like a frightened hen,

just as Alpatych entered.

"He's done her to death. Killed the mistress!... Beat her... dragged her

about so!..."

"What for?" asked Alpatych.

"She kept begging to go away. She's a woman! 'Take me away,' says she,

'don't let me perish with my little children! Folks,' she says, 'are all

gone, so why,' she says, 'don't we go?' And he began beating and pulling

her about so!"

At these words Alpatych nodded as if in approval, and not wishing to

hear more went to the door of the room opposite the innkeeper's, where

he had left his purchases.

"You brute, you murderer!" screamed a thin, pale woman who, with a baby

in her arms and her kerchief torn from her head, burst through the door

at that moment and down the steps into the yard.

Ferapontov came out after her, but on seeing Alpatych adjusted his

waistcoat, smoothed his hair, yawned, and followed Alpatych into the

opposite room.

"Going already?" said he.

Alpatych, without answering or looking at his host, sorted his packages

and asked how much he owed.

"We'll reckon up! Well, have you been to the Governor's?" asked

Ferapontov. "What has been decided?"

Alpatych replied that the Governor had not told him anything definite.

"With our business, how can we get away?" said Ferapontov. "We'd have to

pay seven rubles a cartload to Dorogobuzh and I tell them they're not

Christians to ask it! Selivanov, now, did a good stroke last Thursday--

sold flour to the army at nine rubles a sack. Will you have some tea?"

he added.

While the horses were being harnessed Alpatych and Ferapontov over their

tea talked of the price of corn, the crops, and the good weather for

harvesting.

"Well, it seems to be getting quieter," remarked Ferapontov, finishing

his third cup of tea and getting up. "Ours must have got the best of it.

The orders were not to let them in. So we're in force, it seems.... They

say the other day Matthew Ivanych Platov drove them into the river

Marina and drowned some eighteen thousand in one day."

Alpatych collected his parcels, handed them to the coachman who had come

in, and settled up with the innkeeper. The noise of wheels, hoofs, and

bells was heard from the gateway as a little trap passed out.

It was by now late in the afternoon. Half the street was in shadow, the

other half brightly lit by the sun. Alpatych looked out of the window

and went to the door. Suddenly the strange sound of a far-off whistling

and thud was heard, followed by a boom of cannon blending into a dull

roar that set the windows rattling.

He went out into the street: two men were running past toward the

bridge. From different sides came whistling sounds and the thud of

cannon balls and bursting shells falling on the town. But these sounds

were hardly heard in comparison with the noise of the firing outside the

town and attracted little attention from the inhabitants. The town was

being bombarded by a hundred and thirty guns which Napoleon had ordered

up after four o'clock. The people did not at once realize the meaning of

this bombardment.

At first the noise of the falling bombs and shells only aroused

curiosity. Ferapontov's wife, who till then had not ceased wailing under

the shed, became quiet and with the baby in her arms went to the gate,

listening to the sounds and looking in silence at the people.

The cook and a shop assistant came to the gate. With lively curiosity

everyone tried to get a glimpse of the projectiles as they flew over

their heads. Several people came round the corner talking eagerly.

"What force!" remarked one. "Knocked the roof and ceiling all to

splinters!"

"Routed up the earth like a pig," said another.

"That's grand, it bucks one up!" laughed the first. "Lucky you jumped

aside, or it would have wiped you out!"

Others joined those men and stopped and told how cannon balls had fallen

on a house close to them. Meanwhile still more projectiles, now with the

swift sinister whistle of a cannon ball, now with the agreeable

intermittent whistle of a shell, flew over people's heads incessantly,

but not one fell close by, they all flew over. Alpatych was getting into

his trap. The innkeeper stood at the gate.

"What are you staring at?" he shouted to the cook, who in her red skirt,

with sleeves rolled up, swinging her bare elbows, had stepped to the

corner to listen to what was being said.

"What marvels!" she exclaimed, but hearing her master's voice she turned

back, pulling down her tucked-up skirt.

Once more something whistled, but this time quite close, swooping

downwards like a little bird; a flame flashed in the middle of the

street, something exploded, and the street was shrouded in smoke.

"Scoundrel, what are you doing?" shouted the innkeeper, rushing to the

cook.

At that moment the pitiful wailing of women was heard from different

sides, the frightened baby began to cry, and people crowded silently

with pale faces round the cook. The loudest sound in that crowd was her

wailing.

"Oh-h-h! Dear souls, dear kind souls! Don't let me die! My good

souls!..."

Five minutes later no one remained in the street. The cook, with her

thigh broken by a shell splinter, had been carried into the kitchen.

Alpatych, his coachman, Ferapontov's wife and children and the house

porter were all sitting in the cellar, listening. The roar of guns, the

whistling of projectiles, and the piteous moaning of the cook, which

rose above the other sounds, did not cease for a moment. The mistress

rocked and hushed her baby and when anyone came into the cellar asked in

a pathetic whisper what had become of her husband who had remained in

the street. A shopman who entered told her that her husband had gone

with others to the cathedral, whence they were fetching the wonder-

working icon of Smolensk.

Toward dusk the cannonade began to subside. Alpatych left the cellar and

stopped in the doorway. The evening sky that had been so clear was

clouded with smoke, through which, high up, the sickle of the new moon

shone strangely. Now that the terrible din of the guns had ceased a hush

seemed to reign over the town, broken only by the rustle of footsteps,

the moaning, the distant cries, and the crackle of fires which seemed

widespread everywhere. The cook's moans had now subsided. On two sides

black curling clouds of smoke rose and spread from the fires. Through

the streets soldiers in various uniforms walked or ran confusedly in

different directions like ants from a ruined ant-hill. Several of them

ran into Ferapontov's yard before Alpatych's eyes. Alpatych went out to

the gate. A retreating regiment, thronging and hurrying, blocked the

street.

Noticing him, an officer said: "The town is being abandoned. Get away,

get away!" and then, turning to the soldiers, shouted:

"I'll teach you to run into the yards!"

Alpatych went back to the house, called the coachman, and told him to

set off. Ferapontov's whole household came out too, following Alpatych

and the coachman. The women, who had been silent till then, suddenly

began to wail as they looked at the fires--the smoke and even the flames

of which could be seen in the failing twilight--and as if in reply the

same kind of lamentation was heard from other parts of the street.

Inside the shed Alpatych and the coachman arranged the tangled reins and

traces of their horses with trembling hands.

As Alpatych was driving out of the gate he saw some ten soldiers in

Ferapontov's open shop, talking loudly and filling their bags and

knapsacks with flour and sunflower seeds. Just then Ferapontov returned

and entered his shop. On seeing the soldiers he was about to shout at

them, but suddenly stopped and, clutching at his hair, burst into sobs

and laughter:

"Loot everything, lads! Don't let those devils get it!" he cried, taking

some bags of flour himself and throwing them into the street.

Some of the soldiers were frightened and ran away, others went on

filling their bags. On seeing Alpatych, Ferapontov turned to him:

"Russia is done for!" he cried. "Alpatych, I'll set the place on fire

myself. We're done for!..." and Ferapontov ran into the yard.

Soldiers were passing in a constant stream along the street blocking it

completely, so that Alpatych could not pass out and had to wait.

Ferapontov's wife and children were also sitting in a cart waiting till

it was possible to drive out.

Night had come. There were stars in the sky and the new moon shone out

amid the smoke that screened it. On the sloping descent to the Dnieper

Alpatych's cart and that of the innkeeper's wife, which were slowly

moving amid the rows of soldiers and of other vehicles, had to stop. In

a side street near the crossroads where the vehicles had stopped, a

house and some shops were on fire. This fire was already burning itself

out. The flames now died down and were lost in the black smoke, now

suddenly flared up again brightly, lighting up with strange distinctness

the faces of the people crowding at the crossroads. Black figures

flitted about before the fire, and through the incessant crackling of

the flames talking and shouting could be heard. Seeing that his trap

would not be able to move on for some time, Alpatych got down and turned

into the side street to look at the fire. Soldiers were continually

rushing backwards and forwards near it, and he saw two of them and a man

in a frieze coat dragging burning beams into another yard across the

street, while others carried bundles of hay.

Alpatych went up to a large crowd standing before a high barn which was

blazing briskly. The walls were all on fire and the back wall had fallen

in, the wooden roof was collapsing, and the rafters were alight. The

crowd was evidently watching for the roof to fall in, and Alpatych

watched for it too.

"Alpatych!" a familiar voice suddenly hailed the old man.

"Mercy on us! Your excellency!" answered Alpatych, immediately

recognizing the voice of his young prince.

Prince Andrew in his riding cloak, mounted on a black horse, was looking

at Alpatych from the back of the crowd.

"Why are you here?" he asked.

"Your... your excellency," stammered Alpatych and broke into sobs. "Are

we really lost? Master!..."

"Why are you here?" Prince Andrew repeated.

At that moment the flames flared up and showed his young master's pale

worn face. Alpatych told how he had been sent there and how difficult it

was to get away.

"Are we really quite lost, your excellency?" he asked again.

Prince Andrew without replying took out a notebook and raising his knee

began writing in pencil on a page he tore out. He wrote to his sister:

"Smolensk is being abandoned. Bald Hills will be occupied by the enemy

within a week. Set off immediately for Moscow. Let me know at once when

you will start. Send by special messenger to Usvyazh."

Having written this and given the paper to Alpatych, he told him how to

arrange for departure of the prince, the princess, his son, and the

boy's tutor, and how and where to let him know immediately. Before he

had had time to finish giving these instructions, a chief of staff

followed by a suite galloped up to him.

"You are a colonel?" shouted the chief of staff with a German accent, in

a voice familiar to Prince Andrew. "Houses are set on fire in your

presence and you stand by! What does this mean? You will answer for it!"

shouted Berg, who was now assistant to the chief of staff of the

commander of the left flank of the infantry of the first army, a place,

as Berg said, "very agreeable and well en evidence."

Prince Andrew looked at him and without replying went on speaking to

Alpatych.

"So tell them that I shall await a reply till the tenth, and if by the

tenth I don't receive news that they have all got away I shall have to

throw up everything and come myself to Bald Hills."

"Prince," said Berg, recognizing Prince Andrew, "I only spoke because I

have to obey orders, because I always do obey exactly.... You must

please excuse me," he went on apologetically.

Something cracked in the flames. The fire died down for a moment and

wreaths of black smoke rolled from under the roof. There was another

terrible crash and something huge collapsed.

"Ou-rou-rou!" yelled the crowd, echoing the crash of the collapsing roof

of the barn, the burning grain in which diffused a cakelike aroma all

around. The flames flared up again, lighting the animated, delighted,

exhausted faces of the spectators.

The man in the frieze coat raised his arms and shouted:

"It's fine, lads! Now it's raging... It's fine!"

"That's the owner himself," cried several voices.

"Well then," continued Prince Andrew to Alpatych, "report to them as I

have told you"; and not replying a word to Berg who was now mute beside

him, he touched his horse and rode down the side street.

CHAPTER V

From Smolensk the troops continued to retreat, followed by the enemy. On

the tenth of August the regiment Prince Andrew commanded was marching

along the highroad past the avenue leading to Bald Hills. Heat and

drought had continued for more than three weeks. Each day fleecy clouds

floated across the sky and occasionally veiled the sun, but toward

evening the sky cleared again and the sun set in reddish-brown mist.

Heavy night dews alone refreshed the earth. The unreaped corn was

scorched and shed its grain. The marshes dried up. The cattle lowed from

hunger, finding no food on the sun-parched meadows. Only at night and in

the forests while the dew lasted was there any freshness. But on the

road, the highroad along which the troops marched, there was no such

freshness even at night or when the road passed through the forest; the

dew was imperceptible on the sandy dust churned up more than six inches

deep. As soon as day dawned the march began. The artillery and baggage

wagons moved noiselessly through the deep dust that rose to the very

hubs of the wheels, and the infantry sank ankle-deep in that soft,

choking, hot dust that never cooled even at night. Some of this dust was

kneaded by the feet and wheels, while the rest rose and hung like a

cloud over the troops, settling in eyes, ears, hair, and nostrils, and

worst of all in the lungs of the men and beasts as they moved along that

road. The higher the sun rose the higher rose that cloud of dust, and

through the screen of its hot fine particles one could look with naked

eye at the sun, which showed like a huge crimson ball in the unclouded

sky. There was no wind, and the men choked in that motionless

atmosphere. They marched with handkerchiefs tied over their noses and

mouths. When they passed through a village they all rushed to the wells

and fought for the water and drank it down to the mud.

Prince Andrew was in command of a regiment, and the management of that

regiment, the welfare of the men and the necessity of receiving and

giving orders, engrossed him. The burning of Smolensk and its

abandonment made an epoch in his life. A novel feeling of anger against

the foe made him forget his own sorrow. He was entirely devoted to the

affairs of his regiment and was considerate and kind to his men and

officers. In the regiment they called him "our prince," were proud of

him and loved him. But he was kind and gentle only to those of his

regiment, to Timokhin and the like--people quite new to him, belonging

to a different world and who could not know and understand his past. As

soon as he came across a former acquaintance or anyone from the staff,

he bristled up immediately and grew spiteful, ironical, and

contemptuous. Everything that reminded him of his past was repugnant to

him, and so in his relations with that former circle he confined himself

to trying to do his duty and not to be unfair.

In truth everything presented itself in a dark and gloomy light to

Prince Andrew, especially after the abandonment of Smolensk on the sixth

of August (he considered that it could and should have been defended)

and after his sick father had had to flee to Moscow, abandoning to

pillage his dearly beloved Bald Hills which he had built and peopled.

But despite this, thanks to his regiment, Prince Andrew had something to

think about entirely apart from general questions. Two days previously

he had received news that his father, son, and sister had left for

Moscow; and though there was nothing for him to do at Bald Hills, Prince

Andrew with a characteristic desire to foment his own grief decided that

he must ride there.

He ordered his horse to be saddled and, leaving his regiment on the

march, rode to his father's estate where he had been born and spent his

childhood. Riding past the pond where there used always to be dozens of

women chattering as they rinsed their linen or beat it with wooden

beetles, Prince Andrew noticed that there was not a soul about and that

the little washing wharf, torn from its place and half submerged, was

floating on its side in the middle of the pond. He rode to the keeper's

lodge. No one at the stone entrance gates of the drive and the door

stood open. Grass had already begun to grow on the garden paths, and

horses and calves were straying in the English park. Prince Andrew rode

up to the hothouse; some of the glass panes were broken, and of the

trees in tubs some were overturned and others dried up. He called for

Taras the gardener, but no one replied. Having gone round the corner of

the hothouse to the ornamental garden, he saw that the carved garden

fence was broken and branches of the plum trees had been torn off with

the fruit. An old peasant whom Prince Andrew in his childhood had often

seen at the gate was sitting on a green garden seat, plaiting a bast

shoe.

He was deaf and did not hear Prince Andrew ride up. He was sitting on

the seat the old prince used to like to sit on, and beside him strips of

bast were hanging on the broken and withered branch of a magnolia.

Prince Andrew rode up to the house. Several limes in the old garden had

been cut down and a piebald mare and her foal were wandering in front of

the house among the rosebushes. The shutters were all closed, except at

one window which was open. A little serf boy, seeing Prince Andrew, ran

into the house. Alpatych, having sent his family away, was alone at Bald

Hills and was sitting indoors reading the Lives of the Saints. On

hearing that Prince Andrew had come, he went out with his spectacles on

his nose, buttoning his coat, and, hastily stepping up, without a word

began weeping and kissing Prince Andrew's knee.

Then, vexed at his own weakness, he turned away and began to report on

the position of affairs. Everything precious and valuable had been

removed to Bogucharovo. Seventy quarters of grain had also been carted

away. The hay and the spring corn, of which Alpatych said there had been

a remarkable crop that year, had been commandeered by the troops and

mown down while still green. The peasants were ruined; some of them too

had gone to Bogucharovo, only a few remained.

Without waiting to hear him out, Prince Andrew asked:

"When did my father and sister leave?" meaning when did they leave for

Moscow.

Alpatych, understanding the question to refer to their departure for

Bogucharovo, replied that they had left on the seventh and again went

into details concerning the estate management, asking for instructions.

"Am I to let the troops have the oats, and to take a receipt for them?

We have still six hundred quarters left," he inquired.

"What am I to say to him?" thought Prince Andrew, looking down on the

old man's bald head shining in the sun and seeing by the expression on

his face that the old man himself understood how untimely such questions

were and only asked them to allay his grief.

"Yes, let them have it," replied Prince Andrew.

"If you noticed some disorder in the garden," said Alpatych, "it was

impossible to prevent it. Three regiments have been here and spent the

night, dragoons mostly. I took down the name and rank of their

commanding officer, to hand in a complaint about it."

"Well, and what are you going to do? Will you stay here if the enemy

occupies the place?" asked Prince Andrew.

Alpatych turned his face to Prince Andrew, looked at him, and suddenly

with a solemn gesture raised his arm.

"He is my refuge! His will be done!" he exclaimed.

A group of bareheaded peasants was approaching across the meadow toward

the prince.

"Well, good-by!" said Prince Andrew, bending over to Alpatych. "You must

go away too, take away what you can and tell the serfs to go to the

Ryazan estate or to the one near Moscow."

Alpatych clung to Prince Andrew's leg and burst into sobs. Gently

disengaging himself, the prince spurred his horse and rode down the

avenue at a gallop.

The old man was still sitting in the ornamental garden, like a fly

impassive on the face of a loved one who is dead, tapping the last on

which he was making the bast shoe, and two little girls, running out

from the hot house carrying in their skirts plums they had plucked from

the trees there, came upon Prince Andrew. On seeing the young master,

the elder one with frightened look clutched her younger companion by the

hand and hid with her behind a birch tree, not stopping to pick up some

green plums they had dropped.

Prince Andrew turned away with startled haste, unwilling to let them see

that they had been observed. He was sorry for the pretty frightened

little girl, was afraid of looking at her, and yet felt an irresistible

desire to do so. A new sensation of comfort and relief came over him

when, seeing these girls, he realized the existence of other human

interests entirely aloof from his own and just as legitimate as those

that occupied him. Evidently these girls passionately desired one thing-

-to carry away and eat those green plums without being caught--and

Prince Andrew shared their wish for the success of their enterprise. He

could not resist looking at them once more. Believing their danger past,

they sprang from their ambush and, chirruping something in their shrill

little voices and holding up their skirts, their bare little sunburned

feet scampered merrily and quickly across the meadow grass.

Prince Andrew was somewhat refreshed by having ridden off the dusty

highroad along which the troops were moving. But not far from Bald Hills

he again came out on the road and overtook his regiment at its halting

place by the dam of a small pond. It was past one o'clock. The sun, a

red ball through the dust, burned and scorched his back intolerably

through his black coat. The dust always hung motionless above the buzz

of talk that came from the resting troops. There was no wind. As he

crossed the dam Prince Andrew smelled the ooze and freshness of the

pond. He longed to get into that water, however dirty it might be, and

he glanced round at the pool from whence came sounds of shrieks and

laughter. The small, muddy, green pond had risen visibly more than a

foot, flooding the dam, because it was full of the naked white bodies of

soldiers with brick-red hands, necks, and faces, who were splashing

about in it. All this naked white human flesh, laughing and shrieking,

floundered about in that dirty pool like carp stuffed into a watering

can, and the suggestion of merriment in that floundering mass rendered

it specially pathetic.

One fair-haired young soldier of the third company, whom Prince Andrew

knew and who had a strap round the calf of one leg, crossed himself,

stepped back to get a good run, and plunged into the water; another, a

dark noncommissioned officer who was always shaggy, stood up to his

waist in the water joyfully wriggling his muscular figure and snorted

with satisfaction as he poured the water over his head with hands

blackened to the wrists. There were sounds of men slapping one another,

yelling, and puffing.

Everywhere on the bank, on the dam, and in the pond, there was healthy,

white, muscular flesh. The officer, Timokhin, with his red little nose,

standing on the dam wiping himself with a towel, felt confused at seeing

the prince, but made up his mind to address him nevertheless.

"It's very nice, your excellency! Wouldn't you like to?" said he.

"It's dirty," replied Prince Andrew, making a grimace.

"We'll clear it out for you in a minute," said Timokhin, and, still

undressed, ran off to clear the men out of the pond.

"The prince wants to bathe."

"What prince? Ours?" said many voices, and the men were in such haste to

clear out that the prince could hardly stop them. He decided that he

would rather wash himself with water in the barn.

"Flesh, bodies, cannon fodder!" he thought, and he looked at his own

naked body and shuddered, not from cold but from a sense of disgust and

horror he did not himself understand, aroused by the sight of that

immense number of bodies splashing about in the dirty pond.

On the seventh of August Prince Bagration wrote as follows from his

quarters at Mikhaylovna on the Smolensk road:

Dear Count Alexis Andreevich--(He was writing to Arakcheev but knew that

his letter would be read by the Emperor, and therefore weighed every

word in it to the best of his ability.)

I expect the Minister (Barclay de Tolly) has already reported the

abandonment of Smolensk to the enemy. It is pitiable and sad, and the

whole army is in despair that this most important place has been

wantonly abandoned. I, for my part, begged him personally most urgently

and finally wrote him, but nothing would induce him to consent. I swear

to you on my honor that Napoleon was in such a fix as never before and

might have lost half his army but could not have taken Smolensk. Our

troops fought, and are fighting, as never before. With fifteen thousand

men I held the enemy at bay for thirty-five hours and beat him; but he

would not hold out even for fourteen hours. It is disgraceful, a stain

on our army, and as for him, he ought, it seems to me, not to live. If

he reports that our losses were great, it is not true; perhaps about

four thousand, not more, and not even that; but even were they ten

thousand, that's war! But the enemy has lost masses...

What would it have cost him to hold out for another two days? They would

have had to retire of their own accord, for they had no water for men or

horses. He gave me his word he would not retreat, but suddenly sent

instructions that he was retiring that night. We cannot fight in this

way, or we may soon bring the enemy to Moscow...

There is a rumor that you are thinking of peace. God forbid that you

should make peace after all our sacrifices and such insane retreats! You

would set all Russia against you and every one of us would feel ashamed

to wear the uniform. If it has come to this--we must fight as long as

Russia can and as long as there are men able to stand...

One man ought to be in command, and not two. Your Minister may perhaps

be good as a Minister, but as a general he is not merely bad but

execrable, yet to him is entrusted the fate of our whole country.... I

am really frantic with vexation; forgive my writing boldly. It is clear

that the man who advocates the conclusion of a peace, and that the

Minister should command the army, does not love our sovereign and

desires the ruin of us all. So I write you frankly: call out the

militia. For the Minister is leading these visitors after him to Moscow

in a most masterly way. The whole army feels great suspicion of the

Imperial aide-de-camp Wolzogen. He is said to be more Napoleon's man

than ours, and he is always advising the Minister. I am not merely civil

to him but obey him like a corporal, though I am his senior. This is

painful, but, loving my benefactor and sovereign, I submit. Only I am

sorry for the Emperor that he entrusts our fine army to such as he.

Consider that on our retreat we have lost by fatigue and left in the

hospital more than fifteen thousand men, and had we attacked this would

not have happened. Tell me, for God's sake, what will Russia, our mother

Russia, say to our being so frightened, and why are we abandoning our

good and gallant Fatherland to such rabble and implanting feelings of

hatred and shame in all our subjects? What are we scared at and of whom

are we afraid? I am not to blame that the Minister is vacillating, a

coward, dense, dilatory, and has all bad qualities. The whole army

bewails it and calls down curses upon him...

CHAPTER VI

Among the innumerable categories applicable to the phenomena of human

life one may discriminate between those in which substance prevails and

those in which form prevails. To the latter--as distinguished from

village, country, provincial, or even Moscow life--we may allot

Petersburg life, and especially the life of its salons. That life of the

salons is unchanging. Since the year 1805 we had made peace and had

again quarreled with Bonaparte and had made constitutions and unmade

them again, but the salons of Anna Pavlovna and Helene remained just as

they had been--the one seven and the other five years before. At Anna

Pavlovna's they talked with perplexity of Bonaparte's successes just as

before and saw in them and in the subservience shown to him by the

European sovereigns a malicious conspiracy, the sole object of which was

to cause unpleasantness and anxiety to the court circle of which Anna

Pavlovna was the representative. And in Helene's salon, which Rumyantsev

himself honored with his visits, regarding Helene as a remarkably

intelligent woman, they talked with the same ecstasy in 1812 as in 1808

of the "great nation" and the "great man," and regretted our rupture

with France, a rupture which, according to them, ought to be promptly

terminated by peace.

Of late, since the Emperor's return from the army, there had been some

excitement in these conflicting salon circles and some demonstrations of

hostility to one another, but each camp retained its own tendency. In

Anna Pavlovna's circle only those Frenchmen were admitted who were deep-

rooted legitimists, and patriotic views were expressed to the effect

that one ought not to go to the French theater and that to maintain the

French troupe was costing the government as much as a whole army corps.

The progress of the war was eagerly followed, and only the reports most

flattering to our army were circulated. In the French circle of Helene

and Rumyantsev the reports of the cruelty of the enemy and of the war

were contradicted and all Napoleon's attempts at conciliation were

discussed. In that circle they discountenanced those who advised hurried

preparations for a removal to Kazan of the court and the girls'

educational establishments under the patronage of the Dowager Empress.

In Helene's circle the war in general was regarded as a series of formal

demonstrations which would very soon end in peace, and the view

prevailed expressed by Bilibin--who now in Petersburg was quite at home

in Helene's house, which every clever man was obliged to visit--that not

by gunpowder but by those who invented it would matters be settled. In

that circle the Moscow enthusiasm--news of which had reached Petersburg

simultaneously with the Emperor's return--was ridiculed sarcastically

and very cleverly, though with much caution.

Anna Pavlovna's circle on the contrary was enraptured by this enthusiasm

and spoke of it as Plutarch speaks of the deeds of the ancients. Prince

Vasili, who still occupied his former important posts, formed a

connecting link between these two circles. He visited his "good friend

Anna Pavlovna" as well as his daughter's "diplomatic salon," and often

in his constant comings and goings between the two camps became confused

and said at Helene's what he should have said at Anna Pavlovna's and

vice versa.

Soon after the Emperor's return Prince Vasili in a conversation about

the war at Anna Pavlovna's severely condemned Barclay de Tolly, but was

undecided as to who ought to be appointed commander-in-chief. One of the

visitors, usually spoken of as "a man of great merit," having described

how he had that day seen Kutuzov, the newly chosen chief of the

Petersburg militia, presiding over the enrollment of recruits at the

Treasury, cautiously ventured to suggest that Kutuzov would be the man

to satisfy all requirements.

Anna Pavlovna remarked with a melancholy smile that Kutuzov had done

nothing but cause the Emperor annoyance.

"I have talked and talked at the Assembly of the Nobility," Prince

Vasili interrupted, "but they did not listen to me. I told them his

election as chief of the militia would not please the Emperor. They did

not listen to me.

"It's all this mania for opposition," he went on. "And who for? It is

all because we want to ape the foolish enthusiasm of those Muscovites,"

Prince Vasili continued, forgetting for a moment that though at Helene's

one had to ridicule the Moscow enthusiasm, at Anna Pavlovna's one had to

be ecstatic about it. But he retrieved his mistake at once. "Now, is it

suitable that Count Kutuzov, the oldest general in Russia, should

preside at that tribunal? He will get nothing for his pains! How could

they make a man commander-in-chief who cannot mount a horse, who drops

asleep at a council, and has the very worst morals! A good reputation he

made for himself at Bucharest! I don't speak of his capacity as a

general, but at a time like this how they appoint a decrepit, blind old

man, positively blind? A fine idea to have a blind general! He can't see

anything. To play blindman's bluff? He can't see at all!"

No one replied to his remarks.

This was quite correct on the twenty-fourth of July. But on the twenty-

ninth of July Kutuzov received the title of Prince. This might indicate

a wish to get rid of him, and therefore Prince Vasili's opinion

continued to be correct though he was not now in any hurry to express

it. But on the eighth of August a committee, consisting of Field Marshal

Saltykov, Arakcheev, Vyazmitinov, Lopukhin, and Kochubey met to consider

the progress of the war. This committee came to the conclusion that our

failures were due to a want of unity in the command and though the

members of the committee were aware of the Emperor's dislike of Kutuzov,

after a short deliberation they agreed to advise his appointment as

commander in chief. That same day Kutuzov was appointed commander-in-

chief with full powers over the armies and over the whole region

occupied by them.

On the ninth of August Prince Vasili at Anna Pavlovna's again met the

"man of great merit." The latter was very attentive to Anna Pavlovna

because he wanted to be appointed director of one of the educational

establishments for young ladies. Prince Vasili entered the room with the

air of a happy conqueror who has attained the object of his desires.

"Well, have you heard the great news? Prince Kutuzov is field marshal!

All dissensions are at an end! I am so glad, so delighted! At last we

have a man!" said he, glancing sternly and significantly round at

everyone in the drawing room.

The "man of great merit," despite his desire to obtain the post of

director, could not refrain from reminding Prince Vasili of his former

opinion. Though this was impolite to Prince Vasili in Anna Pavlovna's

drawing room, and also to Anna Pavlovna herself who had received the

news with delight, he could not resist the temptation.

"But, Prince, they say he is blind!" said he, reminding Prince Vasili of

his own words.

"Eh? Nonsense! He sees well enough," said Prince Vasili rapidly, in a

deep voice and with a slight cough--the voice and cough with which he

was wont to dispose of all difficulties.

"He sees well enough," he added. "And what I am so pleased about," he

went on, "is that our sovereign has given him full powers over all the

armies and the whole region--powers no commander-in-chief ever had

before. He is a second autocrat," he concluded with a victorious smile.

"God grant it! God grant it!" said Anna Pavlovna.

The "man of great merit," who was still a novice in court circles,

wishing to flatter Anna Pavlovna by defending her former position on

this question, observed:

"It is said that the Emperor was reluctant to give Kutuzov those powers.

They say he blushed like a girl to whom Joconde is read, when he said to

Kutuzov: 'Your Emperor and the Fatherland award you this honor.'"

"Perhaps the heart took no part in that speech," said Anna Pavlovna.

"Oh, no, no!" warmly rejoined Prince Vasili, who would not now yield

Kutuzov to anyone; in his opinion Kutuzov was not only admirable

himself, but was adored by everybody. "No, that's impossible," said he,

"for our sovereign appreciated him so highly before."

"God grant only that Prince Kutuzov assumes real power and does not

allow anyone to put a spoke in his wheel," observed Anna Pavlovna.

Understanding at once to whom she alluded, Prince Vasili said in a

whisper:

"I know for a fact that Kutuzov made it an absolute condition that the

Tsarevich should not be with the army. Do you know what he said to the

Emperor?"

And Prince Vasili repeated the words supposed to have been spoken by

Kutuzov to the Emperor. "I can neither punish him if he does wrong nor

reward him if he does right."

"Oh, a very wise man is Prince Kutuzov! I have known him a long time!"

"They even say," remarked the "man of great merit" who did not yet

possess courtly tact, "that his excellency made it an express condition

that the sovereign himself should not be with the army."

As soon as he said this both Prince Vasili and Anna Pavlovna turned away

from him and glanced sadly at one another with a sigh at his naivete.

CHAPTER VII

While this was taking place in Petersburg the French had already passed

Smolensk and were drawing nearer and nearer to Moscow. Napoleon's

historian Thiers, like other of his historians, trying to justify his

hero says that he was drawn to the walls of Moscow against his will. He

is as right as other historians who look for the explanation of historic

events in the will of one man; he is as right as the Russian historians

who maintain that Napoleon was drawn to Moscow by the skill of the

Russian commanders. Here besides the law of retrospection, which regards

all the past as a preparation for events that subsequently occur, the

law of reciprocity comes in, confusing the whole matter. A good

chessplayer having lost a game is sincerely convinced that his loss

resulted from a mistake he made and looks for that mistake in the

opening, but forgets that at each stage of the game there were similar

mistakes and that none of his moves were perfect. He only notices the

mistake to which he pays attention, because his opponent took advantage

of it. How much more complex than this is the game of war, which occurs

under certain limits of time, and where it is not one will that

manipulates lifeless objects, but everything results from innumerable

conflicts of various wills!

After Smolensk Napoleon sought a battle beyond Dorogobuzh at Vyazma, and

then at Tsarevo-Zaymishche, but it happened that owing to a conjunction

of innumerable circumstances the Russians could not give battle till

they reached Borodino, seventy miles from Moscow. From Vyazma Napoleon

ordered a direct advance on Moscow.

Moscou, la capitale asiatique de ce grand empire, la ville sacree des

peuples d'Alexandre, Moscou avec ses innombrables eglises en forme de

pagodes chinoises, \* this Moscow gave Napoleon's imagination no rest. On

the march from Vyazma to Tsarevo-Zaymishche he rode his light bay

bobtailed ambler accompanied by his Guards, his bodyguard, his pages,

and aides-de-camp. Berthier, his chief of staff, dropped behind to

question a Russian prisoner captured by the cavalry. Followed by

Lelorgne d'Ideville, an interpreter, he overtook Napoleon at a gallop

and reined in his horse with an amused expression.

\* "Moscow, the Asiatic capital of this great empire, the sacred city of

Alexander's people, Moscow with its innumerable churches shaped like

Chinese pagodas."

"Well?" asked Napoleon.

"One of Platov's Cossacks says that Platov's corps is joining up with

the main army and that Kutuzov has been appointed commander-in-chief. He

is a very shrewd and garrulous fellow."

Napoleon smiled and told them to give the Cossack a horse and bring the

man to him. He wished to talk to him himself. Several adjutants galloped

off, and an hour later, Lavrushka, the serf Denisov had handed over to

Rostov, rode up to Napoleon in an orderly's jacket and on a French

cavalry saddle, with a merry, and tipsy face. Napoleon told him to ride

by his side and began questioning him.

"You are a Cossack?"

"Yes, a Cossack, your Honor."

"The Cossack, not knowing in what company he was, for Napoleon's plain

appearance had nothing about it that would reveal to an Oriental mind

the presence of a monarch, talked with extreme familiarity of the

incidents of the war," says Thiers, narrating this episode. In reality

Lavrushka, having got drunk the day before and left his master

dinnerless, had been whipped and sent to the village in quest of

chickens, where he engaged in looting till the French took him prisoner.

Lavrushka was one of those coarse, bare-faced lackeys who have seen all

sorts of things, consider it necessary to do everything in a mean and

cunning way, are ready to render any sort of service to their master,

and are keen at guessing their master's baser impulses, especially those

prompted by vanity and pettiness.

Finding himself in the company of Napoleon, whose identity he had easily

and surely recognized, Lavrushka was not in the least abashed but merely

did his utmost to gain his new master's favor.

He knew very well that this was Napoleon, but Napoleon's presence could

no more intimidate him than Rostov's, or a sergeant major's with the

rods, would have done, for he had nothing that either the sergeant major

or Napoleon could deprive him of.

So he rattled on, telling all the gossip he had heard among the

orderlies. Much of it true. But when Napoleon asked him whether the

Russians thought they would beat Bonaparte or not, Lavrushka screwed up

his eyes and considered.

In this question he saw subtle cunning, as men of his type see cunning

in everything, so he frowned and did not answer immediately.

"It's like this," he said thoughtfully, "if there's a battle soon, yours

will win. That's right. But if three days pass, then after that, well,

then that same battle will not soon be over."

Lelorgne d'Ideville smilingly interpreted this speech to Napoleon thus:

"If a battle takes place within the next three days the French will win,

but if later, God knows what will happen." Napoleon did not smile,

though he was evidently in high good humor, and he ordered these words

to be repeated.

Lavrushka noticed this and to entertain him further, pretending not to

know who Napoleon was, added:

"We know that you have Bonaparte and that he has beaten everybody in the

world, but we are a different matter..."--without knowing why or how

this bit of boastful patriotism slipped out at the end.

The interpreter translated these words without the last phrase, and

Bonaparte smiled. "The young Cossack made his mighty interlocutor

smile," says Thiers. After riding a few paces in silence, Napoleon

turned to Berthier and said he wished to see how the news that he was

talking to the Emperor himself, to that very Emperor who had written his

immortally victorious name on the Pyramids, would affect this enfant du

Don. \*

\* "Child of the Don."

The fact was accordingly conveyed to Lavrushka.

Lavrushka, understanding that this was done to perplex him and that

Napoleon expected him to be frightened, to gratify his new masters

promptly pretended to be astonished and awe-struck, opened his eyes

wide, and assumed the expression he usually put on when taken to be

whipped. "As soon as Napoleon's interpreter had spoken," says Thiers,

"the Cossack, seized by amazement, did not utter another word, but rode

on, his eyes fixed on the conqueror whose fame had reached him across

the steppes of the East. All his loquacity was suddenly arrested and

replaced by a naive and silent feeling of admiration. Napoleon, after

making the Cossack a present, had him set free like a bird restored to

its native fields."

Napoleon rode on, dreaming of the Moscow that so appealed to his

imagination, and "the bird restored to its native fields" galloped to

our outposts, inventing on the way all that had not taken place but that

he meant to relate to his comrades. What had really taken place he did

not wish to relate because it seemed to him not worth telling. He found

the Cossacks, inquired for the regiment operating with Platov's

detachment and by evening found his master, Nicholas Rostov, quartered

at Yankovo. Rostov was just mounting to go for a ride round the

neighboring villages with Ilyin; he let Lavrushka have another horse and

took him along with him.

CHAPTER VIII

Princess Mary was not in Moscow and out of danger as Prince Andrew

supposed.

After the return of Alpatych from Smolensk the old prince suddenly

seemed to awake as from a dream. He ordered the militiamen to be called

up from the villages and armed, and wrote a letter to the commander-in-

chief informing him that he had resolved to remain at Bald Hills to the

last extremity and to defend it, leaving to the commander-in-chief's

discretion to take measures or not for the defense of Bald Hills, where

one of Russia's oldest generals would be captured or killed, and he

announced to his household that he would remain at Bald Hills.

But while himself remaining, he gave instructions for the departure of

the princess and Dessalles with the little prince to Bogucharovo and

thence to Moscow. Princess Mary, alarmed by her father's feverish and

sleepless activity after his previous apathy, could not bring herself to

leave him alone and for the first time in her life ventured to disobey

him. She refused to go away and her father's fury broke over her in a

terrible storm. He repeated every injustice he had ever inflicted on

her. Trying to convict her, he told her she had worn him out, had caused

his quarrel with his son, had harbored nasty suspicions of him, making

it the object of her life to poison his existence, and he drove her from

his study telling her that if she did not go away it was all the same to

him. He declared that he did not wish to remember her existence and

warned her not to dare to let him see her. The fact that he did not, as

she had feared, order her to be carried away by force but only told her

not to let him see her cheered Princess Mary. She knew it was a proof

that in the depth of his soul he was glad she was remaining at home and

had not gone away.

The morning after little Nicholas had left, the old prince donned his

full uniform and prepared to visit the commander-in-chief. His caleche

was already at the door. Princess Mary saw him walk out of the house in

his uniform wearing all his orders and go down the garden to review his

armed peasants and domestic serfs. She sat by the window listening to

his voice which reached her from the garden. Suddenly several men came

running up the avenue with frightened faces.

Princess Mary ran out to the porch, down the flower-bordered path, and

into the avenue. A large crowd of militiamen and domestics were moving

toward her, and in their midst several men were supporting by the

armpits and dragging along a little old man in a uniform and

decorations. She ran up to him and, in the play of the sunlight that

fell in small round spots through the shade of the lime-tree avenue,

could not be sure what change there was in his face. All she could see

was that his former stern and determined expression had altered to one

of timidity and submission. On seeing his daughter he moved his helpless

lips and made a hoarse sound. It was impossible to make out what he

wanted. He was lifted up, carried to his study, and laid on the very

couch he had so feared of late.

The doctor, who was fetched that same night, bled him and said that the

prince had had a seizure paralyzing his right side.

It was becoming more and more dangerous to remain at Bald Hills, and

next day they moved the prince to Bogucharovo, the doctor accompanying

him.

By the time they reached Bogucharovo, Dessalles and the little prince

had already left for Moscow.

For three weeks the old prince lay stricken by paralysis in the new

house Prince Andrew had built at Bogucharovo, ever in the same state,

getting neither better nor worse. He was unconscious and lay like a

distorted corpse. He muttered unceasingly, his eyebrows and lips

twitching, and it was impossible to tell whether he understood what was

going on around him or not. One thing was certain--that he was suffering

and wished to say something. But what it was, no one could tell: it

might be some caprice of a sick and half-crazy man, or it might relate

to public affairs, or possibly to family concerns.

The doctor said this restlessness did not mean anything and was due to

physical causes; but Princess Mary thought he wished to tell her

something, and the fact that her presence always increased his

restlessness confirmed her opinion.

He was evidently suffering both physically and mentally. There was no

hope of recovery. It was impossible for him to travel, it would not do

to let him die on the road. "Would it not be better if the end did come,

the very end?" Princess Mary sometimes thought. Night and day, hardly

sleeping at all, she watched him and, terrible to say, often watched him

not with hope of finding signs of improvement but wishing to find

symptoms of the approach of the end.

Strange as it was to her to acknowledge this feeling in herself, yet

there it was. And what seemed still more terrible to her was that since

her father's illness began (perhaps even sooner, when she stayed with

him expecting something to happen), all the personal desires and hopes

that had been forgotten or sleeping within her had awakened. Thoughts

that had not entered her mind for years--thoughts of a life free from

the fear of her father, and even the possibility of love and of family

happiness--floated continually in her imagination like temptations of

the devil. Thrust them aside as she would, questions continually

recurred to her as to how she would order her life now, after that.

These were temptations of the devil and Princess Mary knew it. She knew

that the sole weapon against him was prayer, and she tried to pray. She

assumed an attitude of prayer, looked at the icons, repeated the words

of a prayer, but she could not pray. She felt that a different world had

now taken possession of her--the life of a world of strenuous and free

activity, quite opposed to the spiritual world in which till now she had

been confined and in which her greatest comfort had been prayer. She

could not pray, could not weep, and worldly cares took possession of

her.

It was becoming dangerous to remain in Bogucharovo. News of the approach

of the French came from all sides, and in one village, ten miles from

Bogucharovo, a homestead had been looted by French marauders.

The doctor insisted on the necessity of moving the prince; the

provincial Marshal of the Nobility sent an official to Princess Mary to

persuade her to get away as quickly as possible, and the head of the

rural police having come to Bogucharovo urged the same thing, saying

that the French were only some twenty-five miles away, that French

proclamations were circulating in the villages, and that if the princess

did not take her father away before the fifteenth, he could not answer

for the consequences.

The princess decided to leave on the fifteenth. The cares of preparation

and giving orders, for which everyone came to her, occupied her all day.

She spent the night of the fourteenth as usual, without undressing, in

the room next to the one where the prince lay. Several times, waking up,

she heard his groans and muttering, the creak of his bed, and the steps

of Tikhon and the doctor when they turned him over. Several times she

listened at the door, and it seemed to her that his mutterings were

louder than usual and that they turned him over oftener. She could not

sleep and several times went to the door and listened, wishing to enter

but not deciding to do so. Though he did not speak, Princess Mary saw

and knew how unpleasant every sign of anxiety on his account was to him.

She had noticed with what dissatisfaction he turned from the look she

sometimes involuntarily fixed on him. She knew that her going in during

the night at an unusual hour would irritate him.

But never had she felt so grieved for him or so much afraid of losing

him. She recalled all her life with him and in every word and act of his

found an expression of his love of her. Occasionally amid these memories

temptations of the devil would surge into her imagination: thoughts of

how things would be after his death, and how her new, liberated life

would be ordered. But she drove these thoughts away with disgust. Toward

morning he became quiet and she fell asleep.

She woke late. That sincerity which often comes with waking showed her

clearly what chiefly concerned her about her father's illness. On waking

she listened to what was going on behind the door and, hearing him

groan, said to herself with a sigh that things were still the same.

"But what could have happened? What did I want? I want his death!" she

cried with a feeling of loathing for herself.

She washed, dressed, said her prayers, and went out to the porch. In

front of it stood carriages without horses and things were being packed

into the vehicles.

It was a warm, gray morning. Princess Mary stopped at the porch, still

horrified by her spiritual baseness and trying to arrange her thoughts

before going to her father. The doctor came downstairs and went out to

her.

"He is a little better today," said he. "I was looking for you. One can

make out something of what he is saying. His head is clearer. Come in,

he is asking for you..."

Princess Mary's heart beat so violently at this news that she grew pale

and leaned against the wall to keep from falling. To see him, talk to

him, feel his eyes on her now that her whole soul was overflowing with

those dreadful, wicked temptations, was a torment of joy and terror.

"Come," said the doctor.

Princess Mary entered her father's room and went up to his bed. He was

lying on his back propped up high, and his small bony hands with their

knotted purple veins were lying on the quilt; his left eye gazed

straight before him, his right eye was awry, and his brows and lips

motionless. He seemed altogether so thin, small, and pathetic. His face

seemed to have shriveled or melted; his features had grown smaller.

Princess Mary went up and kissed his hand. His left hand pressed hers so

that she understood that he had long been waiting for her to come. He

twitched her hand, and his brows and lips quivered angrily.

She looked at him in dismay trying to guess what he wanted of her. When

she changed her position so that his left eye could see her face he

calmed down, not taking his eyes off her for some seconds. Then his lips

and tongue moved, sounds came, and he began to speak, gazing timidly and

imploringly at her, evidently afraid that she might not understand.

Straining all her faculties Princess Mary looked at him. The comic

efforts with which he moved his tongue made her drop her eyes and with

difficulty repress the sobs that rose to her throat. He said something,

repeating the same words several times. She could not understand them,

but tried to guess what he was saying and inquiringly repeated the words

he uttered.

"Mmm...ar...ate...ate..." he repeated several times.

It was quite impossible to understand these sounds. The doctor thought

he had guessed them, and inquiringly repeated: "Mary, are you afraid?"

The prince shook his head, again repeated the same sounds.

"My mind, my mind aches?" questioned Princess Mary.

He made a mumbling sound in confirmation of this, took her hand, and

began pressing it to different parts of his breast as if trying to find

the right place for it.

"Always thoughts... about you... thoughts..." he then uttered much more

clearly than he had done before, now that he was sure of being

understood.

Princess Mary pressed her head against his hand, trying to hide her sobs

and tears.

He moved his hand over her hair.

"I have been calling you all night..." he brought out.

"If only I had known..." she said through her tears. "I was afraid to

come in."

He pressed her hand.

"Weren't you asleep?"

"No, I did not sleep," said Princess Mary, shaking her head.

Unconsciously imitating her father, she now tried to express herself as

he did, as much as possible by signs, and her tongue too seemed to move

with difficulty.

"Dear one... Dearest..." Princess Mary could not quite make out what he

had said, but from his look it was clear that he had uttered a tender

caressing word such as he had never used to her before. "Why didn't you

come in?"

"And I was wishing for his death!" thought Princess Mary.

He was silent awhile.

"Thank you... daughter dear!... for all, for all... forgive!... thank

you!... forgive!... thank you!..." and tears began to flow from his

eyes. "Call Andrew!" he said suddenly, and a childish, timid expression

of doubt showed itself on his face as he spoke.

He himself seemed aware that his demand was meaningless. So at least it

seemed to Princess Mary.

"I have a letter from him," she replied.

He glanced at her with timid surprise.

"Where is he?"

"He's with the army, Father, at Smolensk."

He closed his eyes and remained silent a long time. Then as if in answer

to his doubts and to confirm the fact that now he understood and

remembered everything, he nodded his head and reopened his eyes.

"Yes," he said, softly and distinctly. "Russia has perished. They've

destroyed her."

And he began to sob, and again tears flowed from his eyes. Princess Mary

could no longer restrain herself and wept while she gazed at his face.

Again he closed his eyes. His sobs ceased, he pointed to his eyes, and

Tikhon, understanding him, wiped away the tears.

Then he again opened his eyes and said something none of them could

understand for a long time, till at last Tikhon understood and repeated

it. Princess Mary had sought the meaning of his words in the mood in

which he had just been speaking. She thought he was speaking of Russia,

or Prince Andrew, of herself, of his grandson, or of his own death, and

so she could not guess his words.

"Put on your white dress. I like it," was what he said.

Having understood this Princess Mary sobbed still louder, and the doctor

taking her arm led her out to the veranda, soothing her and trying to

persuade her to prepare for her journey. When she had left the room the

prince again began speaking about his son, about the war, and about the

Emperor, angrily twitching his brows and raising his hoarse voice, and

then he had a second and final stroke.

Princess Mary stayed on the veranda. The day had cleared, it was hot and

sunny. She could understand nothing, think of nothing and feel nothing,

except passionate love for her father, love such as she thought she had

never felt till that moment. She ran out sobbing into the garden and as

far as the pond, along the avenues of young lime trees Prince Andrew had

planted.

"Yes... I... I... I wished for his death! Yes, I wanted it to end

quicker.... I wished to be at peace.... And what will become of me? What

use will peace be when he is no longer here?" Princess Mary murmured,

pacing the garden with hurried steps and pressing her hands to her bosom

which heaved with convulsive sobs.

When she had completed the tour of the garden, which brought her again

to the house, she saw Mademoiselle Bourienne--who had remained at

Bogucharovo and did not wish to leave it--coming toward her with a

stranger. This was the Marshal of the Nobility of the district, who had

come personally to point out to the princess the necessity for her

prompt departure. Princess Mary listened without understanding him; she

led him to the house, offered him lunch, and sat down with him. Then,

excusing herself, she went to the door of the old prince's room. The

doctor came out with an agitated face and said she could not enter.

"Go away, Princess! Go away... go away!"

She returned to the garden and sat down on the grass at the foot of the

slope by the pond, where no one could see her. She did not know how long

she had been there when she was aroused by the sound of a woman's

footsteps running along the path. She rose and saw Dunyasha her maid,

who was evidently looking for her, and who stopped suddenly as if in

alarm on seeing her mistress.

"Please come, Princess... The Prince," said Dunyasha in a breaking

voice.

"Immediately, I'm coming, I'm coming!" replied the princess hurriedly,

not giving Dunyasha time to finish what she was saying, and trying to

avoid seeing the girl she ran toward the house.

"Princess, it's God's will! You must be prepared for everything," said

the Marshal, meeting her at the house door.

"Let me alone; it's not true!" she cried angrily to him.

The doctor tried to stop her. She pushed him aside and ran to her

father's door. "Why are these people with frightened faces stopping me?

I don't want any of them! And what are they doing here?" she thought.

She opened the door and the bright daylight in that previously darkened

room startled her. In the room were her nurse and other women. They all

drew back from the bed, making way for her. He was still lying on the

bed as before, but the stern expression of his quiet face made Princess

Mary stop short on the threshold.

"No, he's not dead--it's impossible!" she told herself and approached

him, and repressing the terror that seized her, she pressed her lips to

his cheek. But she stepped back immediately. All the force of the

tenderness she had been feeling for him vanished instantly and was

replaced by a feeling of horror at what lay there before her. "No, he is

no more! He is not, but here where he was is something unfamiliar and

hostile, some dreadful, terrifying, and repellent mystery!" And hiding

her face in her hands, Princess Mary sank into the arms of the doctor,

who held her up.

In the presence of Tikhon and the doctor the women washed what had been

the prince, tied his head up with a handkerchief that the mouth should

not stiffen while open, and with another handkerchief tied together the

legs that were already spreading apart. Then they dressed him in uniform

with his decorations and placed his shriveled little body on a table.

Heaven only knows who arranged all this and when, but it all got done as

if of its own accord. Toward night candles were burning round his

coffin, a pall was spread over it, the floor was strewn with sprays of

juniper, a printed band was tucked in under his shriveled head, and in a

corner of the room sat a chanter reading the psalms.

Just as horses shy and snort and gather about a dead horse, so the

inmates of the house and strangers crowded into the drawing room round

the coffin--the Marshal, the village Elder, peasant women--and all with

fixed and frightened eyes, crossing themselves, bowed and kissed the old

prince's cold and stiffened hand.

CHAPTER IX

Until Prince Andrew settled in Bogucharovo its owners had always been

absentees, and its peasants were of quite a different character from

those of Bald Hills. They differed from them in speech, dress, and

disposition. They were called steppe peasants. The old prince used to

approve of them for their endurance at work when they came to Bald Hills

to help with the harvest or to dig ponds, and ditches, but he disliked

them for their boorishness.

Prince Andrew's last stay at Bogucharovo, when he introduced hospitals

and schools and reduced the quitrent the peasants had to pay, had not

softened their disposition but had on the contrary strengthened in them

the traits of character the old prince called boorishness. Various

obscure rumors were always current among them: at one time a rumor that

they would all be enrolled as Cossacks; at another of a new religion to

which they were all to be converted; then of some proclamation of the

Tsar's and of an oath to the Tsar Paul in 1797 (in connection with which

it was rumored that freedom had been granted them but the landowners had

stopped it), then of Peter Fedorovich's return to the throne in seven

years' time, when everything would be made free and so "simple" that

there would be no restrictions. Rumors of the war with Bonaparte and his

invasion were connected in their minds with the same sort of vague

notions of Antichrist, the end of the world, and "pure freedom."

In the vicinity of Bogucharovo were large villages belonging to the

crown or to owners whose serfs paid quitrent and could work where they

pleased. There were very few resident landlords in the neighborhood and

also very few domestic or literate serfs, and in the lives of the

peasantry of those parts the mysterious undercurrents in the life of the

Russian people, the causes and meaning of which are so baffling to

contemporaries, were more clearly and strongly noticeable than among

others. One instance, which had occurred some twenty years before, was a

movement among the peasants to emigrate to some unknown "warm rivers."

Hundreds of peasants, among them the Bogucharovo folk, suddenly began

selling their cattle and moving in whole families toward the southeast.

As birds migrate to somewhere beyond the sea, so these men with their

wives and children streamed to the southeast, to parts where none of

them had ever been. They set off in caravans, bought their freedom one

by one or ran away, and drove or walked toward the "warm rivers." Many

of them were punished, some sent to Siberia, many died of cold and

hunger on the road, many returned of their own accord, and the movement

died down of itself just as it had sprung up, without apparent reason.

But such undercurrents still existed among the people and gathered new

forces ready to manifest themselves just as strangely, unexpectedly, and

at the same time simply, naturally, and forcibly. Now in 1812, to anyone

living in close touch with these people it was apparent that these

undercurrents were acting strongly and nearing an eruption.

Alpatych, who had reached Bogucharovo shortly before the old prince's

death, noticed an agitation among the peasants, and that contrary to

what was happening in the Bald Hills district, where over a radius of

forty miles all the peasants were moving away and leaving their villages

to be devastated by the Cossacks, the peasants in the steppe region

round Bogucharovo were, it was rumored, in touch with the French,

received leaflets from them that passed from hand to hand, and did not

migrate. He learned from domestic serfs loyal to him that the peasant

Karp, who possessed great influence in the village commune and had

recently been away driving a government transport, had returned with

news that the Cossacks were destroying deserted villages, but that the

French did not harm them. Alpatych also knew that on the previous day

another peasant had even brought from the village of Visloukhovo, which

was occupied by the French, a proclamation by a French general that no

harm would be done to the inhabitants, and if they remained they would

be paid for anything taken from them. As proof of this the peasant had

brought from Visloukhovo a hundred rubles in notes (he did not know that

they were false) paid to him in advance for hay.

More important still, Alpatych learned that on the morning of the very

day he gave the village Elder orders to collect carts to move the

princess' luggage from Bogucharovo, there had been a village meeting at

which it had been decided not to move but to wait. Yet there was no time

to waste. On the fifteenth, the day of the old prince's death, the

Marshal had insisted on Princess Mary's leaving at once, as it was

becoming dangerous. He had told her that after the sixteenth he could

not be responsible for what might happen. On the evening of the day the

old prince died the Marshal went away, promising to return next day for

the funeral. But this he was unable to do, for he received tidings that

the French had unexpectedly advanced, and had barely time to remove his

own family and valuables from his estate.

For some thirty years Bogucharovo had been managed by the village Elder,

Dron, whom the old prince called by the diminutive "Dronushka."

Dron was one of those physically and mentally vigorous peasants who grow

big beards as soon as they are of age and go on unchanged till they are

sixty or seventy, without a gray hair or the loss of a tooth, as

straight and strong at sixty as at thirty.

Soon after the migration to the "warm rivers," in which he had taken

part like the rest, Dron was made village Elder and overseer of

Bogucharovo, and had since filled that post irreproachably for twenty-

three years. The peasants feared him more than they did their master.

The masters, both the old prince and the young, and the steward

respected him and jestingly called him "the Minister." During the whole

time of his service Dron had never been drunk or ill, never after

sleepless nights or the hardest tasks had he shown the least fatigue,

and though he could not read he had never forgotten a single money

account or the number of quarters of flour in any of the endless

cartloads he sold for the prince, nor a single shock of the whole corn

crop on any single acre of the Bogucharovo fields.

Alpatych, arriving from the devastated Bald Hills estate, sent for his

Dron on the day of the prince's funeral and told him to have twelve

horses got ready for the princess' carriages and eighteen carts for the

things to be removed from Bogucharovo. Though the peasants paid

quitrent, Alpatych thought no difficulty would be made about complying

with this order, for there were two hundred and thirty households at

work in Bogucharovo and the peasants were well to do. But on hearing the

order Dron lowered his eyes and remained silent. Alpatych named certain

peasants he knew, from whom he told him to take the carts.

Dron replied that the horses of these peasants were away carting.

Alpatych named others, but they too, according to Dron, had no horses

available: some horses were carting for the government, others were too

weak, and others had died for want of fodder. It seemed that no horses

could be had even for the carriages, much less for the carting.

Alpatych looked intently at Dron and frowned. Just as Dron was a model

village Elder, so Alpatych had not managed the prince's estates for

twenty years in vain. He was a model steward, possessing in the highest

degree the faculty of divining the needs and instincts of those he dealt

with. Having glanced at Dron he at once understood that his answers did

not express his personal views but the general mood of the Bogucharovo

commune, by which the Elder had already been carried away. But he also

knew that Dron, who had acquired property and was hated by the commune,

must be hesitating between the two camps: the masters' and the serfs'.

He noticed this hesitation in Dron's look and therefore frowned and

moved closer up to him.

"Now just listen, Dronushka," said he. "Don't talk nonsense to me. His

excellency Prince Andrew himself gave me orders to move all the people

away and not leave them with the enemy, and there is an order from the

Tsar about it too. Anyone who stays is a traitor to the Tsar. Do you

hear?"

"I hear," Dron answered without lifting his eyes.

Alpatych was not satisfied with this reply.

"Eh, Dron, it will turn out badly!" he said, shaking his head.

"The power is in your hands," Dron rejoined sadly.

"Eh, Dron, drop it!" Alpatych repeated, withdrawing his hand from his

bosom and solemnly pointing to the floor at Dron's feet. "I can see

through you and three yards into the ground under you," he continued,

gazing at the floor in front of Dron.

Dron was disconcerted, glanced furtively at Alpatych and again lowered

his eyes.

"You drop this nonsense and tell the people to get ready to leave their

homes and go to Moscow and to get carts ready for tomorrow morning for

the princess' things. And don't go to any meeting yourself, do you

hear?"

Dron suddenly fell on his knees.

"Yakov Alpatych, discharge me! Take the keys from me and discharge me,

for Christ's sake!"

"Stop that!" cried Alpatych sternly. "I see through you and three yards

under you," he repeated, knowing that his skill in beekeeping, his

knowledge of the right time to sow the oats, and the fact that he had

been able to retain the old prince's favor for twenty years had long

since gained him the reputation of being a wizard, and that the power of

seeing three yards under a man is considered an attribute of wizards.

Dron got up and was about to say something, but Alpatych interrupted

him.

"What is it you have got into your heads, eh?... What are you thinking

of, eh?"

"What am I to do with the people?" said Dron. "They're quite beside

themselves; I have already told them..."

"'Told them,' I dare say!" said Alpatych. "Are they drinking?" he asked

abruptly.

"Quite beside themselves, Yakov Alpatych; they've fetched another

barrel."

"Well, then, listen! I'll go to the police officer, and you tell them

so, and that they must stop this and the carts must be got ready."

"I understand."

Alpatych did not insist further. He had managed people for a long time

and knew that the chief way to make them obey is to show no suspicion

that they can possibly disobey. Having wrung a submissive "I understand"

from Dron, Alpatych contented himself with that, though he not only

doubted but felt almost certain that without the help of troops the

carts would not be forthcoming.

And so it was, for when evening came no carts had been provided. In the

village, outside the drink shop, another meeting was being held, which

decided that the horses should be driven out into the woods and the

carts should not be provided. Without saying anything of this to the

princess, Alpatych had his own belongings taken out of the carts which

had arrived from Bald Hills and had those horses got ready for the

princess' carriages. Meanwhile he went himself to the police

authorities.

CHAPTER X

After her father's funeral Princess Mary shut herself up in her room and

did not admit anyone. A maid came to the door to say that Alpatych was

asking for orders about their departure. (This was before his talk with

Dron.) Princess Mary raised herself on the sofa on which she had been

lying and replied through the closed door that she did not mean to go

away and begged to be left in peace.

The windows of the room in which she was lying looked westward. She lay

on the sofa with her face to the wall, fingering the buttons of the

leather cushion and seeing nothing but that cushion, and her confused

thoughts were centered on one subject--the irrevocability of death and

her own spiritual baseness, which she had not suspected, but which had

shown itself during her father's illness. She wished to pray but did not

dare to, dared not in her present state of mind address herself to God.

She lay for a long time in that position.

The sun had reached the other side of the house, and its slanting rays

shone into the open window, lighting up the room and part of the morocco

cushion at which Princess Mary was looking. The flow of her thoughts

suddenly stopped. Unconsciously she sat up, smoothed her hair, got up,

and went to the window, involuntarily inhaling the freshness of the

clear but windy evening.

"Yes, you can well enjoy the evening now! He is gone and no one will

hinder you," she said to herself, and sinking into a chair she let her

head fall on the window sill.

Someone spoke her name in a soft and tender voice from the garden and

kissed her head. She looked up. It was Mademoiselle Bourienne in a black

dress and weepers. She softly approached Princess Mary, sighed, kissed

her, and immediately began to cry. The princess looked up at her. All

their former disharmony and her own jealousy recurred to her mind. But

she remembered too how he had changed of late toward Mademoiselle

Bourienne and could not bear to see her, thereby showing how unjust were

the reproaches Princess Mary had mentally addressed to her. "Besides, is

it for me, for me who desired his death, to condemn anyone?" she

thought.

Princess Mary vividly pictured to herself the position of Mademoiselle

Bourienne, whom she had of late kept at a distance, but who yet was

dependent on her and living in her house. She felt sorry for her and

held out her hand with a glance of gentle inquiry. Mademoiselle

Bourienne at once began crying again and kissed that hand, speaking of

the princess' sorrow and making herself a partner in it. She said her

only consolation was the fact that the princess allowed her to share her

sorrow, that all the old misunderstandings should sink into nothing but

this great grief; that she felt herself blameless in regard to everyone,

and that he, from above, saw her affection and gratitude. The princess

heard her, not heeding her words but occasionally looking up at her and

listening to the sound of her voice.

"Your position is doubly terrible, dear princess," said Mademoiselle

Bourienne after a pause. "I understand that you could not, and cannot,

think of yourself, but with my love for you I must do so.... Has

Alpatych been to you? Has he spoken to you of going away?" she asked.

Princess Mary did not answer. She did not understand who was to go or

where to. "Is it possible to plan or think of anything now? Is it not

all the same?" she thought, and did not reply.

"You know, chere Marie," said Mademoiselle Bourienne, "that we are in

danger--are surrounded by the French. It would be dangerous to move now.

If we go we are almost sure to be taken prisoners, and God knows..."

Princess Mary looked at her companion without understanding what she was

talking about.

"Oh, if anyone knew how little anything matters to me now," she said.

"Of course I would on no account wish to go away from him.... Alpatych

did say something about going.... Speak to him; I can do nothing,

nothing, and don't want to...."

"I've spoken to him. He hopes we should be in time to get away tomorrow,

but I think it would now be better to stay here," said Mademoiselle

Bourienne. "Because, you will agree, chere Marie, to fall into the hands

of the soldiers or of riotous peasants would be terrible."

Mademoiselle Bourienne took from her reticule a proclamation (not

printed on ordinary Russian paper) of General Rameau's, telling people

not to leave their homes and that the French authorities would afford

them proper protection. She handed this to the princess.

"I think it would be best to appeal to that general," she continued,

"and I am sure that all due respect would be shown you."

Princess Mary read the paper, and her face began to quiver with stifled

sobs.

"From whom did you get this?" she asked.

"They probably recognized that I am French, by my name," replied

Mademoiselle Bourienne blushing.

Princess Mary, with the paper in her hand, rose from the window and with

a pale face went out of the room and into what had been Prince Andrew's

study.

"Dunyasha, send Alpatych, or Dronushka, or somebody to me!" she said,

"and tell Mademoiselle Bourienne not to come to me," she added, hearing

Mademoiselle Bourienne's voice. "We must go at once, at once!" she said,

appalled at the thought of being left in the hands of the French.

"If Prince Andrew heard that I was in the power of the French! That I,

the daughter of Prince Nicholas Bolkonski, asked General Rameau for

protection and accepted his favor!" This idea horrified her, made her

shudder, blush, and feel such a rush of anger and pride as she had never

experienced before. All that was distressing, and especially all that

was humiliating, in her position rose vividly to her mind. "They, the

French, would settle in this house: M. le General Rameau would occupy

Prince Andrew's study and amuse himself by looking through and reading

his letters and papers. Mademoiselle Bourienne would do the honors of

Bogucharovo for him. I should be given a small room as a favor, the

soldiers would violate my father's newly dug grave to steal his crosses

and stars, they would tell me of their victories over the Russians, and

would pretend to sympathize with my sorrow..." thought Princess Mary,

not thinking her own thoughts but feeling bound to think like her father

and her brother. For herself she did not care where she remained or what

happened to her, but she felt herself the representative of her dead

father and of Prince Andrew. Involuntarily she thought their thoughts

and felt their feelings. What they would have said and what they would

have done she felt bound to say and do. She went into Prince Andrew's

study, trying to enter completely into his ideas, and considered her

position.

The demands of life, which had seemed to her annihilated by her father's

death, all at once rose before her with a new, previously unknown force

and took possession of her.

Agitated and flushed she paced the room, sending now for Michael

Ivanovich and now for Tikhon or Dron. Dunyasha, the nurse, and the other

maids could not say in how far Mademoiselle Bourienne's statement was

correct. Alpatych was not at home, he had gone to the police. Neither

could the architect Michael Ivanovich, who on being sent for came in

with sleepy eyes, tell Princess Mary anything. With just the same smile

of agreement with which for fifteen years he had been accustomed to

answer the old prince without expressing views of his own, he now

replied to Princess Mary, so that nothing definite could be got from his

answers. The old valet Tikhon, with sunken, emaciated face that bore the

stamp of inconsolable grief, replied: "Yes, Princess" to all Princess

Mary's questions and hardly refrained from sobbing as he looked at her.

At length Dron, the village Elder, entered the room and with a deep bow

to Princess Mary came to a halt by the doorpost.

Princess Mary walked up and down the room and stopped in front of him.

"Dronushka," she said, regarding as a sure friend this Dronushka who

always used to bring a special kind of gingerbread from his visit to the

fair at Vyazma every year and smilingly offer it to her, "Dronushka, now

since our misfortune..." she began, but could not go on.

"We are all in God's hands," said he, with a sigh.

They were silent for a while.

"Dronushka, Alpatych has gone off somewhere and I have no one to turn

to. Is it true, as they tell me, that I can't even go away?"

"Why shouldn't you go away, your excellency? You can go," said Dron.

"I was told it would be dangerous because of the enemy. Dear friend, I

can do nothing. I understand nothing. I have nobody! I want to go away

tonight or early tomorrow morning."

Dron paused. He looked askance at Princess Mary and said: "There are no

horses; I told Yakov Alpatych so."

"Why are there none?" asked the princess.

"It's all God's scourge," said Dron. "What horses we had have been taken

for the army or have died--this is such a year! It's not a case of

feeding horses--we may die of hunger ourselves! As it is, some go three

days without eating. We've nothing, we've been ruined."

Princess Mary listened attentively to what he told her.

"The peasants are ruined? They have no bread?" she asked.

"They're dying of hunger," said Dron. "It's not a case of carting."

"But why didn't you tell me, Dronushka? Isn't it possible to help them?

I'll do all I can...."

To Princess Mary it was strange that now, at a moment when such sorrow

was filling her soul, there could be rich people and poor, and the rich

could refrain from helping the poor. She had heard vaguely that there

was such a thing as "landlord's corn" which was sometimes given to the

peasants. She also knew that neither her father nor her brother would

refuse to help the peasants in need, she only feared to make some

mistake in speaking about the distribution of the grain she wished to

give. She was glad such cares presented themselves, enabling her without

scruple to forget her own grief. She began asking Dron about the

peasants' needs and what there was in Bogucharovo that belonged to the

landlord.

"But we have grain belonging to my brother?" she said.

"The landlord's grain is all safe," replied Dron proudly. "Our prince

did not order it to be sold."

"Give it to the peasants, let them have all they need; I give you leave

in my brother's name," said she.

Dron made no answer but sighed deeply.

"Give them that corn if there is enough of it. Distribute it all. I give

this order in my brother's name; and tell them that what is ours is

theirs. We do not grudge them anything. Tell them so."

Dron looked intently at the princess while she was speaking.

"Discharge me, little mother, for God's sake! Order the keys to be taken

from me," said he. "I have served twenty-three years and have done no

wrong. Discharge me, for God's sake!"

Princess Mary did not understand what he wanted of her or why he was

asking to be discharged. She replied that she had never doubted his

devotion and that she was ready to do anything for him and for the

peasants.

CHAPTER XI

An hour later Dunyasha came to tell the princess that Dron had come, and

all the peasants had assembled at the barn by the princess' order and

wished to have word with their mistress.

"But I never told them to come," said Princess Mary. "I only told Dron

to let them have the grain."

"Only, for God's sake, Princess dear, have them sent away and don't go

out to them. It's all a trick," said Dunyasha, "and when Yakov Alpatych

returns let us get away... and please don't..."

"What is a trick?" asked Princess Mary in surprise.

"I know it is, only listen to me for God's sake! Ask nurse too. They say

they don't agree to leave Bogucharovo as you ordered."

"You're making some mistake. I never ordered them to go away," said

Princess Mary. "Call Dronushka."

Dron came and confirmed Dunyasha's words; the peasants had come by the

princess' order.

"But I never sent for them," declared the princess. "You must have given

my message wrong. I only said that you were to give them the grain."

Dron only sighed in reply.

"If you order it they will go away," said he.

"No, no. I'll go out to them," said Princess Mary, and in spite of the

nurse's and Dunyasha's protests she went out into the porch; Dron,

Dunyasha, the nurse, and Michael Ivanovich following her.

"They probably think I am offering them the grain to bribe them to

remain here, while I myself go away leaving them to the mercy of the

French," thought Princess Mary. "I will offer them monthly rations and

housing at our Moscow estate. I am sure Andrew would do even more in my

place," she thought as she went out in the twilight toward the crowd

standing on the pasture by the barn.

The men crowded closer together, stirred, and rapidly took off their

hats. Princess Mary lowered her eyes and, tripping over her skirt, came

close up to them. So many different eyes, old and young, were fixed on

her, and there were so many different faces, that she could not

distinguish any of them and, feeling that she must speak to them all at

once, did not know how to do it. But again the sense that she

represented her father and her brother gave her courage, and she boldly

began her speech.

"I am very glad you have come," she said without raising her eyes, and

feeling her heart beating quickly and violently. "Dronushka tells me

that the war has ruined you. That is our common misfortune, and I shall

grudge nothing to help you. I am myself going away because it is

dangerous here... the enemy is near... because... I am giving you

everything, my friends, and I beg you to take everything, all our grain,

so that you may not suffer want! And if you have been told that I am

giving you the grain to keep you here--that is not true. On the

contrary, I ask you to go with all your belongings to our estate near

Moscow, and I promise you I will see to it that there you shall want for

nothing. You shall be given food and lodging."

The princess stopped. Sighs were the only sound heard in the crowd.

"I am not doing this on my own account," she continued, "I do it in the

name of my dead father, who was a good master to you, and of my brother

and his son."

Again she paused. No one broke the silence.

"Ours is a common misfortune and we will share it together. All that is

mine is yours," she concluded, scanning the faces before her.

All eyes were gazing at her with one and the same expression. She could

not fathom whether it was curiosity, devotion, gratitude, or

apprehension and distrust--but the expression on all the faces was

identical.

"We are all very thankful for your bounty, but it won't do for us to

take the landlord's grain," said a voice at the back of the crowd.

"But why not?" asked the princess.

No one replied and Princess Mary, looking round at the crowd, found that

every eye she met now was immediately dropped.

"But why don't you want to take it?" she asked again.

No one answered.

The silence began to oppress the princess and she tried to catch

someone's eye.

"Why don't you speak?" she inquired of a very old man who stood just in

front of her leaning on his stick. "If you think something more is

wanted, tell me! I will do anything," said she, catching his eye.

But as if this angered him, he bent his head quite low and muttered:

"Why should we agree? We don't want the grain."

"Why should we give up everything? We don't agree. Don't agree.... We

are sorry for you, but we're not willing. Go away yourself, alone..."

came from various sides of the crowd.

And again all the faces in that crowd bore an identical expression,

though now it was certainly not an expression of curiosity or gratitude,

but of angry resolve.

"But you can't have understood me," said Princess Mary with a sad smile.

"Why don't you want to go? I promise to house and feed you, while here

the enemy would ruin you..."

But her voice was drowned by the voices of the crowd.

"We're not willing. Let them ruin us! We won't take your grain. We don't

agree."

Again Princess Mary tried to catch someone's eye, but not a single eye

in the crowd was turned to her; evidently they were all trying to avoid

her look. She felt strange and awkward.

"Oh yes, an artful tale! Follow her into slavery! Pull down your houses

and go into bondage! I dare say! 'I'll give you grain, indeed!' she

says," voices in the crowd were heard saying.

With drooping head Princess Mary left the crowd and went back to the

house. Having repeated her order to Dron to have horses ready for her

departure next morning, she went to her room and remained alone with her

own thoughts.

CHAPTER XII

For a long time that night Princess Mary sat by the open window of her

room hearing the sound of the peasants' voices that reached her from the

village, but it was not of them she was thinking. She felt that she

could not understand them however much she might think about them. She

thought only of one thing, her sorrow, which, after the break caused by

cares for the present, seemed already to belong to the past. Now she

could remember it and weep or pray.

After sunset the wind had dropped. The night was calm and fresh. Toward

midnight the voices began to subside, a cock crowed, the full moon began

to show from behind the lime trees, a fresh white dewy mist began to

rise, and stillness reigned over the village and the house.

Pictures of the near past--her father's illness and last moments--rose

one after another to her memory. With mournful pleasure she now lingered

over these images, repelling with horror only the last one, the picture

of his death, which she felt she could not contemplate even in

imagination at this still and mystic hour of night. And these pictures

presented themselves to her so clearly and in such detail that they

seemed now present, now past, and now future.

She vividly recalled the moment when he had his first stroke and was

being dragged along by his armpits through the garden at Bald Hills,

muttering something with his helpless tongue, twitching his gray

eyebrows and looking uneasily and timidly at her.

"Even then he wanted to tell me what he told me the day he died," she

thought. "He had always thought what he said then." And she recalled in

all its detail the night at Bald Hills before he had the last stroke,

when with a foreboding of disaster she had remained at home against his

will. She had not slept and had stolen downstairs on tiptoe, and going

to the door of the conservatory where he slept that night had listened

at the door. In a suffering and weary voice he was saying something to

Tikhon, speaking of the Crimea and its warm nights and of the Empress.

Evidently he had wanted to talk. "And why didn't he call me? Why didn't

he let me be there instead of Tikhon?" Princess Mary had thought and

thought again now. "Now he will never tell anyone what he had in his

soul. Never will that moment return for him or for me when he might have

said all he longed to say, and not Tikhon but I might have heard and

understood him. Why didn't I enter the room?" she thought. "Perhaps he

would then have said to me what he said the day he died. While talking

to Tikhon he asked about me twice. He wanted to see me, and I was

standing close by, outside the door. It was sad and painful for him to

talk to Tikhon who did not understand him. I remember how he began

speaking to him about Lise as if she were alive--he had forgotten she

was dead--and Tikhon reminded him that she was no more, and he shouted,

'Fool!' He was greatly depressed. From behind the door I heard how he

lay down on his bed groaning and loudly exclaimed, 'My God!' Why didn't

I go in then? What could he have done to me? What could I have lost? And

perhaps he would then have been comforted and would have said that word

to me." And Princess Mary uttered aloud the caressing word he had said

to her on the day of his death. "Dear-est!" she repeated, and began

sobbing, with tears that relieved her soul. She now saw his face before

her. And not the face she had known ever since she could remember and

had always seen at a distance, but the timid, feeble face she had seen

for the first time quite closely, with all its wrinkles and details,

when she stooped near to his mouth to catch what he said.

"Dear-est!" she repeated again.

"What was he thinking when he uttered that word? What is he thinking

now?" This question suddenly presented itself to her, and in answer she

saw him before her with the expression that was on his face as he lay in

his coffin with his chin bound up with a white handkerchief. And the

horror that had seized her when she touched him and convinced herself

that that was not he, but something mysterious and horrible, seized her

again. She tried to think of something else and to pray, but could do

neither. With wide-open eyes she gazed at the moonlight and the shadows,

expecting every moment to see his dead face, and she felt that the

silence brooding over the house and within it held her fast.

"Dunyasha," she whispered. "Dunyasha!" she screamed wildly, and tearing

herself out of this silence she ran to the servants' quarters to meet

her old nurse and the maidservants who came running toward her.

CHAPTER XIII

On the seventeenth of August Rostov and Ilyin, accompanied by Lavrushka

who had just returned from captivity and by an hussar orderly, left

their quarters at Yankovo, ten miles from Bogucharovo, and went for a

ride--to try a new horse Ilyin had bought and to find out whether there

was any hay to be had in the villages.

For the last three days Bogucharovo had lain between the two hostile

armies, so that it was as easy for the Russian rearguard to get to it as

for the French vanguard; Rostov, as a careful squadron commander, wished

to take such provisions as remained at Bogucharovo before the French

could get them.

Rostov and Ilyin were in the merriest of moods. On the way to

Bogucharovo, a princely estate with a dwelling house and farm where they

hoped to find many domestic serfs and pretty girls, they questioned

Lavrushka about Napoleon and laughed at his stories, and raced one

another to try Ilyin's horse.

Rostov had no idea that the village he was entering was the property of

that very Bolkonski who had been engaged to his sister.

Rostov and Ilyin gave rein to their horses for a last race along the

incline before reaching Bogucharovo, and Rostov, outstripping Ilyin, was

the first to gallop into the village street.

"You're first!" cried Ilyin, flushed.

"Yes, always first both on the grassland and here," answered Rostov,

stroking his heated Donets horse.

"And I'd have won on my Frenchy, your excellency," said Lavrushka from

behind, alluding to his shabby cart horse, "only I didn't wish to

mortify you."

They rode at a footpace to the barn, where a large crowd of peasants was

standing.

Some of the men bared their heads, others stared at the new arrivals

without doffing their caps. Two tall old peasants with wrinkled faces

and scanty beards emerged from the tavern, smiling, staggering, and

singing some incoherent song, and approached the officers.

"Fine fellows!" said Rostov laughing. "Is there any hay here?"

"And how like one another," said Ilyin.

"A mo-o-st me-r-r-y co-o-m-pa...!" sang one of the peasants with a

blissful smile.

One of the men came out of the crowd and went up to Rostov.

"Who do you belong to?" he asked.

"The French," replied Ilyin jestingly, "and here is Napoleon himself"--

and he pointed to Lavrushka.

"Then you are Russians?" the peasant asked again.

"And is there a large force of you here?" said another, a short man,

coming up.

"Very large," answered Rostov. "But why have you collected here?" he

added. "Is it a holiday?"

"The old men have met to talk over the business of the commune," replied

the peasant, moving away.

At that moment, on the road leading from the big house, two women and a

man in a white hat were seen coming toward the officers.

"The one in pink is mine, so keep off!" said Ilyin on seeing Dunyasha

running resolutely toward him.

"She'll be ours!" said Lavrushka to Ilyin, winking.

"What do you want, my pretty?" said Ilyin with a smile.

"The princess ordered me to ask your regiment and your name."

"This is Count Rostov, squadron commander, and I am your humble

servant."

"Co-o-om-pa-ny!" roared the tipsy peasant with a beatific smile as he

looked at Ilyin talking to the girl. Following Dunyasha, Alpatych

advanced to Rostov, having bared his head while still at a distance.

"May I make bold to trouble your honor?" said he respectfully, but with

a shade of contempt for the youthfulness of this officer and with a hand

thrust into his bosom. "My mistress, daughter of General in Chief Prince

Nicholas Bolkonski who died on the fifteenth of this month, finding

herself in difficulties owing to the boorishness of these people"--he

pointed to the peasants--"asks you to come up to the house.... Won't

you, please, ride on a little farther," said Alpatych with a melancholy

smile, "as it is not convenient in the presence of...?" He pointed to

the two peasants who kept as close to him as horseflies to a horse.

"Ah!... Alpatych... Ah, Yakov Alpatych... Grand! Forgive us for Christ's

sake, eh?" said the peasants, smiling joyfully at him.

Rostov looked at the tipsy peasants and smiled.

"Or perhaps they amuse your honor?" remarked Alpatych with a staid air,

as he pointed at the old men with his free hand.

"No, there's not much to be amused at here," said Rostov, and rode on a

little way. "What's the matter?" he asked.

"I make bold to inform your honor that the rude peasants here don't wish

to let the mistress leave the estate, and threaten to unharness her

horses, so that though everything has been packed up since morning, her

excellency cannot get away."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Rostov.

"I have the honor to report to you the actual truth," said Alpatych.

Rostov dismounted, gave his horse to the orderly, and followed Alpatych

to the house, questioning him as to the state of affairs. It appeared

that the princess' offer of corn to the peasants the previous day, and

her talk with Dron and at the meeting, had actually had so bad an effect

that Dron had finally given up the keys and joined the peasants and had

not appeared when Alpatych sent for him; and that in the morning when

the princess gave orders to harness for her journey, the peasants had

come in a large crowd to the barn and sent word that they would not let

her leave the village: that there was an order not to move, and that

they would unharness the horses. Alpatych had gone out to admonish them,

but was told (it was chiefly Karp who did the talking, Dron not showing

himself in the crowd) that they could not let the princess go, that

there was an order to the contrary, but that if she stayed they would

serve her as before and obey her in everything.

At the moment when Rostov and Ilyin were galloping along the road,

Princess Mary, despite the dissuasions of Alpatych, her nurse, and the

maids, had given orders to harness and intended to start, but when the

cavalrymen were espied they were taken for Frenchmen, the coachman ran

away, and the women in the house began to wail.

"Father! Benefactor! God has sent you!" exclaimed deeply moved voices as

Rostov passed through the anteroom.

Princess Mary was sitting helpless and bewildered in the large sitting

room, when Rostov was shown in. She could not grasp who he was and why

he had come, or what was happening to her. When she saw his Russian

face, and by his walk and the first words he uttered recognized him as a

man of her own class, she glanced at him with her deep radiant look and

began speaking in a voice that faltered and trembled with emotion. This

meeting immediately struck Rostov as a romantic event. "A helpless girl

overwhelmed with grief, left to the mercy of coarse, rioting peasants!

And what a strange fate sent me here! What gentleness and nobility there

are in her features and expression!" thought he as he looked at her and

listened to her timid story.

When she began to tell him that all this had happened the day after her

father's funeral, her voice trembled. She turned away, and then, as if

fearing he might take her words as meant to move him to pity, looked at

him with an apprehensive glance of inquiry. There were tears in Rostov's

eyes. Princess Mary noticed this and glanced gratefully at him with that

radiant look which caused the plainness of her face to be forgotten.

"I cannot express, Princess, how glad I am that I happened to ride here

and am able to show my readiness to serve you," said Rostov, rising. "Go

when you please, and I give you my word of honor that no one shall dare

to cause you annoyance if only you will allow me to act as your escort."

And bowing respectfully, as if to a lady of royal blood, he moved toward

the door.

Rostov's deferential tone seemed to indicate that though he would

consider himself happy to be acquainted with her, he did not wish to

take advantage of her misfortunes to intrude upon her.

Princess Mary understood this and appreciated his delicacy.

"I am very, very grateful to you," she said in French, "but I hope it

was all a misunderstanding and that no one is to blame for it." She

suddenly began to cry.

"Excuse me!" she said.

Rostov, knitting his brows, left the room with another low bow.

CHAPTER XIV

"Well, is she pretty? Ah, friend--my pink one is delicious; her name is

Dunyasha...."

But on glancing at Rostov's face Ilyin stopped short. He saw that his

hero and commander was following quite a different train of thought.

Rostov glanced angrily at Ilyin and without replying strode off with

rapid steps to the village.

"I'll show them; I'll give it to them, the brigands!" said he to

himself.

Alpatych at a gliding trot, only just managing not to run, kept up with

him with difficulty.

"What decision have you been pleased to come to?" said he.

Rostov stopped and, clenching his fists, suddenly and sternly turned on

Alpatych.

"Decision? What decision? Old dotard!..." cried he. "What have you been

about? Eh? The peasants are rioting, and you can't manage them? You're a

traitor yourself! I know you. I'll flay you all alive!..." And as if

afraid of wasting his store of anger, he left Alpatych and went rapidly

forward. Alpatych, mastering his offended feelings, kept pace with

Rostov at a gliding gait and continued to impart his views. He said the

peasants were obdurate and that at the present moment it would be

imprudent to "overresist" them without an armed force, and would it not

be better first to send for the military?

"I'll give them armed force... I'll 'overresist' them!" uttered Rostov

meaninglessly, breathless with irrational animal fury and the need to

vent it.

Without considering what he would do he moved unconciously with quick,

resolute steps toward the crowd. And the nearer he drew to it the more

Alpatych felt that this unreasonable action might produce good results.

The peasants in the crowd were similarly impressed when they saw

Rostov's rapid, firm steps and resolute, frowning face.

After the hussars had come to the village and Rostov had gone to see the

princess, a certain confusion and dissension had arisen among the crowd.

Some of the peasants said that these new arrivals were Russians and

might take it amiss that the mistress was being detained. Dron was of

this opinion, but as soon as he expressed it Karp and others attacked

their ex-Elder.

"How many years have you been fattening on the commune?" Karp shouted at

him. "It's all one to you! You'll dig up your pot of money and take it

away with you.... What does it matter to you whether our homes are

ruined or not?"

"We've been told to keep order, and that no one is to leave their homes

or take away a single grain, and that's all about it!" cried another.

"It was your son's turn to be conscripted, but no fear! You begrudged

your lump of a son," a little old man suddenly began attacking Dron--

"and so they took my Vanka to be shaved for a soldier! But we all have

to die."

"To be sure, we all have to die. I'm not against the commune," said

Dron.

"That's it--not against it! You've filled your belly...."

The two tall peasants had their say. As soon as Rostov, followed by

Ilyin, Lavrushka, and Alpatych, came up to the crowd, Karp, thrusting

his fingers into his belt and smiling a little, walked to the front.

Dron on the contrary retired to the rear and the crowd drew closer

together.

"Who is your Elder here? Hey?" shouted Rostov, coming up to the crowd

with quick steps.

"The Elder? What do you want with him?..." asked Karp.

But before the words were well out of his mouth, his cap flew off and a

fierce blow jerked his head to one side.

"Caps off, traitors!" shouted Rostov in a wrathful voice. "Where's the

Elder?" he cried furiously.

"The Elder.... He wants the Elder!... Dron Zakharych, you!" meek and

flustered voices here and there were heard calling and caps began to

come off their heads.

"We don't riot, we're following the orders," declared Karp, and at that

moment several voices began speaking together.

"It's as the old men have decided--there's too many of you giving

orders."

"Arguing? Mutiny!... Brigands! Traitors!" cried Rostov unmeaningly in a

voice not his own, gripping Karp by the collar. "Bind him, bind him!" he

shouted, though there was no one to bind him but Lavrushka and Alpatych.

Lavrushka, however, ran up to Karp and seized him by the arms from

behind.

"Shall I call up our men from beyond the hill?" he called out.

Alpatych turned to the peasants and ordered two of them by name to come

and bind Karp. The men obediently came out of the crowd and began taking

off their belts.

"Where's the Elder?" demanded Rostov in a loud voice.

With a pale and frowning face Dron stepped out of the crowd.

"Are you the Elder? Bind him, Lavrushka!" shouted Rostov, as if that

order, too, could not possibly meet with any opposition.

And in fact two more peasants began binding Dron, who took off his own

belt and handed it to them, as if to aid them.

"And you all listen to me!" said Rostov to the peasants. "Be off to your

houses at once, and don't let one of your voices be heard!"

"Why, we've not done any harm! We did it just out of foolishness. It's

all nonsense... I said then that it was not in order," voices were heard

bickering with one another.

"There! What did I say?" said Alpatych, coming into his own again. "It's

wrong, lads!"

"All our stupidity, Yakov Alpatych," came the answers, and the crowd

began at once to disperse through the village.

The two bound men were led off to the master's house. The two drunken

peasants followed them.

"Aye, when I look at you!..." said one of them to Karp.

"How can one talk to the masters like that? What were you thinking of,

you fool?" added the other--"A real fool!"

Two hours later the carts were standing in the courtyard of the

Bogucharovo house. The peasants were briskly carrying out the

proprietor's goods and packing them on the carts, and Dron, liberated at

Princess Mary's wish from the cupboard where he had been confined, was

standing in the yard directing the men.

"Don't put it in so carelessly," said one of the peasants, a man with a

round smiling face, taking a casket from a housemaid. "You know it has

cost money! How can you chuck it in like that or shove it under the cord

where it'll get rubbed? I don't like that way of doing things. Let it

all be done properly, according to rule. Look here, put it under the

bast matting and cover it with hay--that's the way!"

"Eh, books, books!" said another peasant, bringing out Prince Andrew's

library cupboards. "Don't catch up against it! It's heavy, lads--solid

books."

"Yes, they worked all day and didn't play!" remarked the tall, round-

faced peasant gravely, pointing with a significant wink at the

dictionaries that were on the top.

Unwilling to obtrude himself on the princess, Rostov did not go back to

the house but remained in the village awaiting her departure. When her

carriage drove out of the house, he mounted and accompanied her eight

miles from Bogucharovo to where the road was occupied by our troops. At

the inn at Yankovo he respectfully took leave of her, for the first time

permitting himself to kiss her hand.

"How can you speak so!" he blushingly replied to Princess Mary's

expressions of gratitude for her deliverance, as she termed what had

occurred. "Any police officer would have done as much! If we had had

only peasants to fight, we should not have let the enemy come so far,"

said he with a sense of shame and wishing to change the subject. "I am

only happy to have had the opportunity of making your acquaintance.

Good-bye, Princess. I wish you happiness and consolation and hope to

meet you again in happier circumstances. If you don't want to make me

blush, please don't thank me!"

But the princess, if she did not again thank him in words, thanked him

with the whole expression of her face, radiant with gratitude and

tenderness. She could not believe that there was nothing to thank him

for. On the contrary, it seemed to her certain that had he not been

there she would have perished at the hands of the mutineers and of the

French, and that he had exposed himself to terrible and obvious danger

to save her, and even more certain was it that he was a man of lofty and

noble soul, able to understand her position and her sorrow. His kind,

honest eyes, with the tears rising in them when she herself had begun to

cry as she spoke of her loss, did not leave her memory.

When she had taken leave of him and remained alone she suddenly felt her

eyes filling with tears, and then not for the first time the strange

question presented itself to her: did she love him?

On the rest of the way to Moscow, though the princess' position was not

a cheerful one, Dunyasha, who went with her in the carriage, more than

once noticed that her mistress leaned out of the window and smiled at

something with an expression of mingled joy and sorrow.

"Well, supposing I do love him?" thought Princess Mary.

Ashamed as she was of acknowledging to herself that she had fallen in

love with a man who would perhaps never love her, she comforted herself

with the thought that no one would ever know it and that she would not

be to blame if, without ever speaking of it to anyone, she continued to

the end of her life to love the man with whom she had fallen in love for

the first and last time in her life.

Sometimes when she recalled his looks, his sympathy, and his words,

happiness did not appear impossible to her. It was at those moments that

Dunyasha noticed her smiling as she looked out of the carriage window.

"Was it not fate that brought him to Bogucharovo, and at that very

moment?" thought Princess Mary. "And that caused his sister to refuse my

brother?" And in all this Princess Mary saw the hand of Providence.

The impression the princess made on Rostov was a very agreeable one. To

remember her gave him pleasure, and when his comrades, hearing of his

adventure at Bogucharovo, rallied him on having gone to look for hay and

having picked up one of the wealthiest heiresses in Russia, he grew

angry. It made him angry just because the idea of marrying the gentle

Princess Mary, who was attractive to him and had an enormous fortune,

had against his will more than once entered his head. For himself

personally Nicholas could not wish for a better wife: by marrying her he

would make the countess his mother happy, would be able to put his

father's affairs in order, and would even--he felt it--ensure Princess

Mary's happiness.

But Sonya? And his plighted word? That was why Rostov grew angry when he

was rallied about Princess Bolkonskaya.

CHAPTER XV

On receiving command of the armies Kutuzov remembered Prince Andrew and

sent an order for him to report at headquarters.

Prince Andrew arrived at Tsarevo-Zaymishche on the very day and at the

very hour that Kutuzov was reviewing the troops for the first time. He

stopped in the village at the priest's house in front of which stood the

commander-in-chief's carriage, and he sat down on the bench at the gate

awaiting his Serene Highness, as everyone now called Kutuzov. From the

field beyond the village came now sounds of regimental music and now the

roar of many voices shouting "Hurrah!" to the new commander-in-chief.

Two orderlies, a courier and a major-domo, stood near by, some ten paces

from Prince Andrew, availing themselves of Kutuzov's absence and of the

fine weather. A short, swarthy lieutenant colonel of hussars with thick

mustaches and whiskers rode up to the gate and, glancing at Prince

Andrew, inquired whether his Serene Highness was putting up there and

whether he would soon be back.

Prince Andrew replied that he was not on his Serene Highness' staff but

was himself a new arrival. The lieutenant colonel turned to a smart

orderly, who, with the peculiar contempt with which a commander-in-

chief's orderly speaks to officers, replied:

"What? His Serene Highness? I expect he'll be here soon. What do you

want?"

The lieutenant colonel of hussars smiled beneath his mustache at the

orderly's tone, dismounted, gave his horse to a dispatch runner, and

approached Bolkonski with a slight bow. Bolkonski made room for him on

the bench and the lieutenant colonel sat down beside him.

"You're also waiting for the commander-in-chief?" said he. "They say he

weceives evewyone, thank God!... It's awful with those sausage eaters!

Ermolov had weason to ask to be pwomoted to be a German! Now p'waps

Wussians will get a look in. As it was, devil only knows what was

happening. We kept wetweating and wetweating. Did you take part in the

campaign?" he asked.

"I had the pleasure," replied Prince Andrew, "not only of taking part in

the retreat but of losing in that retreat all I held dear--not to

mention the estate and home of my birth--my father, who died of grief. I

belong to the province of Smolensk."

"Ah? You're Pwince Bolkonski? Vewy glad to make your acquaintance! I'm

Lieutenant Colonel Denisov, better known as 'Vaska,'" said Denisov,

pressing Prince Andrew's hand and looking into his face with a

particularly kindly attention. "Yes, I heard," said he sympathetically,

and after a short pause added: "Yes, it's Scythian warfare. It's all

vewy well--only not for those who get it in the neck. So you are Pwince

Andwew Bolkonski?" He swayed his head. "Vewy pleased, Pwince, to make

your acquaintance!" he repeated again, smiling sadly, and he again

pressed Prince Andrew's hand.

Prince Andrew knew Denisov from what Natasha had told him of her first

suitor. This memory carried him sadly and sweetly back to those painful

feelings of which he had not thought lately, but which still found place

in his soul. Of late he had received so many new and very serious

impressions--such as the retreat from Smolensk, his visit to Bald Hills,

and the recent news of his father's death--and had experienced so many

emotions, that for a long time past those memories had not entered his

mind, and now that they did, they did not act on him with nearly their

former strength. For Denisov, too, the memories awakened by the name of

Bolkonski belonged to a distant, romantic past, when after supper and

after Natasha's singing he had proposed to a little girl of fifteen

without realizing what he was doing. He smiled at the recollection of

that time and of his love for Natasha, and passed at once to what now

interested him passionately and exclusively. This was a plan of campaign

he had devised while serving at the outposts during the retreat. He had

proposed that plan to Barclay de Tolly and now wished to propose it to

Kutuzov. The plan was based on the fact that the French line of

operation was too extended, and it proposed that instead of, or

concurrently with, action on the front to bar the advance of the French,

we should attack their line of communication. He began explaining his

plan to Prince Andrew.

"They can't hold all that line. It's impossible. I will undertake to

bweak thwough. Give me five hundwed men and I will bweak the line,

that's certain! There's only one way--guewilla warfare!"

Denisov rose and began gesticulating as he explained his plan to

Bolkonski. In the midst of his explanation shouts were heard from the

army, growing more incoherent and more diffused, mingling with music and

songs and coming from the field where the review was held. Sounds of

hoofs and shouts were nearing the village.

"He's coming! He's coming!" shouted a Cossack standing at the gate.

Bolkonski and Denisov moved to the gate, at which a knot of soldiers (a

guard of honor) was standing, and they saw Kutuzov coming down the

street mounted on a rather small sorrel horse. A huge suite of generals

rode behind him. Barclay was riding almost beside him, and a crowd of

officers ran after and around them shouting, "Hurrah!"

His adjutants galloped into the yard before him. Kutuzov was impatiently

urging on his horse, which ambled smoothly under his weight, and he

raised his hand to his white Horse Guard's cap with a red band and no

peak, nodding his head continually. When he came up to the guard of

honor, a fine set of Grenadiers mostly wearing decorations, who were

giving him the salute, he looked at them silently and attentively for

nearly a minute with the steady gaze of a commander and then turned to

the crowd of generals and officers surrounding him. Suddenly his face

assumed a subtle expression, he shrugged his shoulders with an air of

perplexity.

"And with such fine fellows to retreat and retreat! Well, good-by,

General," he added, and rode into the yard past Prince Andrew and

Denisov.

"Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!" shouted those behind him.

Since Prince Andrew had last seen him Kutuzov had grown still more

corpulent, flaccid, and fat. But the bleached eyeball, the scar, and the

familiar weariness of his expression were still the same. He was wearing

the white Horse Guard's cap and a military overcoat with a whip hanging

over his shoulder by a thin strap. He sat heavily and swayed limply on

his brisk little horse.

"Whew... whew... whew!" he whistled just audibly as he rode into the

yard. His face expressed the relief of relaxed strain felt by a man who

means to rest after a ceremony. He drew his left foot out of the stirrup

and, lurching with his whole body and puckering his face with the

effort, raised it with difficulty onto the saddle, leaned on his knee,

groaned, and slipped down into the arms of the Cossacks and adjutants

who stood ready to assist him.

He pulled himself together, looked round, screwing up his eyes, glanced

at Prince Andrew, and, evidently not recognizing him, moved with his

waddling gait to the porch. "Whew... whew... whew!" he whistled, and

again glanced at Prince Andrew. As often occurs with old men, it was

only after some seconds that the impression produced by Prince Andrew's

face linked itself up with Kutuzov's remembrance of his personality.

"Ah, how do you do, my dear prince? How do you do, my dear boy? Come

along..." said he, glancing wearily round, and he stepped onto the porch

which creaked under his weight.

He unbuttoned his coat and sat down on a bench in the porch.

"And how's your father?"

"I received news of his death, yesterday," replied Prince Andrew

abruptly.

Kutuzov looked at him with eyes wide open with dismay and then took off

his cap and crossed himself:

"May the kingdom of Heaven be his! God's will be done to us all!" He

sighed deeply, his whole chest heaving, and was silent for a while. "I

loved him and respected him, and sympathize with you with all my heart."

He embraced Prince Andrew, pressing him to his fat breast, and for some

time did not let him go. When he released him Prince Andrew saw that

Kutuzov's flabby lips were trembling and that tears were in his eyes. He

sighed and pressed on the bench with both hands to raise himself.

"Come! Come with me, we'll have a talk," said he.

But at that moment Denisov, no more intimidated by his superiors than by

the enemy, came with jingling spurs up the steps of the porch, despite

the angry whispers of the adjutants who tried to stop him. Kutuzov, his

hands still pressed on the seat, glanced at him glumly. Denisov, having

given his name, announced that he had to communicate to his Serene

Highness a matter of great importance for their country's welfare.

Kutuzov looked wearily at him and, lifting his hands with a gesture of

annoyance, folded them across his stomach, repeating the words: "For our

country's welfare? Well, what is it? Speak!" Denisov blushed like a girl

(it was strange to see the color rise in that shaggy, bibulous, time-

worn face) and boldly began to expound his plan of cutting the enemy's

lines of communication between Smolensk and Vyazma. Denisov came from

those parts and knew the country well. His plan seemed decidedly a good

one, especially from the strength of conviction with which he spoke.

Kutuzov looked down at his own legs, occasionally glancing at the door

of the adjoining hut as if expecting something unpleasant to emerge from

it. And from that hut, while Denisov was speaking, a general with a

portfolio under his arm really did appear.

"What?" said Kutuzov, in the midst of Denisov's explanations, "are you

ready so soon?"

"Ready, your Serene Highness," replied the general.

Kutuzov swayed his head, as much as to say: "How is one man to deal with

it all?" and again listened to Denisov.

"I give my word of honor as a Wussian officer," said Denisov, "that I

can bweak Napoleon's line of communication!"

"What relation are you to Intendant General Kiril Andreevich Denisov?"

asked Kutuzov, interrupting him.

"He is my uncle, your Sewene Highness."

"Ah, we were friends," said Kutuzov cheerfully. "All right, all right,

friend, stay here at the staff and tomorrow we'll have a talk."

With a nod to Denisov he turned away and put out his hand for the papers

Konovnitsyn had brought him.

"Would not your Serene Highness like to come inside?" said the general

on duty in a discontented voice, "the plans must be examined and several

papers have to be signed."

An adjutant came out and announced that everything was in readiness

within. But Kutuzov evidently did not wish to enter that room till he

was disengaged. He made a grimace...

"No, tell them to bring a small table out here, my dear boy. I'll look

at them here," said he. "Don't go away," he added, turning to Prince

Andrew, who remained in the porch and listened to the general's report.

While this was being given, Prince Andrew heard the whisper of a woman's

voice and the rustle of a silk dress behind the door. Several times on

glancing that way he noticed behind that door a plump, rosy, handsome

woman in a pink dress with a lilac silk kerchief on her head, holding a

dish and evidently awaiting the entrance of the commander-in-chief.

Kutuzov's adjutant whispered to Prince Andrew that this was the wife of

the priest whose home it was, and that she intended to offer his Serene

Highness bread and salt. "Her husband has welcomed his Serene Highness

with the cross at the church, and she intends to welcome him in the

house.... She's very pretty," added the adjutant with a smile. At those

words Kutuzov looked round. He was listening to the general's report--

which consisted chiefly of a criticism of the position at Tsarevo-

Zaymishche--as he had listened to Denisov, and seven years previously

had listened to the discussion at the Austerlitz council of war. He

evidently listened only because he had ears which, though there was a

piece of tow in one of them, could not help hearing; but it was evident

that nothing the general could say would surprise or even interest him,

that he knew all that would be said beforehand, and heard it all only

because he had to, as one has to listen to the chanting of a service of

prayer. All that Denisov had said was clever and to the point. What the

general was saying was even more clever and to the point, but it was

evident that Kutuzov despised knowledge and cleverness, and knew of

something else that would decide the matter--something independent of

cleverness and knowledge. Prince Andrew watched the commander-in-chief's

face attentively, and the only expression he could see there was one of

boredom, curiosity as to the meaning of the feminine whispering behind

the door, and a desire to observe propriety. It was evident that Kutuzov

despised cleverness and learning and even the patriotic feeling shown by

Denisov, but despised them not because of his own intellect, feelings,

or knowledge--he did not try to display any of these--but because of

something else. He despised them because of his old age and experience

of life. The only instruction Kutuzov gave of his own accord during that

report referred to looting by the Russian troops. At the end of the

report the general put before him for signature a paper relating to the

recovery of payment from army commanders for green oats mown down by the

soldiers, when landowners lodged petitions for compensation.

After hearing the matter, Kutuzov smacked his lips together and shook

his head.

"Into the stove... into the fire with it! I tell you once for all, my

dear fellow," said he, "into the fire with all such things! Let them cut

the crops and burn wood to their hearts' content. I don't order it or

allow it, but I don't exact compensation either. One can't get on

without it. 'When wood is chopped the chips will fly.'" He looked at the

paper again. "Oh, this German precision!" he muttered, shaking his head.

CHAPTER XVI

"Well, that's all!" said Kutuzov as he signed the last of the documents,

and rising heavily and smoothing out the folds in his fat white neck he

moved toward the door with a more cheerful expression.

The priest's wife, flushing rosy red, caught up the dish she had after

all not managed to present at the right moment, though she had so long

been preparing for it, and with a low bow offered it to Kutuzov.

He screwed up his eyes, smiled, lifted her chin with his hand, and said:

"Ah, what a beauty! Thank you, sweetheart!"

He took some gold pieces from his trouser pocket and put them on the

dish for her. "Well, my dear, and how are we getting on?" he asked,

moving to the door of the room assigned to him. The priest's wife

smiled, and with dimples in her rosy cheeks followed him into the room.

The adjutant came out to the porch and asked Prince Andrew to lunch with

him. Half an hour later Prince Andrew was again called to Kutuzov. He

found him reclining in an armchair, still in the same unbuttoned

overcoat. He had in his hand a French book which he closed as Prince

Andrew entered, marking the place with a knife. Prince Andrew saw by the

cover that it was Les Chevaliers du Cygne by Madame de Genlis.

"Well, sit down, sit down here. Let's have a talk," said Kutuzov. "It's

sad, very sad. But remember, my dear fellow, that I am a father to you,

a second father...."

Prince Andrew told Kutuzov all he knew of his father's death, and what

he had seen at Bald Hills when he passed through it.

"What... what they have brought us to!" Kutuzov suddenly cried in an

agitated voice, evidently picturing vividly to himself from Prince

Andrew's story the condition Russia was in. "But give me time, give me

time!" he said with a grim look, evidently not wishing to continue this

agitating conversation, and added: "I sent for you to keep you with me."

"I thank your Serene Highness, but I fear I am no longer fit for the

staff," replied Prince Andrew with a smile which Kutuzov noticed.

Kutuzov glanced inquiringly at him.

"But above all," added Prince Andrew, "I have grown used to my regiment,

am fond of the officers, and I fancy the men also like me. I should be

sorry to leave the regiment. If I decline the honor of being with you,

believe me..."

A shrewd, kindly, yet subtly derisive expression lit up Kutuzov's podgy

face. He cut Bolkonski short.

"I am sorry, for I need you. But you're right, you're right! It's not

here that men are needed. Advisers are always plentiful, but men are

not. The regiments would not be what they are if the would-be advisers

served there as you do. I remember you at Austerlitz.... I remember,

yes, I remember you with the standard!" said Kutuzov, and a flush of

pleasure suffused Prince Andrew's face at this recollection.

Taking his hand and drawing him downwards, Kutuzov offered his cheek to

be kissed, and again Prince Andrew noticed tears in the old man's eyes.

Though Prince Andrew knew that Kutuzov's tears came easily, and that he

was particularly tender to and considerate of him from a wish to show

sympathy with his loss, yet this reminder of Austerlitz was both

pleasant and flattering to him.

"Go your way and God be with you. I know your path is the path of

honor!" He paused. "I missed you at Bucharest, but I needed someone to

send." And changing the subject, Kutuzov began to speak of the Turkish

war and the peace that had been concluded. "Yes, I have been much

blamed," he said, "both for that war and the peace... but everything

came at the right time. Tout vient a point a celui qui sait attendre. \*

And there were as many advisers there as here..." he went on, returning

to the subject of "advisers" which evidently occupied him. "Ah, those

advisers!" said he. "If we had listened to them all we should not have

made peace with Turkey and should not have been through with that war.

Everything in haste, but more haste, less speed. Kamenski would have

been lost if he had not died. He stormed fortresses with thirty thousand

men. It is not difficult to capture a fortress but it is difficult to

win a campaign. For that, not storming and attacking but patience and

time are wanted. Kamenski sent soldiers to Rustchuk, but I only employed

these two things and took more fortresses than Kamenski and made them

Turks eat horseflesh!" He swayed his head. "And the French shall too,

believe me," he went on, growing warmer and beating his chest, "I'll

make them eat horseflesh!" And tears again dimmed his eyes.

\* "Everything comes in time to him who knows how to wait."

"But shan't we have to accept battle?" remarked Prince Andrew.

"We shall if everybody wants it; it can't be helped.... But believe me,

my dear boy, there is nothing stronger than those two: patience and

time, they will do it all. But the advisers n'entendent pas de cette

oreille, voila le mal. \* Some want a thing--others don't. What's one to

do?" he asked, evidently expecting an answer. "Well, what do you want us

to do?" he repeated and his eye shone with a deep, shrewd look. "I'll

tell you what to do," he continued, as Prince Andrew still did not

reply: "I will tell you what to do, and what I do. Dans le doute, mon

cher," he paused, "abstiens-toi" \*(2)--he articulated the French proverb

deliberately.

\* "Don't see it that way, that's the trouble."

\* (2) "When in doubt, my dear fellow, do nothing."

"Well, good-by, my dear fellow; remember that with all my heart I share

your sorrow, and that for you I am not a Serene Highness, nor a prince,

nor a commander-in-chief, but a father! If you want anything come

straight to me. Good-bye, my dear boy."

Again he embraced and kissed Prince Andrew, but before the latter had

left the room Kutuzov gave a sigh of relief and went on with his

unfinished novel, Les Chevaliers du Cygne by Madame de Genlis.

Prince Andrew could not have explained how or why it was, but after that

interview with Kutuzov he went back to his regiment reassured as to the

general course of affairs and as to the man to whom it had been

entrusted. The more he realized the absence of all personal motive in

that old man--in whom there seemed to remain only the habit of passions,

and in place of an intellect (grouping events and drawing conclusions)

only the capacity calmly to contemplate the course of events--the more

reassured he was that everything would be as it should. "He will not

bring in any plan of his own. He will not devise or undertake anything,"

thought Prince Andrew, "but he will hear everything, remember

everything, and put everything in its place. He will not hinder anything

useful nor allow anything harmful. He understands that there is

something stronger and more important than his own will--the inevitable

course of events, and he can see them and grasp their significance, and

seeing that significance can refrain from meddling and renounce his

personal wish directed to something else. And above all," thought Prince

Andrew, "one believes in him because he's Russian, despite the novel by

Genlis and the French proverbs, and because his voice shook when he

said: 'What they have brought us to!' and had a sob in it when he said

he would 'make them eat horseflesh!'"

On such feelings, more or less dimly shared by all, the unanimity and

general approval were founded with which, despite court influences, the

popular choice of Kutuzov as commander-in-chief was received.

CHAPTER XVII

After the Emperor had left Moscow, life flowed on there in its usual

course, and its course was so very usual that it was difficult to

remember the recent days of patriotic elation and ardor, hard to believe

that Russia was really in danger and that the members of the English

Club were also sons of the Fatherland ready to sacrifice everything for

it. The one thing that recalled the patriotic fervor everyone had

displayed during the Emperor's stay was the call for contributions of

men and money, a necessity that as soon as the promises had been made

assumed a legal, official form and became unavoidable.

With the enemy's approach to Moscow, the Moscovites' view of their

situation did not grow more serious but on the contrary became even more

frivolous, as always happens with people who see a great danger

approaching. At the approach of danger there are always two voices that

speak with equal power in the human soul: one very reasonably tells a

man to consider the nature of the danger and the means of escaping it;

the other, still more reasonably, says that it is too depressing and

painful to think of the danger, since it is not in man's power to

foresee everything and avert the general course of events, and it is

therefore better to disregard what is painful till it comes, and to

think about what is pleasant. In solitude a man generally listens to the

first voice, but in society to the second. So it was now with the

inhabitants of Moscow. It was long since people had been as gay in

Moscow as that year.

Rostopchin's broadsheets, headed by woodcuts of a drink shop, a potman,

and a Moscow burgher called Karpushka Chigirin, "who--having been a

militiaman and having had rather too much at the pub--heard that

Napoleon wished to come to Moscow, grew angry, abused the French in very

bad language, came out of the drink shop, and, under the sign of the

eagle, began to address the assembled people," were read and discussed,

together with the latest of Vasili Lvovich Pushkin's bouts rimes.

In the corner room at the club, members gathered to read these

broadsheets, and some liked the way Karpushka jeered at the French,

saying: "They will swell up with Russian cabbage, burst with our

buckwheat porridge, and choke themselves with cabbage soup. They are all

dwarfs and one peasant woman will toss three of them with a hayfork."

Others did not like that tone and said it was stupid and vulgar. It was

said that Rostopchin had expelled all Frenchmen and even all foreigners

from Moscow, and that there had been some spies and agents of Napoleon

among them; but this was told chiefly to introduce Rostopchin's witty

remark on that occasion. The foreigners were deported to Nizhni by boat,

and Rostopchin had said to them in French: "Rentrez en vousmemes; entrez

dans la barque, et n'en faites pas une barque de Charon." \* There was

talk of all the government offices having been already removed from

Moscow, and to this Shinshin's witticism was added--that for that alone

Moscow ought to be grateful to Napoleon. It was said that Mamonov's

regiment would cost him eight hundred thousand rubles, and that Bezukhov

had spent even more on his, but that the best thing about Bezukhov's

action was that he himself was going to don a uniform and ride at the

head of his regiment without charging anything for the show.

\* "Think it over; get into the barque, and take care not to make it a

barque of Charon."

"You don't spare anyone," said Julie Drubetskaya as she collected and

pressed together a bunch of raveled lint with her thin, beringed

fingers.

Julie was preparing to leave Moscow next day and was giving a farewell

soiree.

"Bezukhov est ridicule, but he is so kind and good-natured. What

pleasure is there to be so caustique?"

"A forfeit!" cried a young man in militia uniform whom Julie called "mon

chevalier," and who was going with her to Nizhni.

In Julie's set, as in many other circles in Moscow, it had been agreed

that they would speak nothing but Russian and that those who made a slip

and spoke French should pay fines to the Committee of Voluntary

Contributions.

"Another forfeit for a Gallicism," said a Russian writer who was

present. "'What pleasure is there to be' is not Russian!"

"You spare no one," continued Julie to the young man without heeding the

author's remark.

"For caustique--I am guilty and will pay, and I am prepared to pay again

for the pleasure of telling you the truth. For Gallicisms I won't be

responsible," she remarked, turning to the author: "I have neither the

money nor the time, like Prince Galitsyn, to engage a master to teach me

Russian!"

"Ah, here he is!" she added. "Quand on... No, no," she said to the

militia officer, "you won't catch me. Speak of the sun and you see its

rays!" and she smiled amiably at Pierre. "We were just talking of you,"

she said with the facility in lying natural to a society woman. "We were

saying that your regiment would be sure to be better than Mamonov's."

"Oh, don't talk to me of my regiment," replied Pierre, kissing his

hostess' hand and taking a seat beside her. "I am so sick of it."

"You will, of course, command it yourself?" said Julie, directing a sly,

sarcastic glance toward the militia officer.

The latter in Pierre's presence had ceased to be caustic, and his face

expressed perplexity as to what Julie's smile might mean. In spite of

his absent-mindedness and good nature, Pierre's personality immediately

checked any attempt to ridicule him to his face.

"No," said Pierre, with a laughing glance at his big, stout body. "I

should make too good a target for the French, besides I am afraid I

should hardly be able to climb onto a horse."

Among those whom Julie's guests happened to choose to gossip about were

the Rostovs.

"I hear that their affairs are in a very bad way," said Julie. "And he

is so unreasonable, the count himself I mean. The Razumovskis wanted to

buy his house and his estate near Moscow, but it drags on and on. He

asks too much."

"No, I think the sale will come off in a few days," said someone.

"Though it is madness to buy anything in Moscow now."

"Why?" asked Julie. "You don't think Moscow is in danger?"

"Then why are you leaving?"

"I? What a question! I am going because... well, because everyone is

going: and besides--I am not Joan of Arc or an Amazon."

"Well, of course, of course! Let me have some more strips of linen."

"If he manages the business properly he will be able to pay off all his

debts," said the militia officer, speaking of Rostov.

"A kindly old man but not up to much. And why do they stay on so long in

Moscow? They meant to leave for the country long ago. Natalie is quite

well again now, isn't she?" Julie asked Pierre with a knowing smile.

"They are waiting for their younger son," Pierre replied. "He joined

Obolenski's Cossacks and went to Belaya Tserkov where the regiment is

being formed. But now they have had him transferred to my regiment and

are expecting him every day. The count wanted to leave long ago, but the

countess won't on any account leave Moscow till her son returns."

"I met them the day before yesterday at the Arkharovs'. Natalie has

recovered her looks and is brighter. She sang a song. How easily some

people get over everything!"

"Get over what?" inquired Pierre, looking displeased.

Julie smiled.

"You know, Count, such knights as you are only found in Madame de

Souza's novels."

"What knights? What do you mean?" demanded Pierre, blushing.

"Oh, come, my dear count! C'est la fable de tout Moscou. Je vous admire,

ma parole d'honneur!" \*

\* "It is the talk of all Moscow. My word, I admire you!"

"Forfeit, forfeit!" cried the militia officer.

"All right, one can't talk--how tiresome!"

"What is 'the talk of all Moscow'?" Pierre asked angrily, rising to his

feet.

"Come now, Count, you know!"

"I don't know anything about it," said Pierre.

"I know you were friendly with Natalie, and so... but I was always more

friendly with Vera--that dear Vera."

"No, madame!" Pierre continued in a tone of displeasure, "I have not

taken on myself the role of Natalie Rostova's knight at all, and have

not been to their house for nearly a month. But I cannot understand the

cruelty..."

"Qui s'excuse s'accuse," \* said Julie, smiling and waving the lint

triumphantly, and to have the last word she promptly changed the

subject. "Do you know what I heard today? Poor Mary Bolkonskaya arrived

in Moscow yesterday. Do you know that she has lost her father?"

\* "Who excuses himself, accuses himself."

"Really? Where is she? I should like very much to see her," said Pierre.

"I spent the evening with her yesterday. She is going to their estate

near Moscow either today or tomorrow morning, with her nephew."

"Well, and how is she?" asked Pierre.

"She is well, but sad. But do you know who rescued her? It is quite a

romance. Nicholas Rostov! She was surrounded, and they wanted to kill

her and had wounded some of her people. He rushed in and saved her...."

"Another romance," said the militia officer. "Really, this general

flight has been arranged to get all the old maids married off. Catiche

is one and Princess Bolkonskaya another."

"Do you know, I really believe she is un petit peu amoureuse du jeune

homme." \*

\* "A little bit in love with the young man."

"Forfeit, forfeit, forfeit!"

"But how could one say that in Russian?"

CHAPTER XVIII

When Pierre returned home he was handed two of Rostopchin's broadsheets

that had been brought that day.

The first declared that the report that Count Rostopchin had forbidden

people to leave Moscow was false; on the contrary he was glad that

ladies and tradesmen's wives were leaving the city. "There will be less

panic and less gossip," ran the broadsheet "but I will stake my life on

it that scoundrel will not enter Moscow." These words showed Pierre

clearly for the first time that the French would enter Moscow. The

second broadsheet stated that our headquarters were at Vyazma, that

Count Wittgenstein had defeated the French, but that as many of the

inhabitants of Moscow wished to be armed, weapons were ready for them at

the arsenal: sabers, pistols, and muskets which could be had at a low

price. The tone of the proclamation was not as jocose as in the former

Chigirin talks. Pierre pondered over these broadsheets. Evidently the

terrible stormcloud he had desired with the whole strength of his soul

but which yet aroused involuntary horror in him was drawing near.

"Shall I join the army and enter the service, or wait?" he asked himself

for the hundredth time. He took a pack of cards that lay on the table

and began to lay them out for a game of patience.

"If this patience comes out," he said to himself after shuffling the

cards, holding them in his hand, and lifting his head, "if it comes out,

it means... what does it mean?"

He had not decided what it should mean when he heard the voice of the

eldest princess at the door asking whether she might come in.

"Then it will mean that I must go to the army," said Pierre to himself.

"Come in, come in!" he added to the princess.

Only the eldest princess, the one with the stony face and long waist,

was still living in Pierre's house. The two younger ones had both

married.

"Excuse my coming to you, cousin," she said in a reproachful and

agitated voice. "You know some decision must be come to. What is going

to happen? Everyone has left Moscow and the people are rioting. How is

it that we are staying on?"

"On the contrary, things seem satisfactory, ma cousine," said Pierre in

the bantering tone he habitually adopted toward her, always feeling

uncomfortable in the role of her benefactor.

"Satisfactory, indeed! Very satisfactory! Barbara Ivanovna told me today

how our troops are distinguishing themselves. It certainly does them

credit! And the people too are quite mutinous--they no longer obey, even

my maid has taken to being rude. At this rate they will soon begin

beating us. One can't walk in the streets. But, above all, the French

will be here any day now, so what are we waiting for? I ask just one

thing of you, cousin," she went on, "arrange for me to be taken to

Petersburg. Whatever I may be, I can't live under Bonaparte's rule."

"Oh, come, ma cousine! Where do you get your information from? On the

contrary..."

"I won't submit to your Napoleon! Others may if they please.... If you

don't want to do this..."

"But I will, I'll give the order at once."

The princess was apparently vexed at not having anyone to be angry with.

Muttering to herself, she sat down on a chair.

"But you have been misinformed," said Pierre. "Everything is quiet in

the city and there is not the slightest danger. See! I've just been

reading..." He showed her the broadsheet. "Count Rostopchin writes that

he will stake his life on it that the enemy will not enter Moscow."

"Oh, that count of yours!" said the princess malevolently. "He is a

hypocrite, a rascal who has himself roused the people to riot. Didn't he

write in those idiotic broadsheets that anyone, 'whoever it might be,

should be dragged to the lockup by his hair'? (How silly!) 'And honor

and glory to whoever captures him,' he says. This is what his cajolery

has brought us to! Barbara Ivanovna told me the mob near killed her

because she said something in French."

"Oh, but it's so... You take everything so to heart," said Pierre, and

began laying out his cards for patience.

Although that patience did come out, Pierre did not join the army, but

remained in deserted Moscow ever in the same state of agitation,

irresolution, and alarm, yet at the same time joyfully expecting

something terrible.

Next day toward evening the princess set off, and Pierre's head steward

came to inform him that the money needed for the equipment of his

regiment could not be found without selling one of the estates. In

general the head steward made out to Pierre that his project of raising

a regiment would ruin him. Pierre listened to him, scarcely able to

repress a smile.

"Well then, sell it," said he. "What's to be done? I can't draw back

now!"

The worse everything became, especially his own affairs, the better was

Pierre pleased and the more evident was it that the catastrophe he

expected was approaching. Hardly anyone he knew was left in town. Julie

had gone, and so had Princess Mary. Of his intimate friends only the

Rostovs remained, but he did not go to see them.

To distract his thoughts he drove that day to the village of Vorontsovo

to see the great balloon Leppich was constructing to destroy the foe,

and a trial balloon that was to go up next day. The balloon was not yet

ready, but Pierre learned that it was being constructed by the Emperor's

desire. The Emperor had written to Count Rostopchin as follows:

As soon as Leppich is ready, get together a crew of reliable and

intelligent men for his car and send a courier to General Kutuzov to let

him know. I have informed him of the matter.

Please impress upon Leppich to be very careful where he descends for the

first time, that he may not make a mistake and fall into the enemy's

hands. It is essential for him to combine his movements with those of

the commander-in-chief.

On his way home from Vorontsovo, as he was passing the Bolotnoe Place

Pierre, seeing a large crowd round the Lobnoe Place, stopped and got out

of his trap. A French cook accused of being a spy was being flogged. The

flogging was only just over, and the executioner was releasing from the

flogging bench a stout man with red whiskers, in blue stockings and a

green jacket, who was moaning piteously. Another criminal, thin and

pale, stood near. Judging by their faces they were both Frenchmen. With

a frightened and suffering look resembling that on the thin Frenchman's

face, Pierre pushed his way in through the crowd.

"What is it? Who is it? What is it for?" he kept asking.

But the attention of the crowd--officials, burghers, shopkeepers,

peasants, and women in cloaks and in pelisses--was so eagerly centered

on what was passing in Lobnoe Place that no one answered him. The stout

man rose, frowned, shrugged his shoulders, and evidently trying to

appear firm began to pull on his jacket without looking about him, but

suddenly his lips trembled and he began to cry, in the way full-blooded

grown-up men cry, though angry with himself for doing so. In the crowd

people began talking loudly, to stifle their feelings of pity as it

seemed to Pierre.

"He's cook to some prince."

"Eh, mounseer, Russian sauce seems to be sour to a Frenchman... sets his

teeth on edge!" said a wrinkled clerk who was standing behind Pierre,

when the Frenchman began to cry.

The clerk glanced round, evidently hoping that his joke would be

appreciated. Some people began to laugh, others continued to watch in

dismay the executioner who was undressing the other man.

Pierre choked, his face puckered, and he turned hastily away, went back

to his trap muttering something to himself as he went, and took his

seat. As they drove along he shuddered and exclaimed several times so

audibly that the coachman asked him:

"What is your pleasure?"

"Where are you going?" shouted Pierre to the man, who was driving to

Lubyanka Street.

"To the Governor's, as you ordered," answered the coachman.

"Fool! Idiot!" shouted Pierre, abusing his coachman--a thing he rarely

did. "Home, I told you! And drive faster, blockhead!" "I must get away

this very day," he murmured to himself.

At the sight of the tortured Frenchman and the crowd surrounding the

Lobnoe Place, Pierre had so definitely made up his mind that he could no

longer remain in Moscow and would leave for the army that very day that

it seemed to him that either he had told the coachman this or that the

man ought to have known it for himself.

On reaching home Pierre gave orders to Evstafey--his head coachman who

knew everything, could do anything, and was known to all Moscow--that he

would leave that night for the army at Mozhaysk, and that his saddle

horses should be sent there. This could not all be arranged that day, so

on Evstafey's representation Pierre had to put off his departure till

next day to allow time for the relay horses to be sent on in advance.

On the twenty-fourth the weather cleared up after a spell of rain, and

after dinner Pierre left Moscow. When changing horses that night in

Perkhushkovo, he learned that there had been a great battle that

evening. (This was the battle of Shevardino.) He was told that there in

Perkhushkovo the earth trembled from the firing, but nobody could answer

his questions as to who had won. At dawn next day Pierre was approaching

Mozhaysk.

Every house in Mozhaysk had soldiers quartered in it, and at the hostel

where Pierre was met by his groom and coachman there was no room to be

had. It was full of officers.

Everywhere in Mozhaysk and beyond it, troops were stationed or on the

march. Cossacks, foot and horse soldiers, wagons, caissons, and cannon

were everywhere. Pierre pushed forward as fast as he could, and the

farther he left Moscow behind and the deeper he plunged into that sea of

troops the more was he overcome by restless agitation and a new and

joyful feeling he had not experienced before. It was a feeling akin to

what he had felt at the Sloboda Palace during the Emperor's visit--a

sense of the necessity of undertaking something and sacrificing

something. He now experienced a glad consciousness that everything that

constitutes men's happiness--the comforts of life, wealth, even life

itself--is rubbish it is pleasant to throw away, compared with

something... With what? Pierre could not say, and he did not try to

determine for whom and for what he felt such particular delight in

sacrificing everything. He was not occupied with the question of what to

sacrifice for; the fact of sacrificing in itself afforded him a new and

joyous sensation.

CHAPTER XIX

On the twenty-fourth of August the battle of the Shevardino Redoubt was

fought, on the twenty-fifth not a shot was fired by either side, and on

the twenty-sixth the battle of Borodino itself took place.

Why and how were the battles of Shevardino and Borodino given and

accepted? Why was the battle of Borodino fought? There was not the least

sense in it for either the French or the Russians. Its immediate result

for the Russians was, and was bound to be, that we were brought nearer

to the destruction of Moscow--which we feared more than anything in the

world; and for the French its immediate result was that they were

brought nearer to the destruction of their whole army--which they feared

more than anything in the world. What the result must be was quite

obvious, and yet Napoleon offered and Kutuzov accepted that battle.

If the commanders had been guided by reason, it would seem that it must

have been obvious to Napoleon that by advancing thirteen hundred miles

and giving battle with a probability of losing a quarter of his army, he

was advancing to certain destruction, and it must have been equally

clear to Kutuzov that by accepting battle and risking the loss of a

quarter of his army he would certainly lose Moscow. For Kutuzov this was

mathematically clear, as it is that if when playing draughts I have one

man less and go on exchanging, I shall certainly lose, and therefore

should not exchange. When my opponent has sixteen men and I have

fourteen, I am only one eighth weaker than he, but when I have exchanged

thirteen more men he will be three times as strong as I am.

Before the battle of Borodino our strength in proportion to the French

was about as five to six, but after that battle it was little more than

one to two: previously we had a hundred thousand against a hundred and

twenty thousand; afterwards little more than fifty thousand against a

hundred thousand. Yet the shrewd and experienced Kutuzov accepted the

battle, while Napoleon, who was said to be a commander of genius, gave

it, losing a quarter of his army and lengthening his lines of

communication still more. If it is said that he expected to end the

campaign by occupying Moscow as he had ended a previous campaign by

occupying Vienna, there is much evidence to the contrary. Napoleon's

historians themselves tell us that from Smolensk onwards he wished to

stop, knew the danger of his extended position, and knew that the

occupation of Moscow would not be the end of the campaign, for he had

seen at Smolensk the state in which Russian towns were left to him, and

had not received a single reply to his repeated announcements of his

wish to negotiate.

In giving and accepting battle at Borodino, Kutuzov acted involuntarily

and irrationally. But later on, to fit what had occurred, the historians

provided cunningly devised evidence of the foresight and genius of the

generals who, of all the blind tools of history were the most enslaved

and involuntary.

The ancients have left us model heroic poems in which the heroes furnish

the whole interest of the story, and we are still unable to accustom

ourselves to the fact that for our epoch histories of that kind are

meaningless.

On the other question, how the battle of Borodino and the preceding

battle of Shevardino were fought, there also exists a definite and well-

known, but quite false, conception. All the historians describe the

affair as follows:

The Russian army, they say, in its retreat from Smolensk sought out for

itself the best position for a general engagement and found such a

position at Borodino.

The Russians, they say, fortified this position in advance on the left

of the highroad (from Moscow to Smolensk) and almost at a right angle to

it, from Borodino to Utitsa, at the very place where the battle was

fought.

In front of this position, they say, a fortified outpost was set up on

the Shevardino mound to observe the enemy. On the twenty-fourth, we are

told, Napoleon attacked this advanced post and took it, and, on the

twenty-sixth, attacked the whole Russian army, which was in position on

the field of Borodino.

So the histories say, and it is all quite wrong, as anyone who cares to

look into the matter can easily convince himself.

The Russians did not seek out the best position but, on the contrary,

during the retreat passed many positions better than Borodino. They did

not stop at any one of these positions because Kutuzov did not wish to

occupy a position he had not himself chosen, because the popular demand

for a battle had not yet expressed itself strongly enough, and because

Miloradovich had not yet arrived with the militia, and for many other

reasons. The fact is that other positions they had passed were stronger,

and that the position at Borodino (the one where the battle was fought),

far from being strong, was no more a position than any other spot one

might find in the Russian Empire by sticking a pin into the map at

hazard.

Not only did the Russians not fortify the position on the field of

Borodino to the left of, and at a right angle to, the highroad (that is,

the position on which the battle took place), but never till the twenty-

fifth of August, 1812, did they think that a battle might be fought

there. This was shown first by the fact that there were no entrenchments

there by the twenty fifth and that those begun on the twenty-fifth and

twenty-sixth were not completed, and secondly, by the position of the

Shevardino Redoubt. That redoubt was quite senseless in front of the

position where the battle was accepted. Why was it more strongly

fortified than any other post? And why were all efforts exhausted and

six thousand men sacrificed to defend it till late at night on the

twenty-fourth? A Cossack patrol would have sufficed to observe the

enemy. Thirdly, as proof that the position on which the battle was

fought had not been foreseen and that the Shevardino Redoubt was not an

advanced post of that position, we have the fact that up to the twenty-

fifth, Barclay de Tolly and Bagration were convinced that the Shevardino

Redoubt was the left flank of the position, and that Kutuzov himself in

his report, written in hot haste after the battle, speaks of the

Shevardino Redoubt as the left flank of the position. It was much later,

when reports on the battle of Borodino were written at leisure, that the

incorrect and extraordinary statement was invented (probably to justify

the mistakes of a commander-in-chief who had to be represented as

infallible) that the Shevardino Redoubt was an advanced post--whereas in

reality it was simply a fortified point on the left flank--and that the

battle of Borodino was fought by us on an entrenched position previously

selected, where as it was fought on a quite unexpected spot which was

almost unentrenched.

The case was evidently this: a position was selected along the river

Kolocha--which crosses the highroad not at a right angle but at an acute

angle--so that the left flank was at Shevardino, the right flank near

the village of Novoe, and the center at Borodino at the confluence of

the rivers Kolocha and Voyna.

To anyone who looks at the field of Borodino without thinking of how the

battle was actually fought, this position, protected by the river

Kolocha, presents itself as obvious for an army whose object was to

prevent an enemy from advancing along the Smolensk road to Moscow.

Napoleon, riding to Valuevo on the twenty-fourth, did not see (as the

history books say he did) the position of the Russians from Utitsa to

Borodino (he could not have seen that position because it did not

exist), nor did he see an advanced post of the Russian army, but while

pursuing the Russian rearguard he came upon the left flank of the

Russian position--at the Shevardino Redoubt--and unexpectedly for the

Russians moved his army across the Kolocha. And the Russians, not having

time to begin a general engagement, withdrew their left wing from the

position they had intended to occupy and took up a new position which

had not been foreseen and was not fortified. By crossing to the other

side of the Kolocha to the left of the highroad, Napoleon shifted the

whole forthcoming battle from right to left (looking from the Russian

side) and transferred it to the plain between Utitsa, Semenovsk, and

Borodino--a plain no more advantageous as a position than any other

plain in Russia--and there the whole battle of the twenty-sixth of

August took place.

Had Napoleon not ridden out on the evening of the twenty-fourth to the

Kolocha, and had he not then ordered an immediate attack on the redoubt

but had begun the attack next morning, no one would have doubted that

the Shevardino Redoubt was the left flank of our position, and the

battle would have taken place where we expected it. In that case we

should probably have defended the Shevardino Redoubt--our left flank--

still more obstinately. We should have attacked Napoleon in the center

or on the right, and the engagement would have taken place on the

twenty-fifth, in the position we intended and had fortified. But as the

attack on our left flank took place in the evening after the retreat of

our rear guard (that is, immediately after the fight at Gridneva), and

as the Russian commanders did not wish, or were not in time, to begin a

general engagement then on the evening of the twenty-fourth, the first

and chief action of the battle of Borodino was already lost on the

twenty-fourth, and obviously led to the loss of the one fought on the

twenty-sixth.

After the loss of the Shevardino Redoubt, we found ourselves on the

morning of the twenty-fifth without a position for our left flank, and

were forced to bend it back and hastily entrench it where it chanced to

be.

Not only was the Russian army on the twenty-sixth defended by weak,

unfinished entrenchments, but the disadvantage of that position was

increased by the fact that the Russian commanders--not having fully

realized what had happened, namely the loss of our position on the left

flank and the shifting of the whole field of the forthcoming battle from

right to left--maintained their extended position from the village of

Novoe to Utitsa, and consequently had to move their forces from right to

left during the battle. So it happened that throughout the whole battle

the Russians opposed the entire French army launched against our left

flank with but half as many men. (Poniatowski's action against Utitsa,

and Uvarov's on the right flank against the French, were actions

distinct from the main course of the battle.) So the battle of Borodino

did not take place at all as (in an effort to conceal our commanders'

mistakes even at the cost of diminishing the glory due to the Russian

army and people) it has been described. The battle of Borodino was not

fought on a chosen and entrenched position with forces only slightly

weaker than those of the enemy, but, as a result of the loss of the

Shevardino Redoubt, the Russians fought the battle of Borodino on an

open and almost unentrenched position, with forces only half as numerous

as the French; that is to say, under conditions in which it was not

merely unthinkable to fight for ten hours and secure an indecisive

result, but unthinkable to keep an army even from complete

disintegration and flight.

CHAPTER XX

On the morning of the twenty-fifth Pierre was leaving Mozhaysk. At the

descent of the high steep hill, down which a winding road led out of the

town past the cathedral on the right, where a service was being held and

the bells were ringing, Pierre got out of his vehicle and proceeded on

foot. Behind him a cavalry regiment was coming down the hill preceded by

its singers. Coming up toward him was a train of carts carrying men who

had been wounded in the engagement the day before. The peasant drivers,

shouting and lashing their horses, kept crossing from side to side. The

carts, in each of which three or four wounded soldiers were lying or

sitting, jolted over the stones that had been thrown on the steep

incline to make it something like a road. The wounded, bandaged with

rags, with pale cheeks, compressed lips, and knitted brows, held on to

the sides of the carts as they were jolted against one another. Almost

all of them stared with naive, childlike curiosity at Pierre's white hat

and green swallow-tail coat.

Pierre's coachman shouted angrily at the convoy of wounded to keep to

one side of the road. The cavalry regiment, as it descended the hill

with its singers, surrounded Pierre's carriage and blocked the road.

Pierre stopped, being pressed against the side of the cutting in which

the road ran. The sunshine from behind the hill did not penetrate into

the cutting and there it was cold and damp, but above Pierre's head was

the bright August sunshine and the bells sounded merrily. One of the

carts with wounded stopped by the side of the road close to Pierre. The

driver in his bast shoes ran panting up to it, placed a stone under one

of its tireless hind wheels, and began arranging the breech-band on his

little horse.

One of the wounded, an old soldier with a bandaged arm who was following

the cart on foot, caught hold of it with his sound hand and turned to

look at Pierre.

"I say, fellow countryman! Will they set us down here or take us on to

Moscow?" he asked.

Pierre was so deep in thought that he did not hear the question. He was

looking now at the cavalry regiment that had met the convoy of wounded,

now at the cart by which he was standing, in which two wounded men were

sitting and one was lying. One of those sitting up in the cart had

probably been wounded in the cheek. His whole head was wrapped in rags

and one cheek was swollen to the size of a baby's head. His nose and

mouth were twisted to one side. This soldier was looking at the

cathedral and crossing himself. Another, a young lad, a fair-haired

recruit as white as though there was no blood in his thin face, looked

at Pierre kindly, with a fixed smile. The third lay prone so that his

face was not visible. The cavalry singers were passing close by:

Ah lost, quite lost... is my head so keen, Living in a foreign land.

they sang their soldiers' dance song.

As if responding to them but with a different sort of merriment, the

metallic sound of the bells reverberated high above and the hot rays of

the sun bathed the top of the opposite slope with yet another sort of

merriment. But beneath the slope, by the cart with the wounded near the

panting little nag where Pierre stood, it was damp, somber, and sad.

The soldier with the swollen cheek looked angrily at the cavalry

singers.

"Oh, the coxcombs!" he muttered reproachfully.

"It's not the soldiers only, but I've seen peasants today, too.... The

peasants--even they have to go," said the soldier behind the cart,

addressing Pierre with a sad smile. "No distinctions made nowadays....

They want the whole nation to fall on them--in a word, it's Moscow! They

want to make an end of it."

In spite of the obscurity of the soldier's words Pierre understood what

he wanted to say and nodded approval.

The road was clear again; Pierre descended the hill and drove on.

He kept looking to either side of the road for familiar faces, but only

saw everywhere the unfamiliar faces of various military men of different

branches of the service, who all looked with astonishment at his white

hat and green tail coat.

Having gone nearly three miles he at last met an acquaintance and

eagerly addressed him. This was one of the head army doctors. He was

driving toward Pierre in a covered gig, sitting beside a young surgeon,

and on recognizing Pierre he told the Cossack who occupied the driver's

seat to pull up.

"Count! Your excellency, how come you to be here?" asked the doctor.

"Well, you know, I wanted to see..."

"Yes, yes, there will be something to see...."

Pierre got out and talked to the doctor, explaining his intention of

taking part in a battle.

The doctor advised him to apply direct to Kutuzov.

"Why should you be God knows where out of sight, during the battle?" he

said, exchanging glances with his young companion. "Anyhow his Serene

Highness knows you and will receive you graciously. That's what you must

do."

The doctor seemed tired and in a hurry.

"You think so?... Ah, I also wanted to ask you where our position is

exactly?" said Pierre.

"The position?" repeated the doctor. "Well, that's not my line. Drive

past Tatarinova, a lot of digging is going on there. Go up the hillock

and you'll see."

"Can one see from there?... If you would..."

But the doctor interrupted him and moved toward his gig.

"I would go with you but on my honor I'm up to here"--and he pointed to

his throat. "I'm galloping to the commander of the corps. How do matters

stand?... You know, Count, there'll be a battle tomorrow. Out of an army

of a hundred thousand we must expect at least twenty thousand wounded,

and we haven't stretchers, or bunks, or dressers, or doctors enough for

six thousand. We have ten thousand carts, but we need other things as

well--we must manage as best we can!"

The strange thought that of the thousands of men, young and old, who had

stared with merry surprise at his hat (perhaps the very men he had

noticed), twenty thousand were inevitably doomed to wounds and death

amazed Pierre.

"They may die tomorrow; why are they thinking of anything but death?"

And by some latent sequence of thought the descent of the Mozhaysk hill,

the carts with the wounded, the ringing bells, the slanting rays of the

sun, and the songs of the cavalrymen vividly recurred to his mind.

"The cavalry ride to battle and meet the wounded and do not for a moment

think of what awaits them, but pass by, winking at the wounded. Yet from

among these men twenty thousand are doomed to die, and they wonder at my

hat! Strange!" thought Pierre, continuing his way to Tatarinova.

In front of a landowner's house to the left of the road stood carriages,

wagons, and crowds of orderlies and sentinels. The commander-in-chief

was putting up there, but just when Pierre arrived he was not in and

hardly any of the staff were there--they had gone to the church service.

Pierre drove on toward Gorki.

When he had ascended the hill and reached the little village street, he

saw for the first time peasant militiamen in their white shirts and with

crosses on their caps, who, talking and laughing loudly, animated and

perspiring, were at work on a huge knoll overgrown with grass to the

right of the road.

Some of them were digging, others were wheeling barrowloads of earth

along planks, while others stood about doing nothing.

Two officers were standing on the knoll, directing the men. On seeing

these peasants, who were evidently still amused by the novelty of their

position as soldiers, Pierre once more thought of the wounded men at

Mozhaysk and understood what the soldier had meant when he said: "They

want the whole nation to fall on them." The sight of these bearded

peasants at work on the battlefield, with their queer, clumsy boots and

perspiring necks, and their shirts opening from the left toward the

middle, unfastened, exposing their sunburned collarbones, impressed

Pierre more strongly with the solemnity and importance of the moment

than anything he had yet seen or heard.

CHAPTER XXI

Pierre stepped out of his carriage and, passing the toiling militiamen,

ascended the knoll from which, according to the doctor, the battlefield

could be seen.

It was about eleven o'clock. The sun shone somewhat to the left and

behind him and brightly lit up the enormous panorama which, rising like

an amphitheater, extended before him in the clear rarefied atmosphere.

From above on the left, bisecting that amphitheater, wound the Smolensk

highroad, passing through a village with a white church some five

hundred paces in front of the knoll and below it. This was Borodino.

Below the village the road crossed the river by a bridge and, winding

down and up, rose higher and higher to the village of Valuevo visible

about four miles away, where Napoleon was then stationed. Beyond Valuevo

the road disappeared into a yellowing forest on the horizon. Far in the

distance in that birch and fir forest to the right of the road, the

cross and belfry of the Kolocha Monastery gleamed in the sun. Here and

there over the whole of that blue expanse, to right and left of the

forest and the road, smoking campfires could be seen and indefinite

masses of troops--ours and the enemy's. The ground to the right--along

the course of the Kolocha and Moskva rivers--was broken and hilly.

Between the hollows the villages of Bezubova and Zakharino showed in the

distance. On the left the ground was more level; there were fields of

grain, and the smoking ruins of Semenovsk, which had been burned down,

could be seen.

All that Pierre saw was so indefinite that neither the left nor the

right side of the field fully satisfied his expectations. Nowhere could

he see the battlefield he had expected to find, but only fields,

meadows, troops, woods, the smoke of campfires, villages, mounds, and

streams; and try as he would he could descry no military "position" in

this place which teemed with life, nor could he even distinguish our

troops from the enemy's.

"I must ask someone who knows," he thought, and addressed an officer who

was looking with curiosity at his huge unmilitary figure.

"May I ask you," said Pierre, "what village that is in front?"

"Burdino, isn't it?" said the officer, turning to his companion.

"Borodino," the other corrected him.

The officer, evidently glad of an opportunity for a talk, moved up to

Pierre.

"Are those our men there?" Pierre inquired.

"Yes, and there, further on, are the French," said the officer. "There

they are, there... you can see them."

"Where? Where?" asked Pierre.

"One can see them with the naked eye... Why, there!"

The officer pointed with his hand to the smoke visible on the left

beyond the river, and the same stern and serious expression that Pierre

had noticed on many of the faces he had met came into his face.

"Ah, those are the French! And over there?..." Pierre pointed to a knoll

on the left, near which some troops could be seen.

"Those are ours."

"Ah, ours! And there?..." Pierre pointed to another knoll in the

distance with a big tree on it, near a village that lay in a hollow

where also some campfires were smoking and something black was visible.

"That's his again," said the officer. (It was the Shevardino Redoubt.)

"It was ours yesterday, but now it is his."

"Then how about our position?"

"Our position?" replied the officer with a smile of satisfaction. "I can

tell you quite clearly, because I constructed nearly all our

entrenchments. There, you see? There's our center, at Borodino, just

there," and he pointed to the village in front of them with the white

church. "That's where one crosses the Kolocha. You see down there where

the rows of hay are lying in the hollow, there's the bridge. That's our

center. Our right flank is over there"--he pointed sharply to the right,

far away in the broken ground--"That's where the Moskva River is, and we

have thrown up three redoubts there, very strong ones. The left

flank..." here the officer paused. "Well, you see, that's difficult to

explain.... Yesterday our left flank was there at Shevardino, you see,

where the oak is, but now we have withdrawn our left wing--now it is

over there, do you see that village and the smoke? That's Semenovsk,

yes, there," he pointed to Raevski's knoll. "But the battle will hardly

be there. His having moved his troops there is only a ruse; he will

probably pass round to the right of the Moskva. But wherever it may be,

many a man will be missing tomorrow!" he remarked.

An elderly sergeant who had approached the officer while he was giving

these explanations had waited in silence for him to finish speaking, but

at this point, evidently not liking the officer's remark, interrupted

him.

"Gabions must be sent for," said he sternly.

The officer appeared abashed, as though he understood that one might

think of how many men would be missing tomorrow but ought not to speak

of it.

"Well, send number three company again," the officer replied hurriedly.

"And you, are you one of the doctors?"

"No, I've come on my own," answered Pierre, and he went down the hill

again, passing the militiamen.

"Oh, those damned fellows!" muttered the officer who followed him,

holding his nose as he ran past the men at work.

"There they are... bringing her, coming... There they are... They'll be

here in a minute..." voices were suddenly heard saying; and officers,

soldiers, and militiamen began running forward along the road.

A church procession was coming up the hill from Borodino. First along

the dusty road came the infantry in ranks, bareheaded and with arms

reversed. From behind them came the sound of church singing.

Soldiers and militiamen ran bareheaded past Pierre toward the

procession.

"They are bringing her, our Protectress!... The Iberian Mother of God!"

someone cried.

"The Smolensk Mother of God," another corrected him.

The militiamen, both those who had been in the village and those who had

been at work on the battery, threw down their spades and ran to meet the

church procession. Following the battalion that marched along the dusty

road came priests in their vestments--one little old man in a hood with

attendants and singers. Behind them soldiers and officers bore a large,

dark-faced icon with an embossed metal cover. This was the icon that had

been brought from Smolensk and had since accompanied the army. Behind,

before, and on both sides, crowds of militiamen with bared heads walked,

ran, and bowed to the ground.

At the summit of the hill they stopped with the icon; the men who had

been holding it up by the linen bands attached to it were relieved by

others, the chanters relit their censers, and service began. The hot

rays of the sun beat down vertically and a fresh soft wind played with

the hair of the bared heads and with the ribbons decorating the icon.

The singing did not sound loud under the open sky. An immense crowd of

bareheaded officers, soldiers, and militiamen surrounded the icon.

Behind the priest and a chanter stood the notabilities on a spot

reserved for them. A bald general with a St. George's Cross on his neck

stood just behind the priest's back, and without crossing himself (he

was evidently a German) patiently awaited the end of the service, which

he considered it necessary to hear to the end, probably to arouse the

patriotism of the Russian people. Another general stood in a martial

pose, crossing himself by shaking his hand in front of his chest while

looking about him. Standing among the crowd of peasants, Pierre

recognized several acquaintances among these notables, but did not look

at them--his whole attention was absorbed in watching the serious

expression on the faces of the crowd of soldiers and militiamen who were

all gazing eagerly at the icon. As soon as the tired chanters, who were

singing the service for the twentieth time that day, began lazily and

mechanically to sing: "Save from calamity Thy servants, O Mother of

God," and the priest and deacon chimed in: "For to Thee under God we all

flee as to an inviolable bulwark and protection," there again kindled in

all those faces the same expression of consciousness of the solemnity of

the impending moment that Pierre had seen on the faces at the foot of

the hill at Mozhaysk and momentarily on many and many faces he had met

that morning; and heads were bowed more frequently and hair tossed back,

and sighs and the sound men made as they crossed themselves were heard.

The crowd round the icon suddenly parted and pressed against Pierre.

Someone, a very important personage judging by the haste with which way

was made for him, was approaching the icon.

It was Kutuzov, who had been riding round the position and on his way

back to Tatarinova had stopped where the service was being held. Pierre

recognized him at once by his peculiar figure, which distinguished him

from everybody else.

With a long overcoat on his exceedingly stout, round-shouldered body,

with uncovered white head and puffy face showing the white ball of the

eye he had lost, Kutuzov walked with plunging, swaying gait into the

crowd and stopped behind the priest. He crossed himself with an

accustomed movement, bent till he touched the ground with his hand, and

bowed his white head with a deep sigh. Behind Kutuzov was Bennigsen and

the suite. Despite the presence of the commander-in-chief, who attracted

the attention of all the superior officers, the militiamen and soldiers

continued their prayers without looking at him.

When the service was over, Kutuzov stepped up to the icon, sank heavily

to his knees, bowed to the ground, and for a long time tried vainly to

rise, but could not do so on account of his weakness and weight. His

white head twitched with the effort. At last he rose, kissed the icon as

a child does with naively pouting lips, and again bowed till he touched

the ground with his hand. The other generals followed his example, then

the officers, and after them with excited faces, pressing on one

another, crowding, panting, and pushing, scrambled the soldiers and

militiamen.

CHAPTER XXII

Staggering amid the crush, Pierre looked about him.

"Count Peter Kirilovich! How did you get here?" said a voice.

Pierre looked round. Boris Drubetskoy, brushing his knees with his hand

(he had probably soiled them when he, too, had knelt before the icon),

came up to him smiling. Boris was elegantly dressed, with a slightly

martial touch appropriate to a campaign. He wore a long coat and like

Kutuzov had a whip slung across his shoulder.

Meanwhile Kutuzov had reached the village and seated himself in the

shade of the nearest house, on a bench which one Cossack had run to

fetch and another had hastily covered with a rug. An immense and

brilliant suite surrounded him.

The icon was carried further, accompanied by the throng. Pierre stopped

some thirty paces from Kutuzov, talking to Boris.

He explained his wish to be present at the battle and to see the

position.

"This is what you must do," said Boris. "I will do the honors of the

camp to you. You will see everything best from where Count Bennigsen

will be. I am in attendance on him, you know; I'll mention it to him.

But if you want to ride round the position, come along with us. We are

just going to the left flank. Then when we get back, do spend the night

with me and we'll arrange a game of cards. Of course you know Dmitri

Sergeevich? Those are his quarters," and he pointed to the third house

in the village of Gorki.

"But I should like to see the right flank. They say it's very strong,"

said Pierre. "I should like to start from the Moskva River and ride

round the whole position."

"Well, you can do that later, but the chief thing is the left flank."

"Yes, yes. But where is Prince Bolkonski's regiment? Can you point it

out to me?"

"Prince Andrew's? We shall pass it and I'll take you to him."

"What about the left flank?" asked Pierre

"To tell you the truth, between ourselves, God only knows what state our

left flank is in," said Boris confidentially lowering his voice. "It is

not at all what Count Bennigsen intended. He meant to fortify that knoll

quite differently, but..." Boris shrugged his shoulders, "his Serene

Highness would not have it, or someone persuaded him. You see..." but

Boris did not finish, for at that moment Kaysarov, Kutuzov's adjutant,

came up to Pierre. "Ah, Kaysarov!" said Boris, addressing him with an

unembarrassed smile, "I was just trying to explain our position to the

count. It is amazing how his Serene Highness could so foresee the

intentions of the French!"

"You mean the left flank?" asked Kaysarov.

"Yes, exactly; the left flank is now extremely strong."

Though Kutuzov had dismissed all unnecessary men from the staff, Boris

had contrived to remain at headquarters after the changes. He had

established himself with Count Bennigsen, who, like all on whom Boris

had been in attendance, considered young Prince Drubetskoy an invaluable

man.

In the higher command there were two sharply defined parties: Kutuzov's

party and that of Bennigsen, the chief of staff. Boris belonged to the

latter and no one else, while showing servile respect to Kutuzov, could

so create an impression that the old fellow was not much good and that

Bennigsen managed everything. Now the decisive moment of battle had come

when Kutuzov would be destroyed and the power pass to Bennigsen, or even

if Kutuzov won the battle it would be felt that everything was done by

Bennigsen. In any case many great rewards would have to be given for

tomorrow's action, and new men would come to the front. So Boris was

full of nervous vivacity all day.

After Kaysarov, others whom Pierre knew came up to him, and he had not

time to reply to all the questions about Moscow that were showered upon

him, or to listen to all that was told him. The faces all expressed

animation and apprehension, but it seemed to Pierre that the cause of

the excitement shown in some of these faces lay chiefly in questions of

personal success; his mind, however, was occupied by the different

expression he saw on other faces--an expression that spoke not of

personal matters but of the universal questions of life and death.

Kutuzov noticed Pierre's figure and the group gathered round him.

"Call him to me," said Kutuzov.

An adjutant told Pierre of his Serene Highness' wish, and Pierre went

toward Kutuzov's bench. But a militiaman got there before him. It was

Dolokhov.

"How did that fellow get here?" asked Pierre.

"He's a creature that wriggles in anywhere!" was the answer. "He has

been degraded, you know. Now he wants to bob up again. He's been

proposing some scheme or other and has crawled into the enemy's picket

line at night.... He's a brave fellow."

Pierre took off his hat and bowed respectfully to Kutuzov.

"I concluded that if I reported to your Serene Highness you might send

me away or say that you knew what I was reporting, but then I shouldn't

lose anything..." Dolokhov was saying.

"Yes, yes."

"But if I were right, I should be rendering a service to my Fatherland

for which I am ready to die."

"Yes, yes."

"And should your Serene Highness require a man who will not spare his

skin, please think of me.... Perhaps I may prove useful to your Serene

Highness."

"Yes... Yes..." Kutuzov repeated, his laughing eye narrowing more and

more as he looked at Pierre.

Just then Boris, with his courtierlike adroitness, stepped up to

Pierre's side near Kutuzov and in a most natural manner, without raising

his voice, said to Pierre, as though continuing an interrupted

conversation:

"The militia have put on clean white shirts to be ready to die. What

heroism, Count!"

Boris evidently said this to Pierre in order to be overheard by his

Serene Highness. He knew Kutuzov's attention would be caught by those

words, and so it was.

"What are you saying about the militia?" he asked Boris.

"Preparing for tomorrow, your Serene Highness--for death--they have put

on clean shirts."

"Ah... a wonderful, a matchless people!" said Kutuzov; and he closed his

eyes and swayed his head. "A matchless people!" he repeated with a sigh.

"So you want to smell gunpowder?" he said to Pierre. "Yes, it's a

pleasant smell. I have the honor to be one of your wife's adorers. Is

she well? My quarters are at your service."

And as often happens with old people, Kutuzov began looking about

absent-mindedly as if forgetting all he wanted to say or do.

Then, evidently remembering what he wanted, he beckoned to Andrew

Kaysarov, his adjutant's brother.

"Those verses... those verses of Marin's... how do they go, eh? Those he

wrote about Gerakov: 'Lectures for the corps inditing'... Recite them,

recite them!" said he, evidently preparing to laugh.

Kaysarov recited.... Kutuzov smilingly nodded his head to the rhythm of

the verses.

When Pierre had left Kutuzov, Dolokhov came up to him and took his hand.

"I am very glad to meet you here, Count," he said aloud, regardless of

the presence of strangers and in a particularly resolute and solemn

tone. "On the eve of a day when God alone knows who of us is fated to

survive, I am glad of this opportunity to tell you that I regret the

misunderstandings that occurred between us and should wish you not to

have any ill feeling for me. I beg you to forgive me."

Pierre looked at Dolokhov with a smile, not knowing what to say to him.

With tears in his eyes Dolokhov embraced Pierre and kissed him.

Boris said a few words to his general, and Count Bennigsen turned to

Pierre and proposed that he should ride with him along the line.

"It will interest you," said he.

"Yes, very much," replied Pierre.

Half an hour later Kutuzov left for Tatarinova, and Bennigsen and his

suite, with Pierre among them, set out on their ride along the line.

CHAPTER XXIII

From Gorki, Bennigsen descended the highroad to the bridge which, when

they had looked at it from the hill, the officer had pointed out as

being the center of our position and where rows of fragrant new-mown hay

lay by the riverside. They rode across that bridge into the village of

Borodino and thence turned to the left, passing an enormous number of

troops and guns, and came to a high knoll where militiamen were digging.

This was the redoubt, as yet unnamed, which afterwards became known as

the Raevski Redoubt, or the Knoll Battery, but Pierre paid no special

attention to it. He did not know that it would become more memorable to

him than any other spot on the plain of Borodino.

They then crossed the hollow to Semenovsk, where the soldiers were

dragging away the last logs from the huts and barns. Then they rode

downhill and uphill, across a ryefield trodden and beaten down as if by

hail, following a track freshly made by the artillery over the furrows

of the plowed land, and reached some fleches \* which were still being

dug.

\* A kind of entrenchment.

At the fleches Bennigsen stopped and began looking at the Shevardino

Redoubt opposite, which had been ours the day before and where several

horsemen could be descried. The officers said that either Napoleon or

Murat was there, and they all gazed eagerly at this little group of

horsemen. Pierre also looked at them, trying to guess which of the

scarcely discernible figures was Napoleon. At last those mounted men

rode away from the mound and disappeared.

Bennigsen spoke to a general who approached him, and began explaining

the whole position of our troops. Pierre listened to him, straining each

faculty to understand the essential points of the impending battle, but

was mortified to feel that his mental capacity was inadequate for the

task. He could make nothing of it. Bennigsen stopped speaking and,

noticing that Pierre was listening, suddenly said to him:

"I don't think this interests you?"

"On the contrary it's very interesting!" replied Pierre not quite

truthfully.

From the fleches they rode still farther to the left, along a road

winding through a thick, low-growing birch wood. In the middle of the

wood a brown hare with white feet sprang out and, scared by the tramp of

the many horses, grew so confused that it leaped along the road in front

of them for some time, arousing general attention and laughter, and only

when several voices shouted at it did it dart to one side and disappear

in the thicket. After going through the wood for about a mile and a half

they came out on a glade where troops of Tuchkov's corps were stationed

to defend the left flank.

Here, at the extreme left flank, Bennigsen talked a great deal and with

much heat, and, as it seemed to Pierre, gave orders of great military

importance. In front of Tuchkov's troops was some high ground not

occupied by troops. Bennigsen loudly criticized this mistake, saying

that it was madness to leave a height which commanded the country around

unoccupied and to place troops below it. Some of the generals expressed

the same opinion. One in particular declared with martial heat that they

were put there to be slaughtered. Bennigsen on his own authority ordered

the troops to occupy the high ground. This disposition on the left flank

increased Pierre's doubt of his own capacity to understand military

matters. Listening to Bennigsen and the generals criticizing the

position of the troops behind the hill, he quite understood them and

shared their opinion, but for that very reason he could not understand

how the man who put them there behind the hill could have made so gross

and palpable a blunder.

Pierre did not know that these troops were not, as Bennigsen supposed,

put there to defend the position, but were in a concealed position as an

ambush, that they should not be seen and might be able to strike an

approaching enemy unexpectedly. Bennigsen did not know this and moved

the troops forward according to his own ideas without mentioning the

matter to the commander-in-chief.

CHAPTER XXIV

On that bright evening of August 25, Prince Andrew lay leaning on his

elbow in a broken-down shed in the village of Knyazkovo at the further

end of his regiment's encampment. Through a gap in the broken wall he

could see, beside the wooden fence, a row of thirty year-old birches

with their lower branches lopped off, a field on which shocks of oats

were standing, and some bushes near which rose the smoke of campfires--

the soldiers' kitchens.

Narrow and burdensome and useless to anyone as his life now seemed to

him, Prince Andrew on the eve of battle felt agitated and irritable as

he had done seven years before at Austerlitz.

He had received and given the orders for next day's battle and had

nothing more to do. But his thoughts--the simplest, clearest, and

therefore most terrible thoughts--would give him no peace. He knew that

tomorrow's battle would be the most terrible of all he had taken part

in, and for the first time in his life the possibility of death

presented itself to him--not in relation to any worldly matter or with

reference to its effect on others, but simply in relation to himself, to

his own soul--vividly, plainly, terribly, and almost as a certainty. And

from the height of this perception all that had previously tormented and

preoccupied him suddenly became illumined by a cold white light without

shadows, without perspective, without distinction of outline. All life

appeared to him like magic-lantern pictures at which he had long been

gazing by artificial light through a glass. Now he suddenly saw those

badly daubed pictures in clear daylight and without a glass. "Yes, yes!

There they are, those false images that agitated, enraptured, and

tormented me," said he to himself, passing in review the principal

pictures of the magic lantern of life and regarding them now in the cold

white daylight of his clear perception of death. "There they are, those

rudely painted figures that once seemed splendid and mysterious. Glory,

the good of society, love of a woman, the Fatherland itself--how

important these pictures appeared to me, with what profound meaning they

seemed to be filled! And it is all so simple, pale, and crude in the

cold white light of this morning which I feel is dawning for me." The

three great sorrows of his life held his attention in particular: his

love for a woman, his father's death, and the French invasion which had

overrun half Russia. "Love... that little girl who seemed to me brimming

over with mystic forces! Yes, indeed, I loved her. I made romantic plans

of love and happiness with her! Oh, what a boy I was!" he said aloud

bitterly. "Ah me! I believed in some ideal love which was to keep her

faithful to me for the whole year of my absence! Like the gentle dove in

the fable she was to pine apart from me.... But it was much simpler

really.... It was all very simple and horrible."

"When my father built Bald Hills he thought the place was his: his land,

his air, his peasants. But Napoleon came and swept him aside,

unconscious of his existence, as he might brush a chip from his path,

and his Bald Hills and his whole life fell to pieces. Princess Mary says

it is a trial sent from above. What is the trial for, when he is not

here and will never return? He is not here! For whom then is the trial

intended? The Fatherland, the destruction of Moscow! And tomorrow I

shall be killed, perhaps not even by a Frenchman but by one of our own

men, by a soldier discharging a musket close to my ear as one of them

did yesterday, and the French will come and take me by head and heels

and fling me into a hole that I may not stink under their noses, and new

conditions of life will arise, which will seem quite ordinary to others

and about which I shall know nothing. I shall not exist..."

He looked at the row of birches shining in the sunshine, with their

motionless green and yellow foliage and white bark. "To die... to be

killed tomorrow... That I should not exist... That all this should still

be, but no me...."

And the birches with their light and shade, the curly clouds, the smoke

of the campfires, and all that was around him changed and seemed

terrible and menacing. A cold shiver ran down his spine. He rose

quickly, went out of the shed, and began to walk about.

After he had returned, voices were heard outside the shed. "Who's that?"

he cried.

The red-nosed Captain Timokhin, formerly Dolokhov's squadron commander,

but now from lack of officers a battalion commander, shyly entered the

shed followed by an adjutant and the regimental paymaster.

Prince Andrew rose hastily, listened to the business they had come

about, gave them some further instructions, and was about to dismiss

them when he heard a familiar, lisping, voice behind the shed.

"Devil take it!" said the voice of a man stumbling over something.

Prince Andrew looked out of the shed and saw Pierre, who had tripped

over a pole on the ground and had nearly fallen, coming his way. It was

unpleasant to Prince Andrew to meet people of his own set in general,

and Pierre especially, for he reminded him of all the painful moments of

his last visit to Moscow.

"You? What a surprise!" said he. "What brings you here? This is

unexpected!"

As he said this his eyes and face expressed more than coldness--they

expressed hostility, which Pierre noticed at once. He had approached the

shed full of animation, but on seeing Prince Andrew's face he felt

constrained and ill at ease.

"I have come... simply... you know... come... it interests me," said

Pierre, who had so often that day senselessly repeated that word

"interesting." "I wish to see the battle."

"Oh yes, and what do the masonic brothers say about war? How would they

stop it?" said Prince Andrew sarcastically. "Well, and how's Moscow? And

my people? Have they reached Moscow at last?" he asked seriously.

"Yes, they have. Julie Drubetskaya told me so. I went to see them, but

missed them. They have gone to your estate near Moscow."

CHAPTER XXV

The officers were about to take leave, but Prince Andrew, apparently

reluctant to be left alone with his friend, asked them to stay and have

tea. Seats were brought in and so was the tea. The officers gazed with

surprise at Pierre's huge stout figure and listened to his talk of

Moscow and the position of our army, round which he had ridden. Prince

Andrew remained silent, and his expression was so forbidding that Pierre

addressed his remarks chiefly to the good-natured battalion commander.

"So you understand the whole position of our troops?" Prince Andrew

interrupted him.

"Yes--that is, how do you mean?" said Pierre. "Not being a military man

I can't say I have understood it fully, but I understand the general

position."

"Well, then, you know more than anyone else, be it who it may," said

Prince Andrew.

"Oh!" said Pierre, looking over his spectacles in perplexity at Prince

Andrew. "Well, and what do you think of Kutuzov's appointment?" he

asked.

"I was very glad of his appointment, that's all I know," replied Prince

Andrew.

"And tell me your opinion of Barclay de Tolly. In Moscow they are saying

heaven knows what about him.... What do you think of him?"

"Ask them," replied Prince Andrew, indicating the officers.

Pierre looked at Timokhin with the condescendingly interrogative smile

with which everybody involuntarily addressed that officer.

"We see light again, since his Serenity has been appointed, your

excellency," said Timokhin timidly, and continually turning to glance at

his colonel.

"Why so?" asked Pierre.

"Well, to mention only firewood and fodder, let me inform you. Why, when

we were retreating from Sventsyani we dare not touch a stick or a wisp

of hay or anything. You see, we were going away, so he would get it all;

wasn't it so, your excellency?" and again Timokhin turned to the prince.

"But we daren't. In our regiment two officers were court-martialed for

that kind of thing. But when his Serenity took command everything became

straight forward. Now we see light..."

"Then why was it forbidden?"

Timokhin looked about in confusion, not knowing what or how to answer

such a question. Pierre put the same question to Prince Andrew.

"Why, so as not to lay waste the country we were abandoning to the

enemy," said Prince Andrew with venomous irony. "It is very sound: one

can't permit the land to be pillaged and accustom the troops to

marauding. At Smolensk too he judged correctly that the French might

outflank us, as they had larger forces. But he could not understand

this," cried Prince Andrew in a shrill voice that seemed to escape him

involuntarily: "he could not understand that there, for the first time,

we were fighting for Russian soil, and that there was a spirit in the

men such as I had never seen before, that we had held the French for two

days, and that that success had increased our strength tenfold. He

ordered us to retreat, and all our efforts and losses went for nothing.

He had no thought of betraying us, he tried to do the best he could, he

thought out everything, and that is why he is unsuitable. He is

unsuitable now, just because he plans out everything very thoroughly and

accurately as every German has to. How can I explain?... Well, say your

father has a German valet, and he is a splendid valet and satisfies your

father's requirements better than you could, then it's all right to let

him serve. But if your father is mortally sick you'll send the valet

away and attend to your father with your own unpracticed, awkward hands,

and will soothe him better than a skilled man who is a stranger could.

So it has been with Barclay. While Russia was well, a foreigner could

serve her and be a splendid minister; but as soon as she is in danger

she needs one of her own kin. But in your club they have been making him

out a traitor! They slander him as a traitor, and the only result will

be that afterwards, ashamed of their false accusations, they will make

him out a hero or a genius instead of a traitor, and that will be still

more unjust. He is an honest and very punctilious German."

"And they say he's a skillful commander," rejoined Pierre.

"I don't understand what is meant by 'a skillful commander,'" replied

Prince Andrew ironically.

"A skillful commander?" replied Pierre. "Why, one who foresees all

contingencies... and foresees the adversary's intentions."

"But that's impossible," said Prince Andrew as if it were a matter

settled long ago.

Pierre looked at him in surprise.

"And yet they say that war is like a game of chess?" he remarked.

"Yes," replied Prince Andrew, "but with this little difference, that in

chess you may think over each move as long as you please and are not

limited for time, and with this difference too, that a knight is always

stronger than a pawn, and two pawns are always stronger than one, while

in war a battalion is sometimes stronger than a division and sometimes

weaker than a company. The relative strength of bodies of troops can

never be known to anyone. Believe me," he went on, "if things depended

on arrangements made by the staff, I should be there making

arrangements, but instead of that I have the honor to serve here in the

regiment with these gentlemen, and I consider that on us tomorrow's

battle will depend and not on those others.... Success never depends,

and never will depend, on position, or equipment, or even on numbers,

and least of all on position."

"But on what then?"

"On the feeling that is in me and in him," he pointed to Timokhin, "and

in each soldier."

Prince Andrew glanced at Timokhin, who looked at his commander in alarm

and bewilderment. In contrast to his former reticent taciturnity Prince

Andrew now seemed excited. He could apparently not refrain from

expressing the thoughts that had suddenly occurred to him.

"A battle is won by those who firmly resolve to win it! Why did we lose

the battle at Austerlitz? The French losses were almost equal to ours,

but very early we said to ourselves that we were losing the battle, and

we did lose it. And we said so because we had nothing to fight for

there, we wanted to get away from the battlefield as soon as we could.

'We've lost, so let us run,' and we ran. If we had not said that till

the evening, heaven knows what might not have happened. But tomorrow we

shan't say it! You talk about our position, the left flank weak and the

right flank too extended," he went on. "That's all nonsense, there's

nothing of the kind. But what awaits us tomorrow? A hundred million most

diverse chances which will be decided on the instant by the fact that

our men or theirs run or do not run, and that this man or that man is

killed, but all that is being done at present is only play. The fact is

that those men with whom you have ridden round the position not only do

not help matters, but hinder. They are only concerned with their own

petty interests."

"At such a moment?" said Pierre reproachfully.

"At such a moment!" Prince Andrew repeated. "To them it is only a moment

affording opportunities to undermine a rival and obtain an extra cross

or ribbon. For me tomorrow means this: a Russian army of a hundred

thousand and a French army of a hundred thousand have met to fight, and

the thing is that these two hundred thousand men will fight and the side

that fights more fiercely and spares itself least will win. And if you

like I will tell you that whatever happens and whatever muddles those at

the top may make, we shall win tomorrow's battle. Tomorrow, happen what

may, we shall win!"

"There now, your excellency! That's the truth, the real truth," said

Timokhin. "Who would spare himself now? The soldiers in my battalion,

believe me, wouldn't drink their vodka! 'It's not the day for that!'

they say."

All were silent. The officers rose. Prince Andrew went out of the shed

with them, giving final orders to the adjutant. After they had gone

Pierre approached Prince Andrew and was about to start a conversation

when they heard the clatter of three horses' hoofs on the road not far

from the shed, and looking in that direction Prince Andrew recognized

Wolzogen and Clausewitz accompanied by a Cossack. They rode close by

continuing to converse, and Prince Andrew involuntarily heard these

words:

"Der Krieg muss in Raum verlegt werden. Der Ansicht kann ich nicht genug

Preis geben," \* said one of them.

\* "The war must be extended widely. I cannot sufficiently commend that

view."

"Oh, ja," said the other, "der Zweck ist nur den Feind zu schwächen, so

kann man gewiss nicht den Verlust der Privat-Personen in Achtung

nehmen." \*

\* "Oh, yes, the only aim is to weaken the enemy, so of course one cannot

take into account the loss of private individuals."

"Oh, no," agreed the other.

"Extend widely!" said Prince Andrew with an angry snort, when they had

ridden past. "In that 'extend' were my father, son, and sister, at Bald

Hills. That's all the same to him! That's what I was saying to you--

those German gentlemen won't win the battle tomorrow but will only make

all the mess they can, because they have nothing in their German heads

but theories not worth an empty eggshell and haven't in their hearts the

one thing needed tomorrow--that which Timokhin has. They have yielded up

all Europe to him, and have now come to teach us. Fine teachers!" and

again his voice grew shrill.

"So you think we shall win tomorrow's battle?" asked Pierre.

"Yes, yes," answered Prince Andrew absently. "One thing I would do if I

had the power," he began again, "I would not take prisoners. Why take

prisoners? It's chivalry! The French have destroyed my home and are on

their way to destroy Moscow, they have outraged and are outraging me

every moment. They are my enemies. In my opinion they are all criminals.

And so thinks Timokhin and the whole army. They should be executed!

Since they are my foes they cannot be my friends, whatever may have been

said at Tilsit."

"Yes, yes," muttered Pierre, looking with shining eyes at Prince Andrew.

"I quite agree with you!"

The question that had perturbed Pierre on the Mozhaysk hill and all that

day now seemed to him quite clear and completely solved. He now

understood the whole meaning and importance of this war and of the

impending battle. All he had seen that day, all the significant and

stern expressions on the faces he had seen in passing, were lit up for

him by a new light. He understood that latent heat (as they say in

physics) of patriotism which was present in all these men he had seen,

and this explained to him why they all prepared for death calmly, and as

it were lightheartedly.

"Not take prisoners," Prince Andrew continued: "That by itself would

quite change the whole war and make it less cruel. As it is we have

played at war--that's what's vile! We play at magnanimity and all that

stuff. Such magnanimity and sensibility are like the magnanimity and

sensibility of a lady who faints when she sees a calf being killed: she

is so kindhearted that she can't look at blood, but enjoys eating the

calf served up with sauce. They talk to us of the rules of war, of

chivalry, of flags of truce, of mercy to the unfortunate and so on. It's

all rubbish! I saw chivalry and flags of truce in 1805; they humbugged

us and we humbugged them. They plunder other people's houses, issue

false paper money, and worst of all they kill my children and my father,

and then talk of rules of war and magnanimity to foes! Take no

prisoners, but kill and be killed! He who has come to this as I have

through the same sufferings..."

Prince Andrew, who had thought it was all the same to him whether or not

Moscow was taken as Smolensk had been, was suddenly checked in his

speech by an unexpected cramp in his throat. He paced up and down a few

times in silence, but his eyes glittered feverishly and his lips

quivered as he began speaking.

"If there was none of this magnanimity in war, we should go to war only

when it was worth while going to certain death, as now. Then there would

not be war because Paul Ivanovich had offended Michael Ivanovich. And

when there was a war, like this one, it would be war! And then the

determination of the troops would be quite different. Then all these

Westphalians and Hessians whom Napoleon is leading would not follow him

into Russia, and we should not go to fight in Austria and Prussia

without knowing why. War is not courtesy but the most horrible thing in

life; and we ought to understand that and not play at war. We ought to

accept this terrible necessity sternly and seriously. It all lies in

that: get rid of falsehood and let war be war and not a game. As it is

now, war is the favorite pastime of the idle and frivolous. The military

calling is the most highly honored.

"But what is war? What is needed for success in warfare? What are the

habits of the military? The aim of war is murder; the methods of war are

spying, treachery, and their encouragement, the ruin of a country's

inhabitants, robbing them or stealing to provision the army, and fraud

and falsehood termed military craft. The habits of the military class

are the absence of freedom, that is, discipline, idleness, ignorance,

cruelty, debauchery, and drunkenness. And in spite of all this it is the

highest class, respected by everyone. All the kings, except the Chinese,

wear military uniforms, and he who kills most people receives the

highest rewards.

"They meet, as we shall meet tomorrow, to murder one another; they kill

and maim tens of thousands, and then have thanksgiving services for

having killed so many people (they even exaggerate the number), and they

announce a victory, supposing that the more people they have killed the

greater their achievement. How does God above look at them and hear

them?" exclaimed Prince Andrew in a shrill, piercing voice. "Ah, my

friend, it has of late become hard for me to live. I see that I have

begun to understand too much. And it doesn't do for man to taste of the

tree of knowledge of good and evil.... Ah, well, it's not for long!" he

added.

"However, you're sleepy, and it's time for me to sleep. Go back to

Gorki!" said Prince Andrew suddenly.

"Oh no!" Pierre replied, looking at Prince Andrew with frightened,

compassionate eyes.

"Go, go! Before a battle one must have one's sleep out," repeated Prince

Andrew.

He came quickly up to Pierre and embraced and kissed him. "Good-bye, be

off!" he shouted. "Whether we meet again or not..." and turning away

hurriedly he entered the shed.

It was already dark, and Pierre could not make out whether the

expression of Prince Andrew's face was angry or tender.

For some time he stood in silence considering whether he should follow

him or go away. "No, he does not want it!" Pierre concluded. "And I know

that this is our last meeting!" He sighed deeply and rode back to Gorki.

On re-entering the shed Prince Andrew lay down on a rug, but he could

not sleep.

He closed his eyes. One picture succeeded another in his imagination. On

one of them he dwelt long and joyfully. He vividly recalled an evening

in Petersburg. Natasha with animated and excited face was telling him

how she had gone to look for mushrooms the previous summer and had lost

her way in the big forest. She incoherently described the depths of the

forest, her feelings, and a talk with a beekeeper she met, and

constantly interrupted her story to say: "No, I can't! I'm not telling

it right; no, you don't understand," though he encouraged her by saying

that he did understand, and he really had understood all she wanted to

say. But Natasha was not satisfied with her own words: she felt that

they did not convey the passionately poetic feeling she had experienced

that day and wished to convey. "He was such a delightful old man, and it

was so dark in the forest... and he had such kind... No, I can't

describe it," she had said, flushed and excited. Prince Andrew smiled

now the same happy smile as then when he had looked into her eyes. "I

understood her," he thought. "I not only understood her, but it was just

that inner, spiritual force, that sincerity, that frankness of soul--

that very soul of hers which seemed to be fettered by her body--it was

that soul I loved in her... loved so strongly and happily..." and

suddenly he remembered how his love had ended. "He did not need anything

of that kind. He neither saw nor understood anything of the sort. He

only saw in her a pretty and fresh young girl, with whom he did not

deign to unite his fate. And I?... and he is still alive and gay!"

Prince Andrew jumped up as if someone had burned him, and again began

pacing up and down in front of the shed.

CHAPTER XXVI

On August 25, the eve of the battle of Borodino, M. de Beausset, prefect

of the French Emperor's palace, arrived at Napoleon's quarters at

Valuevo with Colonel Fabvier, the former from Paris and the latter from

Madrid.

Donning his court uniform, M. de Beausset ordered a box he had brought

for the Emperor to be carried before him and entered the first

compartment of Napoleon's tent, where he began opening the box while

conversing with Napoleon's aides-de-camp who surrounded him.

Fabvier, not entering the tent, remained at the entrance talking to some

generals of his acquaintance.

The Emperor Napoleon had not yet left his bedroom and was finishing his

toilet. Slightly snorting and grunting, he presented now his back and

now his plump hairy chest to the brush with which his valet was rubbing

him down. Another valet, with his finger over the mouth of a bottle, was

sprinkling Eau de Cologne on the Emperor's pampered body with an

expression which seemed to say that he alone knew where and how much Eau

de Cologne should be sprinkled. Napoleon's short hair was wet and matted

on the forehead, but his face, though puffy and yellow, expressed

physical satisfaction. "Go on, harder, go on!" he muttered to the valet

who was rubbing him, slightly twitching and grunting. An aide-de-camp,

who had entered the bedroom to report to the Emperor the number of

prisoners taken in yesterday's action, was standing by the door after

delivering his message, awaiting permission to withdraw. Napoleon,

frowning, looked at him from under his brows.

"No prisoners!" said he, repeating the aide-de-camp's words. "They are

forcing us to exterminate them. So much the worse for the Russian

army.... Go on... harder, harder!" he muttered, hunching his back and

presenting his fat shoulders.

"All right. Let Monsieur de Beausset enter, and Fabvier too," he said,

nodding to the aide-de-camp.

"Yes, sire," and the aide-de-camp disappeared through the door of the

tent.

Two valets rapidly dressed His Majesty, and wearing the blue uniform of

the Guards he went with firm quick steps to the reception room.

De Beausset's hands meanwhile were busily engaged arranging the present

he had brought from the Empress, on two chairs directly in front of the

entrance. But Napoleon had dressed and come out with such unexpected

rapidity that he had not time to finish arranging the surprise.

Napoleon noticed at once what they were about and guessed that they were

not ready. He did not wish to deprive them of the pleasure of giving him

a surprise, so he pretended not to see de Beausset and called Fabvier to

him, listening silently and with a stern frown to what Fabvier told him

of the heroism and devotion of his troops fighting at Salamanca, at the

other end of Europe, with but one thought--to be worthy of their

Emperor--and but one fear--to fail to please him. The result of that

battle had been deplorable. Napoleon made ironic remarks during

Fabvier's account, as if he had not expected that matters could go

otherwise in his absence.

"I must make up for that in Moscow," said Napoleon. "I'll see you

later," he added, and summoned de Beausset, who by that time had

prepared the surprise, having placed something on the chairs and covered

it with a cloth.

De Beausset bowed low, with that courtly French bow which only the old

retainers of the Bourbons knew how to make, and approached him,

presenting an envelope.

Napoleon turned to him gaily and pulled his ear.

"You have hurried here. I am very glad. Well, what is Paris saying?" he

asked, suddenly changing his former stern expression for a most cordial

tone.

"Sire, all Paris regrets your absence," replied de Beausset as was

proper.

But though Napoleon knew that de Beausset had to say something of this

kind, and though in his lucid moments he knew it was untrue, he was

pleased to hear it from him. Again he honored him by touching his ear.

"I am very sorry to have made you travel so far," said he.

"Sire, I expected nothing less than to find you at the gates of Moscow,"

replied de Beausset.

Napoleon smiled and, lifting his head absent-mindedly, glanced to the

right. An aide-de-camp approached with gliding steps and offered him a

gold snuffbox, which he took.

"Yes, it has happened luckily for you," he said, raising the open

snuffbox to his nose. "You are fond of travel, and in three days you

will see Moscow. You surely did not expect to see that Asiatic capital.

You will have a pleasant journey."

De Beausset bowed gratefully at this regard for his taste for travel (of

which he had not till then been aware).

"Ha, what's this?" asked Napoleon, noticing that all the courtiers were

looking at something concealed under a cloth.

With courtly adroitness de Beausset half turned and without turning his

back to the Emperor retired two steps, twitching off the cloth at the

same time, and said:

"A present to Your Majesty from the Empress."

It was a portrait, painted in bright colors by Gerard, of the son borne

to Napoleon by the daughter of the Emperor of Austria, the boy whom for

some reason everyone called "The King of Rome."

A very pretty curly-headed boy with a look of the Christ in the Sistine

Madonna was depicted playing at stick and ball. The ball represented the

terrestrial globe and the stick in his other hand a scepter.

Though it was not clear what the artist meant to express by depicting

the so-called King of Rome spiking the earth with a stick, the allegory

apparently seemed to Napoleon, as it had done to all who had seen it in

Paris, quite clear and very pleasing.

"The King of Rome!" he said, pointing to the portrait with a graceful

gesture. "Admirable!"

With the natural capacity of an Italian for changing the expression of

his face at will, he drew nearer to the portrait and assumed a look of

pensive tenderness. He felt that what he now said and did would be

historical, and it seemed to him that it would now be best for him--

whose grandeur enabled his son to play stick and ball with the

terrestrial globe--to show, in contrast to that grandeur, the simplest

paternal tenderness. His eyes grew dim, he moved forward, glanced round

at a chair (which seemed to place itself under him), and sat down on it

before the portrait. At a single gesture from him everyone went out on

tiptoe, leaving the great man to himself and his emotion.

Having sat still for a while he touched--himself not knowing why--the

thick spot of paint representing the highest light in the portrait,

rose, and recalled de Beausset and the officer on duty. He ordered the

portrait to be carried outside his tent, that the Old Guard, stationed

round it, might not be deprived of the pleasure of seeing the King of

Rome, the son and heir of their adored monarch.

And while he was doing M. de Beausset the honor of breakfasting with

him, they heard, as Napoleon had anticipated, the rapturous cries of the

officers and men of the Old Guard who had run up to see the portrait.

"Vive l'Empereur! Vive le roi de Rome! Vive l'Empereur!" came those

ecstatic cries.

After breakfast Napoleon in de Beausset's presence dictated his order of

the day to the army.

"Short and energetic!" he remarked when he had read over the

proclamation which he had dictated straight off without corrections. It

ran:

Soldiers! This is the battle you have so longed for. Victory depends on

you. It is essential for us; it will give us all we need: comfortable

quarters and a speedy return to our country. Behave as you did at

Austerlitz, Friedland, Vitebsk, and Smolensk. Let our remotest posterity

recall your achievements this day with pride. Let it be said of each of

you: "He was in the great battle before Moscow!"

"Before Moscow!" repeated Napoleon, and inviting M. de Beausset, who was

so fond of travel, to accompany him on his ride, he went out of the tent

to where the horses stood saddled.

"Your Majesty is too kind!" replied de Beausset to the invitation to

accompany the Emperor; he wanted to sleep, did not know how to ride and

was afraid of doing so.

But Napoleon nodded to the traveler, and de Beausset had to mount. When

Napoleon came out of the tent the shouting of the Guards before his

son's portrait grew still louder. Napoleon frowned.

"Take him away!" he said, pointing with a gracefully majestic gesture to

the portrait. "It is too soon for him to see a field of battle."

De Beausset closed his eyes, bowed his head, and sighed deeply, to

indicate how profoundly he valued and comprehended the Emperor's words.

CHAPTER XXVII

On the twenty-fifth of August, so his historians tell us, Napoleon spent

the whole day on horseback inspecting the locality, considering plans

submitted to him by his marshals, and personally giving commands to his

generals.

The original line of the Russian forces along the river Kolocha had been

dislocated by the capture of the Shevardino Redoubt on the twenty-

fourth, and part of the line--the left flank--had been drawn back. That

part of the line was not entrenched and in front of it the ground was

more open and level than elsewhere. It was evident to anyone, military

or not, that it was here the French should attack. It would seem that

not much consideration was needed to reach this conclusion, nor any

particular care or trouble on the part of the Emperor and his marshals,

nor was there any need of that special and supreme quality called genius

that people are so apt to ascribe to Napoleon; yet the historians who

described the event later and the men who then surrounded Napoleon, and

he himself, thought otherwise.

Napoleon rode over the plain and surveyed the locality with a profound

air and in silence, nodded with approval or shook his head dubiously,

and without communicating to the generals around him the profound course

of ideas which guided his decisions merely gave them his final

conclusions in the form of commands. Having listened to a suggestion

from Davout, who was now called Prince d'Eckmuhl, to turn the Russian

left wing, Napoleon said it should not be done, without explaining why

not. To a proposal made by General Campan (who was to attack the

fleches) to lead his division through the woods, Napoleon agreed, though

the so-called Duke of Elchingen (Ney) ventured to remark that a movement

through the woods was dangerous and might disorder the division.

Having inspected the country opposite the Shevardino Redoubt, Napoleon

pondered a little in silence and then indicated the spots where two

batteries should be set up by the morrow to act against the Russian

entrenchments, and the places where, in line with them, the field

artillery should be placed.

After giving these and other commands he returned to his tent, and the

dispositions for the battle were written down from his dictation.

These dispositions, of which the French historians write with enthusiasm

and other historians with profound respect, were as follows:

At dawn the two new batteries established during the night on the plain

occupied by the Prince d'Eckmuhl will open fire on the opposing

batteries of the enemy.

At the same time the commander of the artillery of the 1st Corps,

General Pernetti, with thirty cannon of Campan's division and all the

howitzers of Dessaix's and Friant's divisions, will move forward, open

fire, and overwhelm with shellfire the enemy's battery, against which

will operate:

24 guns of the artillery of the Guards 30 guns of Campan's division

and 8 guns of Friant's and Dessaix's divisions --

in all 62 guns.

The commander of the artillery of the 3rd Corps, General Fouche, will

place the howitzers of the 3rd and 8th Corps, sixteen in all, on the

flanks of the battery that is to bombard the entrenchment on the left,

which will have forty guns in all directed against it.

General Sorbier must be ready at the first order to advance with all the

howitzers of the Guard's artillery against either one or other of the

entrenchments.

During the cannonade Prince Poniatowski is to advance through the wood

on the village and turn the enemy's position.

General Campan will move through the wood to seize the first

fortification.

After the advance has begun in this manner, orders will be given in

accordance with the enemy's movements.

The cannonade on the left flank will begin as soon as the guns of the

right wing are heard. The sharpshooters of Morand's division and of the

vice-King's division will open a heavy fire on seeing the attack

commence on the right wing.

The vice-King will occupy the village and cross by its three bridges,

advancing to the same heights as Morand's and Gibrard's divisions, which

under his leadership will be directed against the redoubt and come into

line with the rest of the forces.

All this must be done in good order (le tout se fera avec ordre et

methode) as far as possible retaining troops in reserve.

The Imperial Camp near Mozhaysk,

September, 6, 1812.

These dispositions, which are very obscure and confused if one allows

oneself to regard the arrangements without religious awe of his genius,

related to Napoleon's orders to deal with four points--four different

orders. Not one of these was, or could be, carried out.

In the disposition it is said first that the batteries placed on the

spot chosen by Napoleon, with the guns of Pernetti and Fouche; which

were to come in line with them, 102 guns in all, were to open fire and

shower shells on the Russian fleches and redoubts. This could not be

done, as from the spots selected by Napoleon the projectiles did not

carry to the Russian works, and those 102 guns shot into the air until

the nearest commander, contrary to Napoleon's instructions, moved them

forward.

The second order was that Poniatowski, moving to the village through the

wood, should turn the Russian left flank. This could not be done and was

not done, because Poniatowski, advancing on the village through the

wood, met Tuchkov there barring his way, and could not and did not turn

the Russian position.

The third order was: General Campan will move through the wood to seize

the first fortification. General Campan's division did not seize the

first fortification but was driven back, for on emerging from the wood

it had to reform under grapeshot, of which Napoleon was unaware.

The fourth order was: The vice-King will occupy the village (Borodino)

and cross by its three bridges, advancing to the same heights as

Morand's and Gibrard's divisions (for whose movements no directions are

given), which under his leadership will be directed against the redoubt

and come into line with the rest of the forces.

As far as one can make out, not so much from this unintelligible

sentence as from the attempts the vice-King made to execute the orders

given him, he was to advance from the left through Borodino to the

redoubt while the divisions of Morand and Gerard were to advance

simultaneously from the front.

All this, like the other parts of the disposition, was not and could not

be executed. After passing through Borodino the vice-King was driven

back to the Kolocha and could get no farther; while the divisions of

Morand and Gerard did not take the redoubt but were driven back, and the

redoubt was only taken at the end of the battle by the cavalry (a thing

probably unforeseen and not heard of by Napoleon). So not one of the

orders in the disposition was, or could be, executed. But in the

disposition it is said that, after the fight has commenced in this

manner, orders will be given in accordance with the enemy's movements,

and so it might be supposed that all necessary arrangements would be

made by Napoleon during the battle. But this was not and could not be

done, for during the whole battle Napoleon was so far away that, as

appeared later, he could not know the course of the battle and not one

of his orders during the fight could be executed.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Many historians say that the French did not win the battle of Borodino

because Napoleon had a cold, and that if he had not had a cold the

orders he gave before and during the battle would have been still more

full of genius and Russia would have been lost and the face of the world

have been changed. To historians who believe that Russia was shaped by

the will of one man--Peter the Great--and that France from a republic

became an empire and French armies went to Russia at the will of one

man--Napoleon--to say that Russia remained a power because Napoleon had

a bad cold on the twenty-fourth of August may seem logical and

convincing.

If it had depended on Napoleon's will to fight or not to fight the

battle of Borodino, and if this or that other arrangement depended on

his will, then evidently a cold affecting the manifestation of his will

might have saved Russia, and consequently the valet who omitted to bring

Napoleon his waterproof boots on the twenty-fourth would have been the

savior of Russia. Along that line of thought such a deduction is

indubitable, as indubitable as the deduction Voltaire made in jest

(without knowing what he was jesting at) when he saw that the Massacre

of St. Bartholomew was due to Charles IX's stomach being deranged. But

to men who do not admit that Russia was formed by the will of one man,

Peter I, or that the French Empire was formed and the war with Russia

begun by the will of one man, Napoleon, that argument seems not merely

untrue and irrational, but contrary to all human reality. To the

question of what causes historic events another answer presents itself,

namely, that the course of human events is predetermined from on high--

depends on the coincidence of the wills of all who take part in the

events, and that a Napoleon's influence on the course of these events is

purely external and fictitious.

Strange as at first glance it may seem to suppose that the Massacre of

St. Bartholomew was not due to Charles IX's will, though he gave the

order for it and thought it was done as a result of that order; and

strange as it may seem to suppose that the slaughter of eighty thousand

men at Borodino was not due to Napoleon's will, though he ordered the

commencement and conduct of the battle and thought it was done because

he ordered it; strange as these suppositions appear, yet human dignity--

which tells me that each of us is, if not more at least not less a man

than the great Napoleon--demands the acceptance of that solution of the

question, and historic investigation abundantly confirms it.

At the battle of Borodino Napoleon shot at no one and killed no one.

That was all done by the soldiers. Therefore it was not he who killed

people.

The French soldiers went to kill and be killed at the battle of Borodino

not because of Napoleon's orders but by their own volition. The whole

army--French, Italian, German, Polish, and Dutch--hungry, ragged, and

weary of the campaign, felt at the sight of an army blocking their road

to Moscow that the wine was drawn and must be drunk. Had Napoleon then

forbidden them to fight the Russians, they would have killed him and

have proceeded to fight the Russians because it was inevitable.

When they heard Napoleon's proclamation offering them, as compensation

for mutilation and death, the words of posterity about their having been

in the battle before Moscow, they cried "Vive l'Empereur!" just as they

had cried "Vive l'Empereur!" at the sight of the portrait of the boy

piercing the terrestrial globe with a toy stick, and just as they would

have cried "Vive l'Empereur!" at any nonsense that might be told them.

There was nothing left for them to do but cry "Vive l'Empereur!" and go

to fight, in order to get food and rest as conquerors in Moscow. So it

was not because of Napoleon's commands that they killed their fellow

men.

And it was not Napoleon who directed the course of the battle, for none

of his orders were executed and during the battle he did not know what

was going on before him. So the way in which these people killed one

another was not decided by Napoleon's will but occurred independently of

him, in accord with the will of hundreds of thousands of people who took

part in the common action. It only seemed to Napoleon that it all took

place by his will. And so the question whether he had or had not a cold

has no more historic interest than the cold of the least of the

transport soldiers.

Moreover, the assertion made by various writers that his cold was the

cause of his dispositions not being as well-planned as on former

occasions, and of his orders during the battle not being as good as

previously, is quite baseless, which again shows that Napoleon's cold on

the twenty-sixth of August was unimportant.

The dispositions cited above are not at all worse, but are even better,

than previous dispositions by which he had won victories. His pseudo-

orders during the battle were also no worse than formerly, but much the

same as usual. These dispositions and orders only seem worse than

previous ones because the battle of Borodino was the first Napoleon did

not win. The profoundest and most excellent dispositions and orders seem

very bad, and every learned militarist criticizes them with looks of

importance, when they relate to a battle that has been lost, and the

very worst dispositions and orders seem very good, and serious people

fill whole volumes to demonstrate their merits, when they relate to a

battle that has been won.

The dispositions drawn up by Weyrother for the battle of Austerlitz were

a model of perfection for that kind of composition, but still they were

criticized--criticized for their very perfection, for their excessive

minuteness.

Napoleon at the battle of Borodino fulfilled his office as

representative of authority as well as, and even better than, at other

battles. He did nothing harmful to the progress of the battle; he

inclined to the most reasonable opinions, he made no confusion, did not

contradict himself, did not get frightened or run away from the field of

battle, but with his great tact and military experience carried out his

role of appearing to command, calmly and with dignity.

CHAPTER XXIX

On returning from a second inspection of the lines, Napoleon remarked:

"The chessmen are set up, the game will begin tomorrow!"

Having ordered punch and summoned de Beausset, he began to talk to him

about Paris and about some changes he meant to make in the Empress'

household, surprising the prefect by his memory of minute details

relating to the court.

He showed an interest in trifles, joked about de Beausset's love of

travel, and chatted carelessly, as a famous, self-confident surgeon who

knows his job does when turning up his sleeves and putting on his apron

while a patient is being strapped to the operating table. "The matter is

in my hands and is clear and definite in my head. When the time comes to

set to work I shall do it as no one else could, but now I can jest, and

the more I jest and the calmer I am the more tranquil and confident you

ought to be, and the more amazed at my genius."

Having finished his second glass of punch, Napoleon went to rest before

the serious business which, he considered, awaited him next day. He was

so much interested in that task that he was unable to sleep, and in

spite of his cold which had grown worse from the dampness of the

evening, he went into the large division of the tent at three o'clock in

the morning, loudly blowing his nose. He asked whether the Russians had

not withdrawn, and was told that the enemy's fires were still in the

same places. He nodded approval.

The adjutant in attendance came into the tent.

"Well, Rapp, do you think we shall do good business today?" Napoleon

asked him.

"Without doubt, sire," replied Rapp.

Napoleon looked at him.

"Do you remember, sire, what you did me the honor to say at Smolensk?"

continued Rapp. "The wine is drawn and must be drunk."

Napoleon frowned and sat silent for a long time leaning his head on his

hand.

"This poor army!" he suddenly remarked. "It has diminished greatly since

Smolensk. Fortune is frankly a courtesan, Rapp. I have always said so

and I am beginning to experience it. But the Guards, Rapp, the Guards

are intact?" he remarked interrogatively.

"Yes, sire," replied Rapp.

Napoleon took a lozenge, put it in his mouth, and glanced at his watch.

He was not sleepy and it was still not nearly morning. It was impossible

to give further orders for the sake of killing time, for the orders had

all been given and were now being executed.

"Have the biscuits and rice been served out to the regiments of the

Guards?" asked Napoleon sternly.

"Yes, sire."

"The rice too?"

Rapp replied that he had given the Emperor's order about the rice, but

Napoleon shook his head in dissatisfaction as if not believing that his

order had been executed. An attendant came in with punch. Napoleon

ordered another glass to be brought for Rapp, and silently sipped his

own.

"I have neither taste nor smell," he remarked, sniffing at his glass.

"This cold is tiresome. They talk about medicine--what is the good of

medicine when it can't cure a cold! Corvisart gave me these lozenges but

they don't help at all. What can doctors cure? One can't cure anything.

Our body is a machine for living. It is organized for that, it is its

nature. Let life go on in it unhindered and let it defend itself, it

will do more than if you paralyze it by encumbering it with remedies.

Our body is like a perfect watch that should go for a certain time; the

watchmaker cannot open it, he can only adjust it by fumbling, and that

blindfold.... Yes, our body is just a machine for living, that is all."

And having entered on the path of definition, of which he was fond,

Napoleon suddenly and unexpectedly gave a new one.

"Do you know, Rapp, what military art is?" asked he. "It is the art of

being stronger than the enemy at a given moment. That's all."

Rapp made no reply.

"Tomorrow we shall have to deal with Kutuzov!" said Napoleon. "We shall

see! Do you remember at Braunau he commanded an army for three weeks and

did not once mount a horse to inspect his entrenchments.... We shall

see!"

He looked at his watch. It was still only four o'clock. He did not feel

sleepy. The punch was finished and there was still nothing to do. He

rose, walked to and fro, put on a warm overcoat and a hat, and went out

of the tent. The night was dark and damp, a scarcely perceptible

moisture was descending from above. Near by, the campfires were dimly

burning among the French Guards, and in the distance those of the

Russian line shone through the smoke. The weather was calm, and the

rustle and tramp of the French troops already beginning to move to take

up their positions were clearly audible.

Napoleon walked about in front of his tent, looked at the fires and

listened to these sounds, and as he was passing a tall guardsman in a

shaggy cap, who was standing sentinel before his tent and had drawn

himself up like a black pillar at sight of the Emperor, Napoleon stopped

in front of him.

"What year did you enter the service?" he asked with that affectation of

military bluntness and geniality with which he always addressed the

soldiers.

The man answered the question.

"Ah! One of the old ones! Has your regiment had its rice?"

"It has, Your Majesty."

Napoleon nodded and walked away.

At half-past five Napoleon rode to the village of Shevardino.

It was growing light, the sky was clearing, only a single cloud lay in

the east. The abandoned campfires were burning themselves out in the

faint morning light.

On the right a single deep report of a cannon resounded and died away in

the prevailing silence. Some minutes passed. A second and a third report

shook the air, then a fourth and a fifth boomed solemnly near by on the

right.

The first shots had not yet ceased to reverberate before others rang out

and yet more were heard mingling with and overtaking one another.

Napoleon with his suite rode up to the Shevardino Redoubt where he

dismounted. The game had begun.

CHAPTER XXX

On returning to Gorki after having seen Prince Andrew, Pierre ordered

his groom to get the horses ready and to call him early in the morning,

and then immediately fell asleep behind a partition in a corner Boris

had given up to him.

Before he was thoroughly awake next morning everybody had already left

the hut. The panes were rattling in the little windows and his groom was

shaking him.

"Your excellency! Your excellency! Your excellency!" he kept repeating

pertinaciously while he shook Pierre by the shoulder without looking at

him, having apparently lost hope of getting him to wake up.

"What? Has it begun? Is it time?" Pierre asked, waking up.

"Hear the firing," said the groom, a discharged soldier. "All the

gentlemen have gone out, and his Serene Highness himself rode past long

ago."

Pierre dressed hastily and ran out to the porch. Outside all was bright,

fresh, dewy, and cheerful. The sun, just bursting forth from behind a

cloud that had concealed it, was shining, with rays still half broken by

the clouds, over the roofs of the street opposite, on the dew-

besprinkled dust of the road, on the walls of the houses, on the

windows, the fence, and on Pierre's horses standing before the hut. The

roar of guns sounded more distinct outside. An adjutant accompanied by a

Cossack passed by at a sharp trot.

"It's time, Count; it's time!" cried the adjutant.

Telling the groom to follow him with the horses, Pierre went down the

street to the knoll from which he had looked at the field of battle the

day before. A crowd of military men was assembled there, members of the

staff could be heard conversing in French, and Kutuzov's gray head in a

white cap with a red band was visible, his gray nape sunk between his

shoulders. He was looking through a field glass down the highroad before

him.

Mounting the steps to the knoll Pierre looked at the scene before him,

spellbound by beauty. It was the same panorama he had admired from that

spot the day before, but now the whole place was full of troops and

covered by smoke clouds from the guns, and the slanting rays of the

bright sun, rising slightly to the left behind Pierre, cast upon it

through the clear morning air penetrating streaks of rosy, golden-tinted

light and long dark shadows. The forest at the farthest extremity of the

panorama seemed carved in some precious stone of a yellowish-green

color; its undulating outline was silhouetted against the horizon and

was pierced beyond Valuevo by the Smolensk highroad crowded with troops.

Nearer at hand glittered golden cornfields interspersed with copses.

There were troops to be seen everywhere, in front and to the right and

left. All this was vivid, majestic, and unexpected; but what impressed

Pierre most of all was the view of the battlefield itself, of Borodino

and the hollows on both sides of the Kolocha.

Above the Kolocha, in Borodino and on both sides of it, especially to

the left where the Voyna flowing between its marshy banks falls into the

Kolocha, a mist had spread which seemed to melt, to dissolve, and to

become translucent when the brilliant sun appeared and magically colored

and outlined everything. The smoke of the guns mingled with this mist,

and over the whole expanse and through that mist the rays of the morning

sun were reflected, flashing back like lightning from the water, from

the dew, and from the bayonets of the troops crowded together by the

riverbanks and in Borodino. A white church could be seen through the

mist, and here and there the roofs of huts in Borodino as well as dense

masses of soldiers, or green ammunition chests and ordnance. And all

this moved, or seemed to move, as the smoke and mist spread out over the

whole space. Just as in the mist-enveloped hollow near Borodino, so

along the entire line outside and above it and especially in the woods

and fields to the left, in the valleys and on the summits of the high

ground, clouds of powder smoke seemed continually to spring up out of

nothing, now singly, now several at a time, some translucent, others

dense, which, swelling, growing, rolling, and blending, extended over

the whole expanse.

These puffs of smoke and (strange to say) the sound of the firing

produced the chief beauty of the spectacle.

"Puff!"--suddenly a round compact cloud of smoke was seen merging from

violet into gray and milky white, and "boom!" came the report a second

later.

"Puff! puff!"--and two clouds arose pushing one another and blending

together; and "boom, boom!" came the sounds confirming what the eye had

seen.

Pierre glanced round at the first cloud, which he had seen as a round

compact ball, and in its place already were balloons of smoke floating

to one side, and--"puff" (with a pause)--"puff, puff!" three and then

four more appeared and then from each, with the same interval--"boom--

boom, boom!" came the fine, firm, precise sounds in reply. It seemed as

if those smoke clouds sometimes ran and sometimes stood still while

woods, fields, and glittering bayonets ran past them. From the left,

over fields and bushes, those large balls of smoke were continually

appearing followed by their solemn reports, while nearer still, in the

hollows and woods, there burst from the muskets small cloudlets that had

no time to become balls, but had their little echoes in just the same

way. "Trakh-ta-ta-takh!" came the frequent crackle of musketry, but it

was irregular and feeble in comparison with the reports of the cannon.

Pierre wished to be there with that smoke, those shining bayonets, that

movement, and those sounds. He turned to look at Kutuzov and his suite,

to compare his impressions with those of others. They were all looking

at the field of battle as he was, and, as it seemed to him, with the

same feelings. All their faces were now shining with that latent warmth

of feeling Pierre had noticed the day before and had fully understood

after his talk with Prince Andrew.

"Go, my dear fellow, go... and Christ be with you!" Kutuzov was saying

to a general who stood beside him, not taking his eye from the

battlefield.

Having received this order the general passed by Pierre on his way down

the knoll.

"To the crossing!" said the general coldly and sternly in reply to one

of the staff who asked where he was going.

"I'll go there too, I too!" thought Pierre, and followed the general.

The general mounted a horse a Cossack had brought him. Pierre went to

his groom who was holding his horses and, asking which was the quietest,

clambered onto it, seized it by the mane, and turning out his toes

pressed his heels against its sides and, feeling that his spectacles

were slipping off but unable to let go of the mane and reins, he

galloped after the general, causing the staff officers to smile as they

watched him from the knoll.

CHAPTER XXXI

Having descended the hill the general after whom Pierre was galloping

turned sharply to the left, and Pierre, losing sight of him, galloped in

among some ranks of infantry marching ahead of him. He tried to pass

either in front of them or to the right or left, but there were soldiers

everywhere, all with the same preoccupied expression and busy with some

unseen but evidently important task. They all gazed with the same

dissatisfied and inquiring expression at this stout man in a white hat,

who for some unknown reason threatened to trample them under his horse's

hoofs.

"Why ride into the middle of the battalion?" one of them shouted at him.

Another prodded his horse with the butt end of a musket, and Pierre,

bending over his saddlebow and hardly able to control his shying horse,

galloped ahead of the soldiers where there was a free space.

There was a bridge ahead of him, where other soldiers stood firing.

Pierre rode up to them. Without being aware of it he had come to the

bridge across the Kolocha between Gorki and Borodino, which the French

(having occupied Borodino) were attacking in the first phase of the

battle. Pierre saw that there was a bridge in front of him and that

soldiers were doing something on both sides of it and in the meadow,

among the rows of new-mown hay which he had taken no notice of amid the

smoke of the campfires the day before; but despite the incessant firing

going on there he had no idea that this was the field of battle. He did

not notice the sound of the bullets whistling from every side, or the

projectiles that flew over him, did not see the enemy on the other side

of the river, and for a long time did not notice the killed and wounded,

though many fell near him. He looked about him with a smile which did

not leave his face.

"Why's that fellow in front of the line?" shouted somebody at him again.

"To the left!... Keep to the right!" the men shouted to him.

Pierre went to the right, and unexpectedly encountered one of Raevski's

adjutants whom he knew. The adjutant looked angrily at him, evidently

also intending to shout at him, but on recognizing him he nodded.

"How have you got here?" he said, and galloped on.

Pierre, feeling out of place there, having nothing to do, and afraid of

getting in someone's way again, galloped after the adjutant.

"What's happening here? May I come with you?" he asked.

"One moment, one moment!" replied the adjutant, and riding up to a stout

colonel who was standing in the meadow, he gave him some message and

then addressed Pierre.

"Why have you come here, Count?" he asked with a smile. "Still

inquisitive?"

"Yes, yes," assented Pierre.

But the adjutant turned his horse about and rode on.

"Here it's tolerable," said he, "but with Bagration on the left flank

they're getting it frightfully hot."

"Really?" said Pierre. "Where is that?"

"Come along with me to our knoll. We can get a view from there and in

our battery it is still bearable," said the adjutant. "Will you come?"

"Yes, I'll come with you," replied Pierre, looking round for his groom.

It was only now that he noticed wounded men staggering along or being

carried on stretchers. On that very meadow he had ridden over the day

before, a soldier was lying athwart the rows of scented hay, with his

head thrown awkwardly back and his shako off.

"Why haven't they carried him away?" Pierre was about to ask, but seeing

the stern expression of the adjutant who was also looking that way, he

checked himself.

Pierre did not find his groom and rode along the hollow with the

adjutant to Raevski's Redoubt. His horse lagged behind the adjutant's

and jolted him at every step.

"You don't seem to be used to riding, Count?" remarked the adjutant.

"No it's not that, but her action seems so jerky," said Pierre in a

puzzled tone.

"Why... she's wounded!" said the adjutant. "In the off foreleg above the

knee. A bullet, no doubt. I congratulate you, Count, on your baptism of

fire!"

Having ridden in the smoke past the Sixth Corps, behind the artillery

which had been moved forward and was in action, deafening them with the

noise of firing, they came to a small wood. There it was cool and quiet,

with a scent of autumn. Pierre and the adjutant dismounted and walked up

the hill on foot.

"Is the general here?" asked the adjutant on reaching the knoll.

"He was here a minute ago but has just gone that way," someone told him,

pointing to the right.

The adjutant looked at Pierre as if puzzled what to do with him now.

"Don't trouble about me," said Pierre. "I'll go up onto the knoll if I

may?"

"Yes, do. You'll see everything from there and it's less dangerous, and

I'll come for you."

Pierre went to the battery and the adjutant rode on. They did not meet

again, and only much later did Pierre learn that he lost an arm that

day.

The knoll to which Pierre ascended was that famous one afterwards known

to the Russians as the Knoll Battery or Raevski's Redoubt, and to the

French as la grande redoute, la fatale redoute, la redoute du centre,

around which tens of thousands fell, and which the French regarded as

the key to the whole position.

This redoubt consisted of a knoll, on three sides of which trenches had

been dug. Within the entrenchment stood ten guns that were being fired

through openings in the earthwork.

In line with the knoll on both sides stood other guns which also fired

incessantly. A little behind the guns stood infantry. When ascending

that knoll Pierre had no notion that this spot, on which small trenches

had been dug and from which a few guns were firing, was the most

important point of the battle.

On the contrary, just because he happened to be there he thought it one

of the least significant parts of the field.

Having reached the knoll, Pierre sat down at one end of a trench

surrounding the battery and gazed at what was going on around him with

an unconsciously happy smile. Occasionally he rose and walked about the

battery still with that same smile, trying not to obstruct the soldiers

who were loading, hauling the guns, and continually running past him

with bags and charges. The guns of that battery were being fired

continually one after another with a deafening roar, enveloping the

whole neighborhood in powder smoke.

In contrast with the dread felt by the infantrymen placed in support,

here in the battery where a small number of men busy at their work were

separated from the rest by a trench, everyone experienced a common and

as it were family feeling of animation.

The intrusion of Pierre's nonmilitary figure in a white hat made an

unpleasant impression at first. The soldiers looked askance at him with

surprise and even alarm as they went past him. The senior artillery

officer, a tall, long-legged, pockmarked man, moved over to Pierre as if

to see the action of the farthest gun and looked at him with curiosity.

A young round-faced officer, quite a boy still and evidently only just

out of the Cadet College, who was zealously commanding the two guns

entrusted to him, addressed Pierre sternly.

"Sir," he said, "permit me to ask you to stand aside. You must not be

here."

The soldiers shook their heads disapprovingly as they looked at Pierre.

But when they had convinced themselves that this man in the white hat

was doing no harm, but either sat quietly on the slope of the trench

with a shy smile or, politely making way for the soldiers, paced up and

down the battery under fire as calmly as if he were on a boulevard,

their feeling of hostile distrust gradually began to change into a

kindly and bantering sympathy, such as soldiers feel for their dogs,

cocks, goats, and in general for the animals that live with the

regiment. The men soon accepted Pierre into their family, adopted him,

gave him a nickname ("our gentleman"), and made kindly fun of him among

themselves.

A shell tore up the earth two paces from Pierre and he looked around

with a smile as he brushed from his clothes some earth it had thrown up.

"And how's it you're not afraid, sir, really now?" a red-faced, broad-

shouldered soldier asked Pierre, with a grin that disclosed a set of

sound, white teeth.

"Are you afraid, then?" said Pierre.

"What else do you expect?" answered the soldier. "She has no mercy, you

know! When she comes spluttering down, out go your innards. One can't

help being afraid," he said laughing.

Several of the men, with bright kindly faces, stopped beside Pierre.

They seemed not to have expected him to talk like anybody else, and the

discovery that he did so delighted them.

"It's the business of us soldiers. But in a gentleman it's wonderful!

There's a gentleman for you!"

"To your places!" cried the young officer to the men gathered round

Pierre.

The young officer was evidently exercising his duties for the first or

second time and therefore treated both his superiors and the men with

great precision and formality.

The booming cannonade and the fusillade of musketry were growing more

intense over the whole field, especially to the left where Bagration's

fleches were, but where Pierre was the smoke of the firing made it

almost impossible to distinguish anything. Moreover, his whole attention

was engrossed by watching the family circle--separated from all else--

formed by the men in the battery. His first unconscious feeling of

joyful animation produced by the sights and sounds of the battlefield

was now replaced by another, especially since he had seen that soldier

lying alone in the hayfield. Now, seated on the slope of the trench, he

observed the faces of those around him.

By ten o'clock some twenty men had already been carried away from the

battery; two guns were smashed and cannon balls fell more and more

frequently on the battery and spent bullets buzzed and whistled around.

But the men in the battery seemed not to notice this, and merry voices

and jokes were heard on all sides.

"A live one!" shouted a man as a whistling shell approached.

"Not this way! To the infantry!" added another with loud laughter,

seeing the shell fly past and fall into the ranks of the supports.

"Are you bowing to a friend, eh?" remarked another, chaffing a peasant

who ducked low as a cannon ball flew over.

Several soldiers gathered by the wall of the trench, looking out to see

what was happening in front.

"They've withdrawn the front line, it has retired," said they, pointing

over the earthwork.

"Mind your own business," an old sergeant shouted at them. "If they've

retired it's because there's work for them to do farther back."

And the sergeant, taking one of the men by the shoulders, gave him a

shove with his knee. This was followed by a burst of laughter.

"To the fifth gun, wheel it up!" came shouts from one side.

"Now then, all together, like bargees!" rose the merry voices of those

who were moving the gun.

"Oh, she nearly knocked our gentleman's hat off!" cried the red-faced

humorist, showing his teeth chaffing Pierre. "Awkward baggage!" he added

reproachfully to a cannon ball that struck a cannon wheel and a man's

leg.

"Now then, you foxes!" said another, laughing at some militiamen who,

stooping low, entered the battery to carry away the wounded man.

"So this gruel isn't to your taste? Oh, you crows! You're scared!" they

shouted at the militiamen who stood hesitating before the man whose leg

had been torn off.

"There, lads... oh, oh!" they mimicked the peasants, "they don't like it

at all!"

Pierre noticed that after every ball that hit the redoubt, and after

every loss, the liveliness increased more and more.

As the flames of the fire hidden within come more and more vividly and

rapidly from an approaching thundercloud, so, as if in opposition to

what was taking place, the lightning of hidden fire growing more and

more intense glowed in the faces of these men.

Pierre did not look out at the battlefield and was not concerned to know

what was happening there; he was entirely absorbed in watching this fire

which burned ever more brightly and which he felt was flaming up in the

same way in his own soul.

At ten o'clock the infantry that had been among the bushes in front of

the battery and along the Kamenka streamlet retreated. From the battery

they could be seen running back past it carrying their wounded on their

muskets. A general with his suite came to the battery, and after

speaking to the colonel gave Pierre an angry look and went away again

having ordered the infantry supports behind the battery to lie down, so

as to be less exposed to fire. After this from amid the ranks of

infantry to the right of the battery came the sound of a drum and shouts

of command, and from the battery one saw how those ranks of infantry

moved forward.

Pierre looked over the wall of the trench and was particularly struck by

a pale young officer who, letting his sword hang down, was walking

backwards and kept glancing uneasily around.

The ranks of the infantry disappeared amid the smoke but their long-

drawn shout and rapid musketry firing could still be heard. A few

minutes later crowds of wounded men and stretcher-bearers came back from

that direction. Projectiles began to fall still more frequently in the

battery. Several men were lying about who had not been removed. Around

the cannon the men moved still more briskly and busily. No one any

longer took notice of Pierre. Once or twice he was shouted at for being

in the way. The senior officer moved with big, rapid strides from one

gun to another with a frowning face. The young officer, with his face

still more flushed, commanded the men more scrupulously than ever. The

soldiers handed up the charges, turned, loaded, and did their business

with strained smartness. They gave little jumps as they walked, as

though they were on springs.

The stormcloud had come upon them, and in every face the fire which

Pierre had watched kindle burned up brightly. Pierre standing beside the

commanding officer. The young officer, his hand to his shako, ran up to

his superior.

"I have the honor to report, sir, that only eight rounds are left. Are

we to continue firing?" he asked.

"Grapeshot!" the senior shouted, without answering the question, looking

over the wall of the trench.

Suddenly something happened: the young officer gave a gasp and bending

double sat down on the ground like a bird shot on the wing. Everything

became strange, confused, and misty in Pierre's eyes.

One cannon ball after another whistled by and struck the earthwork, a

soldier, or a gun. Pierre, who had not noticed these sounds before, now

heard nothing else. On the right of the battery soldiers shouting

"Hurrah!" were running not forwards but backwards, it seemed to Pierre.

A cannon ball struck the very end of the earth work by which he was

standing, crumbling down the earth; a black ball flashed before his eyes

and at the same instant plumped into something. Some militiamen who were

entering the battery ran back.

"All with grapeshot!" shouted the officer.

The sergeant ran up to the officer and in a frightened whisper informed

him (as a butler at dinner informs his master that there is no more of

some wine asked for) that there were no more charges.

"The scoundrels! What are they doing?" shouted the officer, turning to

Pierre.

The officer's face was red and perspiring and his eyes glittered under

his frowning brow.

"Run to the reserves and bring up the ammunition boxes!" he yelled,

angrily avoiding Pierre with his eyes and speaking to his men.

"I'll go," said Pierre.

The officer, without answering him, strode across to the opposite side.

"Don't fire.... Wait!" he shouted.

The man who had been ordered to go for ammunition stumbled against

Pierre.

"Eh, sir, this is no place for you," said he, and ran down the slope.

Pierre ran after him, avoiding the spot where the young officer was

sitting.

One cannon ball, another, and a third flew over him, falling in front,

beside, and behind him. Pierre ran down the slope. "Where am I going?"

he suddenly asked himself when he was already near the green ammunition

wagons. He halted irresolutely, not knowing whether to return or go on.

Suddenly a terrible concussion threw him backwards to the ground. At the

same instant he was dazzled by a great flash of flame, and immediately a

deafening roar, crackling, and whistling made his ears tingle.

When he came to himself he was sitting on the ground leaning on his

hands; the ammunition wagons he had been approaching no longer existed,

only charred green boards and rags littered the scorched grass, and a

horse, dangling fragments of its shaft behind it, galloped past, while

another horse lay, like Pierre, on the ground, uttering prolonged and

piercing cries.

CHAPTER XXXII

Beside himself with terror Pierre jumped up and ran back to the battery,

as to the only refuge from the horrors that surrounded him.

On entering the earthwork he noticed that there were men doing something

there but that no shots were being fired from the battery. He had no

time to realize who these men were. He saw the senior officer lying on

the earth wall with his back turned as if he were examining something

down below and that one of the soldiers he had noticed before was

struggling forward shouting "Brothers!" and trying to free himself from

some men who were holding him by the arm. He also saw something else

that was strange.

But he had not time to realize that the colonel had been killed, that

the soldier shouting "Brothers!" was a prisoner, and that another man

had been bayoneted in the back before his eyes, for hardly had he run

into the redoubt before a thin, sallow-faced, perspiring man in a blue

uniform rushed on him sword in hand, shouting something. Instinctively

guarding against the shock--for they had been running together at full

speed before they saw one another--Pierre put out his hands and seized

the man (a French officer) by the shoulder with one hand and by the

throat with the other. The officer, dropping his sword, seized Pierre by

his collar.

For some seconds they gazed with frightened eyes at one another's

unfamiliar faces and both were perplexed at what they had done and what

they were to do next. "Am I taken prisoner or have I taken him

prisoner?" each was thinking. But the French officer was evidently more

inclined to think he had been taken prisoner because Pierre's strong

hand, impelled by instinctive fear, squeezed his throat ever tighter and

tighter. The Frenchman was about to say something, when just above their

heads, terrible and low, a cannon ball whistled, and it seemed to Pierre

that the French officer's head had been torn off, so swiftly had he

ducked it.

Pierre too bent his head and let his hands fall. Without further thought

as to who had taken whom prisoner, the Frenchman ran back to the battery

and Pierre ran down the slope stumbling over the dead and wounded who,

it seemed to him, caught at his feet. But before he reached the foot of

the knoll he was met by a dense crowd of Russian soldiers who,

stumbling, tripping up, and shouting, ran merrily and wildly toward the

battery. (This was the attack for which Ermolov claimed the credit,

declaring that only his courage and good luck made such a feat possible:

it was the attack in which he was said to have thrown some St. George's

Crosses he had in his pocket into the battery for the first soldiers to

take who got there.)

The French who had occupied the battery fled, and our troops shouting

"Hurrah!" pursued them so far beyond the battery that it was difficult

to call them back.

The prisoners were brought down from the battery and among them was a

wounded French general, whom the officers surrounded. Crowds of wounded-

-some known to Pierre and some unknown--Russians and French, with faces

distorted by suffering, walked, crawled, and were carried on stretchers

from the battery. Pierre again went up onto the knoll where he had spent

over an hour, and of that family circle which had received him as a

member he did not find a single one. There were many dead whom he did

not know, but some he recognized. The young officer still sat in the

same way, bent double, in a pool of blood at the edge of the earth wall.

The red-faced man was still twitching, but they did not carry him away.

Pierre ran down the slope once more.

"Now they will stop it, now they will be horrified at what they have

done!" he thought, aimlessly going toward a crowd of stretcher bearers

moving from the battlefield.

But behind the veil of smoke the sun was still high, and in front and

especially to the left, near Semenovsk, something seemed to be seething

in the smoke, and the roar of cannon and musketry did not diminish, but

even increased to desperation like a man who, straining himself, shrieks

with all his remaining strength.

CHAPTER XXXIII

The chief action of the battle of Borodino was fought within the seven

thousand feet between Borodino and Bagration's fleches. Beyond that

space there was, on the one side, a demonstration made by the Russians

with Uvarov's cavalry at midday, and on the other side, beyond Utitsa,

Poniatowski's collision with Tuchkov; but these two were detached and

feeble actions in comparison with what took place in the center of the

battlefield. On the field between Borodino and the fleches, beside the

wood, the chief action of the day took place on an open space visible

from both sides and was fought in the simplest and most artless way.

The battle began on both sides with a cannonade from several hundred

guns.

Then when the whole field was covered with smoke, two divisions,

Campan's and Dessaix's, advanced from the French right, while Murat's

troops advanced on Borodino from their left.

From the Shevardino Redoubt where Napoleon was standing the fleches were

two thirds of a mile away, and it was more than a mile as the crow flies

to Borodino, so that Napoleon could not see what was happening there,

especially as the smoke mingling with the mist hid the whole locality.

The soldiers of Dessaix's division advancing against the fleches could

only be seen till they had entered the hollow that lay between them and

the fleches. As soon as they had descended into that hollow, the smoke

of the guns and musketry on the fleches grew so dense that it covered

the whole approach on that side of it. Through the smoke glimpses could

be caught of something black--probably men--and at times the glint of

bayonets. But whether they were moving or stationary, whether they were

French or Russian, could not be discovered from the Shevardino Redoubt.

The sun had risen brightly and its slanting rays struck straight into

Napoleon's face as, shading his eyes with his hand, he looked at the

fleches. The smoke spread out before them, and at times it looked as if

the smoke were moving, at times as if the troops moved. Sometimes shouts

were heard through the firing, but it was impossible to tell what was

being done there.

Napoleon, standing on the knoll, looked through a field glass, and in

its small circlet saw smoke and men, sometimes his own and sometimes

Russians, but when he looked again with the naked eye, he could not tell

where what he had seen was.

He descended the knoll and began walking up and down before it.

Occasionally he stopped, listened to the firing, and gazed intently at

the battlefield.

But not only was it impossible to make out what was happening from where

he was standing down below, or from the knoll above on which some of his

generals had taken their stand, but even from the fleches themselves--in

which by this time there were now Russian and now French soldiers,

alternately or together, dead, wounded, alive, frightened, or maddened--

even at those fleches themselves it was impossible to make out what was

taking place. There for several hours amid incessant cannon and musketry

fire, now Russians were seen alone, now Frenchmen alone, now infantry,

and now cavalry: they appeared, fired, fell, collided, not knowing what

to do with one another, screamed, and ran back again.

From the battlefield adjutants he had sent out, and orderlies from his

marshals, kept galloping up to Napoleon with reports of the progress of

the action, but all these reports were false, both because it was

impossible in the heat of battle to say what was happening at any given

moment and because many of the adjutants did not go to the actual place

of conflict but reported what they had heard from others; and also

because while an adjutant was riding more than a mile to Napoleon

circumstances changed and the news he brought was already becoming

false. Thus an adjutant galloped up from Murat with tidings that

Borodino had been occupied and the bridge over the Kolocha was in the

hands of the French. The adjutant asked whether Napoleon wished the

troops to cross it? Napoleon gave orders that the troops should form up

on the farther side and wait. But before that order was given--almost as

soon in fact as the adjutant had left Borodino--the bridge had been

retaken by the Russians and burned, in the very skirmish at which Pierre

had been present at the beginning of the battle.

An adjutant galloped up from the fleches with a pale and frightened face

and reported to Napoleon that their attack had been repulsed, Campan

wounded, and Davout killed; yet at the very time the adjutant had been

told that the French had been repulsed, the fleches had in fact been

recaptured by other French troops, and Davout was alive and only

slightly bruised. On the basis of these necessarily untrustworthy

reports Napoleon gave his orders, which had either been executed before

he gave them or could not be and were not executed.

The marshals and generals, who were nearer to the field of battle but,

like Napoleon, did not take part in the actual fighting and only

occasionally went within musket range, made their own arrangements

without asking Napoleon and issued orders where and in what direction to

fire and where cavalry should gallop and infantry should run. But even

their orders, like Napoleon's, were seldom carried out, and then but

partially. For the most part things happened contrary to their orders.

Soldiers ordered to advance ran back on meeting grapeshot; soldiers

ordered to remain where they were, suddenly, seeing Russians

unexpectedly before them, sometimes rushed back and sometimes forward,

and the cavalry dashed without orders in pursuit of the flying Russians.

In this way two cavalry regiments galloped through the Semenovsk hollow

and as soon as they reached the top of the incline turned round and

galloped full speed back again. The infantry moved in the same way,

sometimes running to quite other places than those they were ordered to

go to. All orders as to where and when to move the guns, when to send

infantry to shoot or horsemen to ride down the Russian infantry--all

such orders were given by the officers on the spot nearest to the units

concerned, without asking either Ney, Davout, or Murat, much less

Napoleon. They did not fear getting into trouble for not fulfilling

orders or for acting on their own initiative, for in battle what is at

stake is what is dearest to man--his own life--and it sometimes seems

that safety lies in running back, sometimes in running forward; and

these men who were right in the heat of the battle acted according to

the mood of the moment. In reality, however, all these movements forward

and backward did not improve or alter the position of the troops. All

their rushing and galloping at one another did little harm, the harm of

disablement and death was caused by the balls and bullets that flew over

the fields on which these men were floundering about. As soon as they

left the place where the balls and bullets were flying about, their

superiors, located in the background, re-formed them and brought them

under discipline and under the influence of that discipline led them

back to the zone of fire, where under the influence of fear of death

they lost their discipline and rushed about according to the chance

promptings of the throng.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Napoleon's generals--Davout, Ney, and Murat, who were near that region

of fire and sometimes even entered it--repeatedly led into it huge

masses of well-ordered troops. But contrary to what had always happened

in their former battles, instead of the news they expected of the

enemy's flight, these orderly masses returned thence as disorganized and

terrified mobs. The generals re-formed them, but their numbers

constantly decreased. In the middle of the day Murat sent his adjutant

to Napoleon to demand reinforcements.

Napoleon sat at the foot of the knoll, drinking punch, when Murat's

adjutant galloped up with an assurance that the Russians would be routed

if His Majesty would let him have another division.

"Reinforcements?" said Napoleon in a tone of stern surprise, looking at

the adjutant--a handsome lad with long black curls arranged like Murat's

own--as though he did not understand his words.

"Reinforcements!" thought Napoleon to himself. "How can they need

reinforcements when they already have half the army directed against a

weak, unentrenched Russian wing?"

"Tell the King of Naples," said he sternly, "that it is not noon yet,

and I don't yet see my chessboard clearly. Go!..."

The handsome boy adjutant with the long hair sighed deeply without

removing his hand from his hat and galloped back to where men were being

slaughtered.

Napoleon rose and having summoned Caulaincourt and Berthier began

talking to them about matters unconnected with the battle.

In the midst of this conversation, which was beginning to interest

Napoleon, Berthier's eyes turned to look at a general with a suite, who

was galloping toward the knoll on a lathering horse. It was Belliard.

Having dismounted he went up to the Emperor with rapid strides and in a

loud voice began boldly demonstrating the necessity of sending

reinforcements. He swore on his honor that the Russians were lost if the

Emperor would give another division.

Napoleon shrugged his shoulders and continued to pace up and down

without replying. Belliard began talking loudly and eagerly to the

generals of the suite around him.

"You are very fiery, Belliard," said Napoleon, when he again came up to

the general. "In the heat of a battle it is easy to make a mistake. Go

and have another look and then come back to me."

Before Belliard was out of sight, a messenger from another part of the

battlefield galloped up.

"Now then, what do you want?" asked Napoleon in the tone of a man

irritated at being continually disturbed.

"Sire, the prince..." began the adjutant.

"Asks for reinforcements?" said Napoleon with an angry gesture.

The adjutant bent his head affirmatively and began to report, but the

Emperor turned from him, took a couple of steps, stopped, came back, and

called Berthier.

"We must give reserves," he said, moving his arms slightly apart. "Who

do you think should be sent there?" he asked of Berthier (whom he

subsequently termed "that gosling I have made an eagle").

"Send Claparede's division, sire," replied Berthier, who knew all the

division's regiments, and battalions by heart.

Napoleon nodded assent.

The adjutant galloped to Claparede's division and a few minutes later

the Young Guards stationed behind the knoll moved forward. Napoleon

gazed silently in that direction.

"No!" he suddenly said to Berthier. "I can't send Claparede. Send

Friant's division."

Though there was no advantage in sending Friant's division instead of

Claparede's, and even an obvious inconvenience and delay in stopping

Claparede and sending Friant now, the order was carried out exactly.

Napoleon did not notice that in regard to his army he was playing the

part of a doctor who hinders by his medicines--a role he so justly

understood and condemned.

Friant's division disappeared as the others had done into the smoke of

the battlefield. From all sides adjutants continued to arrive at a

gallop and as if by agreement all said the same thing. They all asked

for reinforcements and all said that the Russians were holding their

positions and maintaining a hellish fire under which the French army was

melting away.

Napoleon sat on a campstool, wrapped in thought.

M. de Beausset, the man so fond of travel, having fasted since morning,

came up to the Emperor and ventured respectfully to suggest lunch to His

Majesty.

"I hope I may now congratulate Your Majesty on a victory?" said he.

Napoleon silently shook his head in negation. Assuming the negation to

refer only to the victory and not to the lunch, M. de Beausset ventured

with respectful jocularity to remark that there is no reason for not

having lunch when one can get it.

"Go away..." exclaimed Napoleon suddenly and morosely, and turned aside.

A beatific smile of regret, repentance, and ecstasy beamed on M. de

Beausset's face and he glided away to the other generals.

Napoleon was experiencing a feeling of depression like that of an ever-

lucky gambler who, after recklessly flinging money about and always

winning, suddenly just when he has calculated all the chances of the

game, finds that the more he considers his play the more surely he

loses.

His troops were the same, his generals the same, the same preparations

had been made, the same dispositions, and the same proclamation courte

et energique, he himself was still the same: he knew that and knew that

he was now even more experienced and skillful than before. Even the

enemy was the same as at Austerlitz and Friedland--yet the terrible

stroke of his arm had supernaturally become impotent.

All the old methods that had been unfailingly crowned with success: the

concentration of batteries on one point, an attack by reserves to break

the enemy's line, and a cavalry attack by "the men of iron," all these

methods had already been employed, yet not only was there no victory,

but from all sides came the same news of generals killed and wounded, of

reinforcements needed, of the impossibility of driving back the

Russians, and of disorganization among his own troops.

Formerly, after he had given two or three orders and uttered a few

phrases, marshals and adjutants had come galloping up with

congratulations and happy faces, announcing the trophies taken, the

corps of prisoners, bundles of enemy eagles and standards, cannon and

stores, and Murat had only begged leave to loose the cavalry to gather

in the baggage wagons. So it had been at Lodi, Marengo, Arcola, Jena,

Austerlitz, Wagram, and so on. But now something strange was happening

to his troops.

Despite news of the capture of the fleches, Napoleon saw that this was

not the same, not at all the same, as what had happened in his former

battles. He saw that what he was feeling was felt by all the men about

him experienced in the art of war. All their faces looked dejected, and

they all shunned one another's eyes--only a de Beausset could fail to

grasp the meaning of what was happening.

But Napoleon with his long experience of war well knew the meaning of a

battle not gained by the attacking side in eight hours, after all

efforts had been expended. He knew that it was a lost battle and that

the least accident might now--with the fight balanced on such a strained

center--destroy him and his army.

When he ran his mind over the whole of this strange Russian campaign in

which not one battle had been won, and in which not a flag, or cannon,

or army corps had been captured in two months, when he looked at the

concealed depression on the faces around him and heard reports of the

Russians still holding their ground--a terrible feeling like a nightmare

took possession of him, and all the unlucky accidents that might destroy

him occurred to his mind. The Russians might fall on his left wing,

might break through his center, he himself might be killed by a stray

cannon ball. All this was possible. In former battles he had only

considered the possibilities of success, but now innumerable unlucky

chances presented themselves, and he expected them all. Yes, it was like

a dream in which a man fancies that a ruffian is coming to attack him,

and raises his arm to strike that ruffian a terrible blow which he knows

should annihilate him, but then feels that his arm drops powerless and

limp like a rag, and the horror of unavoidable destruction seizes him in

his helplessness.

The news that the Russians were attacking the left flank of the French

army aroused that horror in Napoleon. He sat silently on a campstool

below the knoll, with head bowed and elbows on his knees. Berthier

approached and suggested that they should ride along the line to

ascertain the position of affairs.

"What? What do you say?" asked Napoleon. "Yes, tell them to bring me my

horse."

He mounted and rode toward Semenovsk.

Amid the powder smoke, slowly dispersing over the whole space through

which Napoleon rode, horses and men were lying in pools of blood, singly

or in heaps. Neither Napoleon nor any of his generals had ever before

seen such horrors or so many slain in such a small area. The roar of

guns, that had not ceased for ten hours, wearied the ear and gave a

peculiar significance to the spectacle, as music does to tableaux

vivants. Napoleon rode up the high ground at Semenovsk, and through the

smoke saw ranks of men in uniforms of a color unfamiliar to him. They

were Russians.

The Russians stood in serried ranks behind Semenovsk village and its

knoll, and their guns boomed incessantly along their line and sent forth

clouds of smoke. It was no longer a battle: it was a continuous

slaughter which could be of no avail either to the French or the

Russians. Napoleon stopped his horse and again fell into the reverie

from which Berthier had aroused him. He could not stop what was going on

before him and around him and was supposed to be directed by him and to

depend on him, and from its lack of success this affair, for the first

time, seemed to him unnecessary and horrible.

One of the generals rode up to Napoleon and ventured to offer to lead

the Old Guard into action. Ney and Berthier, standing near Napoleon,

exchanged looks and smiled contemptuously at this general's senseless

offer.

Napoleon bowed his head and remained silent a long time.

"At eight hundred leagues from France, I will not have my Guard

destroyed!" he said, and turning his horse rode back to Shevardino.

CHAPTER XXXV

On the rug-covered bench where Pierre had seen him in the morning sat

Kutuzov, his gray head hanging, his heavy body relaxed. He gave no

orders, but only assented to or dissented from what others suggested.

"Yes, yes, do that," he replied to various proposals. "Yes, yes: go,

dear boy, and have a look," he would say to one or another of those

about him; or, "No, don't, we'd better wait!" He listened to the reports

that were brought him and gave directions when his subordinates demanded

that of him; but when listening to the reports it seemed as if he were

not interested in the import of the words spoken, but rather in

something else--in the expression of face and tone of voice of those who

were reporting. By long years of military experience he knew, and with

the wisdom of age understood, that it is impossible for one man to

direct hundreds of thousands of others struggling with death, and he

knew that the result of a battle is decided not by the orders of a

commander-in-chief, nor the place where the troops are stationed, nor by

the number of cannon or of slaughtered men, but by that intangible force

called the spirit of the army, and he watched this force and guided it

in as far as that was in his power.

Kutuzov's general expression was one of concentrated quiet attention,

and his face wore a strained look as if he found it difficult to master

the fatigue of his old and feeble body.

At eleven o'clock they brought him news that the fleches captured by the

French had been retaken, but that Prince Bagration was wounded. Kutuzov

groaned and swayed his head.

"Ride over to Prince Peter Ivanovich and find out about it exactly," he

said to one of his adjutants, and then turned to the Duke of Wurttemberg

who was standing behind him.

"Will Your Highness please take command of the first army?"

Soon after the duke's departure--before he could possibly have reached

Semenovsk--his adjutant came back from him and told Kutuzov that the

duke asked for more troops.

Kutuzov made a grimace and sent an order to Dokhturov to take over the

command of the first army, and a request to the duke--whom he said he

could not spare at such an important moment--to return to him. When they

brought him news that Murat had been taken prisoner, and the staff

officers congratulated him, Kutuzov smiled.

"Wait a little, gentlemen," said he. "The battle is won, and there is

nothing extraordinary in the capture of Murat. Still, it is better to

wait before we rejoice."

But he sent an adjutant to take the news round the army.

When Scherbinin came galloping from the left flank with news that the

French had captured the fleches and the village of Semenovsk, Kutuzov,

guessing by the sounds of the battle and by Scherbinin's looks that the

news was bad, rose as if to stretch his legs and, taking Scherbinin's

arm, led him aside.

"Go, my dear fellow," he said to Ermolov, "and see whether something

can't be done."

Kutuzov was in Gorki, near the center of the Russian position. The

attack directed by Napoleon against our left flank had been several

times repulsed. In the center the French had not got beyond Borodino,

and on their left flank Uvarov's cavalry had put the French to flight.

Toward three o'clock the French attacks ceased. On the faces of all who

came from the field of battle, and of those who stood around him,

Kutuzov noticed an expression of extreme tension. He was satisfied with

the day's success--a success exceeding his expectations, but the old

man's strength was failing him. Several times his head dropped low as if

it were falling and he dozed off. Dinner was brought him.

Adjutant General Wolzogen, the man who when riding past Prince Andrew

had said, "the war should be extended widely," and whom Bagration so

detested, rode up while Kutuzov was at dinner. Wolzogen had come from

Barclay de Tolly to report on the progress of affairs on the left flank.

The sagacious Barclay de Tolly, seeing crowds of wounded men running

back and the disordered rear of the army, weighed all the circumstances,

concluded that the battle was lost, and sent his favorite officer to the

commander in chief with that news.

Kutuzov was chewing a piece of roast chicken with difficulty and glanced

at Wolzogen with eyes that brightened under their puckering lids.

Wolzogen, nonchalantly stretching his legs, approached Kutuzov with a

half-contemptuous smile on his lips, scarcely touching the peak of his

cap.

He treated his Serene Highness with a somewhat affected nonchalance

intended to show that, as a highly trained military man, he left it to

Russians to make an idol of this useless old man, but that he knew whom

he was dealing with. "Der alte Herr" (as in their own set the Germans

called Kutuzov) "is making himself very comfortable," thought Wolzogen,

and looking severely at the dishes in front of Kutuzov he began to

report to "the old gentleman" the position of affairs on the left flank

as Barclay had ordered him to and as he himself had seen and understood

it.

"All the points of our position are in the enemy's hands and we cannot

dislodge them for lack of troops, the men are running away and it is

impossible to stop them," he reported.

Kutuzov ceased chewing and fixed an astonished gaze on Wolzogen, as if

not understanding what was said to him. Wolzogen, noticing "the old

gentleman's" agitation, said with a smile:

"I have not considered it right to conceal from your Serene Highness

what I have seen. The troops are in complete disorder..."

"You have seen? You have seen?..." Kutuzov shouted. Frowning and rising

quickly, he went up to Wolzogen.

"How... how dare you!..." he shouted, choking and making a threatening

gesture with his trembling arms: "How dare you, sir, say that to me? You

know nothing about it. Tell General Barclay from me that his information

is incorrect and that the real course of the battle is better known to

me, the commander-in-chief, than to him."

Wolzogen was about to make a rejoinder, but Kutuzov interrupted him.

"The enemy has been repulsed on the left and defeated on the right

flank. If you have seen amiss, sir, do not allow yourself to say what

you don't know! Be so good as to ride to General Barclay and inform him

of my firm intention to attack the enemy tomorrow," said Kutuzov

sternly.

All were silent, and the only sound audible was the heavy breathing of

the panting old general.

"They are repulsed everywhere, for which I thank God and our brave army!

The enemy is beaten, and tomorrow we shall drive him from the sacred

soil of Russia," said Kutuzov crossing himself, and he suddenly sobbed

as his eyes filled with tears.

Wolzogen, shrugging his shoulders and curling his lips, stepped silently

aside, marveling at "the old gentleman's" conceited stupidity.

"Ah, here he is, my hero!" said Kutuzov to a portly, handsome, dark-

haired general who was just ascending the knoll.

This was Raevski, who had spent the whole day at the most important part

of the field of Borodino.

Raevski reported that the troops were firmly holding their ground and

that the French no longer ventured to attack.

After hearing him, Kutuzov said in French:

"Then you do not think, like some others, that we must retreat?"

"On the contrary, your Highness, in indecisive actions it is always the

most stubborn who remain victors," replied Raevski, "and in my

opinion..."

"Kaysarov!" Kutuzov called to his adjutant. "Sit down and write out the

order of the day for tomorrow. And you," he continued, addressing

another, "ride along the line and announce that tomorrow we attack."

While Kutuzov was talking to Raevski and dictating the order of the day,

Wolzogen returned from Barclay and said that General Barclay wished to

have written confirmation of the order the field marshal had given.

Kutuzov, without looking at Wolzogen, gave directions for the order to

be written out which the former commander-in-chief, to avoid personal

responsibility, very judiciously wished to receive.

And by means of that mysterious indefinable bond which maintains

throughout an army one and the same temper, known as "the spirit of the

army," and which constitutes the sinew of war, Kutuzov's words, his

order for a battle next day, immediately became known from one end of

the army to the other.

It was far from being the same words or the same order that reached the

farthest links of that chain. The tales passing from mouth to mouth at

different ends of the army did not even resemble what Kutuzov had said,

but the sense of his words spread everywhere because what he said was

not the outcome of cunning calculations, but of a feeling that lay in

the commander-in-chief's soul as in that of every Russian.

And on learning that tomorrow they were to attack the enemy, and hearing

from the highest quarters a confirmation of what they wanted to believe,

the exhausted, wavering men felt comforted and inspirited.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Prince Andrew's regiment was among the reserves which till after one

o'clock were stationed inactive behind Semenovsk, under heavy artillery

fire. Toward two o'clock the regiment, having already lost more than two

hundred men, was moved forward into a trampled oatfield in the gap

between Semenovsk and the Knoll Battery, where thousands of men perished

that day and on which an intense, concentrated fire from several hundred

enemy guns was directed between one and two o'clock.

Without moving from that spot or firing a single shot the regiment here

lost another third of its men. From in front and especially from the

right, in the unlifting smoke the guns boomed, and out of the mysterious

domain of smoke that overlay the whole space in front, quick hissing

cannon balls and slow whistling shells flew unceasingly. At times, as if

to allow them a respite, a quarter of an hour passed during which the

cannon balls and shells all flew overhead, but sometimes several men

were torn from the regiment in a minute and the slain were continually

being dragged away and the wounded carried off.

With each fresh blow less and less chance of life remained for those not

yet killed. The regiment stood in columns of battalion, three hundred

paces apart, but nevertheless the men were always in one and the same

mood. All alike were taciturn and morose. Talk was rarely heard in the

ranks, and it ceased altogether every time the thud of a successful shot

and the cry of "stretchers!" was heard. Most of the time, by their

officers' order, the men sat on the ground. One, having taken off his

shako, carefully loosened the gathers of its lining and drew them tight

again; another, rubbing some dry clay between his palms, polished his

bayonet; another fingered the strap and pulled the buckle of his

bandolier, while another smoothed and refolded his leg bands and put his

boots on again. Some built little houses of the tufts in the plowed

ground, or plaited baskets from the straw in the cornfield. All seemed

fully absorbed in these pursuits. When men were killed or wounded, when

rows of stretchers went past, when some troops retreated, and when great

masses of the enemy came into view through the smoke, no one paid any

attention to these things. But when our artillery or cavalry advanced or

some of our infantry were seen to move forward, words of approval were

heard on all sides. But the liveliest attention was attracted by

occurrences quite apart from, and unconnected with, the battle. It was

as if the minds of these morally exhausted men found relief in everyday,

commonplace occurrences. A battery of artillery was passing in front of

the regiment. The horse of an ammunition cart put its leg over a trace.

"Hey, look at the trace horse!... Get her leg out! She'll fall.... Ah,

they don't see it!" came identical shouts from the ranks all along the

regiment. Another time, general attention was attracted by a small brown

dog, coming heaven knows whence, which trotted in a preoccupied manner

in front of the ranks with tail stiffly erect till suddenly a shell fell

close by, when it yelped, tucked its tail between its legs, and darted

aside. Yells and shrieks of laughter rose from the whole regiment. But

such distractions lasted only a moment, and for eight hours the men had

been inactive, without food, in constant fear of death, and their pale

and gloomy faces grew ever paler and gloomier.

Prince Andrew, pale and gloomy like everyone in the regiment, paced up

and down from the border of one patch to another, at the edge of the

meadow beside an oatfield, with head bowed and arms behind his back.

There was nothing for him to do and no orders to be given. Everything

went on of itself. The killed were dragged from the front, the wounded

carried away, and the ranks closed up. If any soldiers ran to the rear

they returned immediately and hastily. At first Prince Andrew,

considering it his duty to rouse the courage of the men and to set them

an example, walked about among the ranks, but he soon became convinced

that this was unnecessary and that there was nothing he could teach

them. All the powers of his soul, as of every soldier there, were

unconsciously bent on avoiding the contemplation of the horrors of their

situation. He walked along the meadow, dragging his feet, rustling the

grass, and gazing at the dust that covered his boots; now he took big

strides trying to keep to the footprints left on the meadow by the

mowers, then he counted his steps, calculating how often he must walk

from one strip to another to walk a mile, then he stripped the flowers

from the wormwood that grew along a boundary rut, rubbed them in his

palms, and smelled their pungent, sweetly bitter scent. Nothing remained

of the previous day's thoughts. He thought of nothing. He listened with

weary ears to the ever-recurring sounds, distinguishing the whistle of

flying projectiles from the booming of the reports, glanced at the

tiresomely familiar faces of the men of the first battalion, and waited.

"Here it comes... this one is coming our way again!" he thought,

listening to an approaching whistle in the hidden region of smoke. "One,

another! Again! It has hit...." He stopped and looked at the ranks. "No,

it has gone over. But this one has hit!" And again he started trying to

reach the boundary strip in sixteen paces. A whizz and a thud! Five

paces from him, a cannon ball tore up the dry earth and disappeared. A

chill ran down his back. Again he glanced at the ranks. Probably many

had been hit--a large crowd had gathered near the second battalion.

"Adjutant!" he shouted. "Order them not to crowd together."

The adjutant, having obeyed this instruction, approached Prince Andrew.

From the other side a battalion commander rode up.

"Look out!" came a frightened cry from a soldier and, like a bird

whirring in rapid flight and alighting on the ground, a shell dropped

with little noise within two steps of Prince Andrew and close to the

battalion commander's horse. The horse first, regardless of whether it

was right or wrong to show fear, snorted, reared almost throwing the

major, and galloped aside. The horse's terror infected the men.

"Lie down!" cried the adjutant, throwing himself flat on the ground.

Prince Andrew hesitated. The smoking shell spun like a top between him

and the prostrate adjutant, near a wormwood plant between the field and

the meadow.

"Can this be death?" thought Prince Andrew, looking with a quite new,

envious glance at the grass, the wormwood, and the streamlet of smoke

that curled up from the rotating black ball. "I cannot, I do not wish to

die. I love life--I love this grass, this earth, this air...." He

thought this, and at the same time remembered that people were looking

at him.

"It's shameful, sir!" he said to the adjutant. "What..."

He did not finish speaking. At one and the same moment came the sound of

an explosion, a whistle of splinters as from a breaking window frame, a

suffocating smell of powder, and Prince Andrew started to one side,

raising his arm, and fell on his chest. Several officers ran up to him.

From the right side of his abdomen, blood was welling out making a large

stain on the grass.

The militiamen with stretchers who were called up stood behind the

officers. Prince Andrew lay on his chest with his face in the grass,

breathing heavily and noisily.

"What are you waiting for? Come along!"

The peasants went up and took him by his shoulders and legs, but he

moaned piteously and, exchanging looks, they set him down again.

"Pick him up, lift him, it's all the same!" cried someone.

They again took him by the shoulders and laid him on the stretcher.

"Ah, God! My God! What is it? The stomach? That means death! My God!"--

voices among the officers were heard saying.

"It flew a hair's breadth past my ear," said the adjutant.

The peasants, adjusting the stretcher to their shoulders, started

hurriedly along the path they had trodden down, to the dressing station.

"Keep in step! Ah... those peasants!" shouted an officer, seizing by

their shoulders and checking the peasants, who were walking unevenly and

jolting the stretcher.

"Get into step, Fedor... I say, Fedor!" said the foremost peasant.

"Now that's right!" said the one behind joyfully, when he had got into

step.

"Your excellency! Eh, Prince!" said the trembling voice of Timokhin, who

had run up and was looking down on the stretcher.

Prince Andrew opened his eyes and looked up at the speaker from the

stretcher into which his head had sunk deep and again his eyelids

drooped.

The militiamen carried Prince Andrew to the dressing station by the

wood, where wagons were stationed. The dressing station consisted of

three tents with flaps turned back, pitched at the edge of a birch wood.

In the wood, wagons and horses were standing. The horses were eating

oats from their movable troughs and sparrows flew down and pecked the

grains that fell. Some crows, scenting blood, flew among the birch trees

cawing impatiently. Around the tents, over more than five acres,

bloodstained men in various garbs stood, sat, or lay. Around the wounded

stood crowds of soldier stretcher-bearers with dismal and attentive

faces, whom the officers keeping order tried in vain to drive from the

spot. Disregarding the officers' orders, the soldiers stood leaning

against their stretchers and gazing intently, as if trying to comprehend

the difficult problem of what was taking place before them. From the

tents came now loud angry cries and now plaintive groans. Occasionally

dressers ran out to fetch water, or to point out those who were to be

brought in next. The wounded men awaiting their turn outside the tents

groaned, sighed, wept, screamed, swore, or asked for vodka. Some were

delirious. Prince Andrew's bearers, stepping over the wounded who had

not yet been bandaged, took him, as a regimental commander, close up to

one of the tents and there stopped, awaiting instructions. Prince Andrew

opened his eyes and for a long time could not make out what was going on

around him. He remembered the meadow, the wormwood, the field, the

whirling black ball, and his sudden rush of passionate love of life. Two

steps from him, leaning against a branch and talking loudly and

attracting general attention, stood a tall, handsome, black-haired

noncommissioned officer with a bandaged head. He had been wounded in the

head and leg by bullets. Around him, eagerly listening to his talk, a

crowd of wounded and stretcher-bearers was gathered.

"We kicked him out from there so that he chucked everything, we grabbed

the King himself!" cried he, looking around him with eyes that glittered

with fever. "If only reserves had come up just then, lads, there

wouldn't have been nothing left of him! I tell you surely..."

Like all the others near the speaker, Prince Andrew looked at him with

shining eyes and experienced a sense of comfort. "But isn't it all the

same now?" thought he. "And what will be there, and what has there been

here? Why was I so reluctant to part with life? There was something in

this life I did not and do not understand."

CHAPTER XXXVII

One of the doctors came out of the tent in a bloodstained apron, holding

a cigar between the thumb and little finger of one of his small

bloodstained hands, so as not to smear it. He raised his head and looked

about him, but above the level of the wounded men. He evidently wanted a

little respite. After turning his head from right to left for some time,

he sighed and looked down.

"All right, immediately," he replied to a dresser who pointed Prince

Andrew out to him, and he told them to carry him into the tent.

Murmurs arose among the wounded who were waiting.

"It seems that even in the next world only the gentry are to have a

chance!" remarked one.

Prince Andrew was carried in and laid on a table that had only just been

cleared and which a dresser was washing down. Prince Andrew could not

make out distinctly what was in that tent. The pitiful groans from all

sides and the torturing pain in his thigh, stomach, and back distracted

him. All he saw about him merged into a general impression of naked,

bleeding human bodies that seemed to fill the whole of the low tent, as

a few weeks previously, on that hot August day, such bodies had filled

the dirty pond beside the Smolensk road. Yes, it was the same flesh, the

same chair a canon, the sight of which had even then filled him with

horror, as by a presentiment.

There were three operating tables in the tent. Two were occupied, and on

the third they placed Prince Andrew. For a little while he was left

alone and involuntarily witnessed what was taking place on the other two

tables. On the nearest one sat a Tartar, probably a Cossack, judging by

the uniform thrown down beside him. Four soldiers were holding him, and

a spectacled doctor was cutting into his muscular brown back.

"Ooh, ooh, ooh!" grunted the Tartar, and suddenly lifting up his swarthy

snub-nosed face with its high cheekbones, and baring his white teeth, he

began to wriggle and twitch his body and utter piercing, ringing, and

prolonged yells. On the other table, round which many people were

crowding, a tall well-fed man lay on his back with his head thrown back.

His curly hair, its color, and the shape of his head seemed strangely

familiar to Prince Andrew. Several dressers were pressing on his chest

to hold him down. One large, white, plump leg twitched rapidly all the

time with a feverish tremor. The man was sobbing and choking

convulsively. Two doctors--one of whom was pale and trembling--were

silently doing something to this man's other, gory leg. When he had

finished with the Tartar, whom they covered with an overcoat, the

spectacled doctor came up to Prince Andrew, wiping his hands.

He glanced at Prince Andrew's face and quickly turned away.

"Undress him! What are you waiting for?" he cried angrily to the

dressers.

His very first, remotest recollections of childhood came back to Prince

Andrew's mind when the dresser with sleeves rolled up began hastily to

undo the buttons of his clothes and undressed him. The doctor bent down

over the wound, felt it, and sighed deeply. Then he made a sign to

someone, and the torturing pain in his abdomen caused Prince Andrew to

lose consciousness. When he came to himself the splintered portions of

his thighbone had been extracted, the torn flesh cut away, and the wound

bandaged. Water was being sprinkled on his face. As soon as Prince

Andrew opened his eyes, the doctor bent over, kissed him silently on the

lips, and hurried away.

After the sufferings he had been enduring, Prince Andrew enjoyed a

blissful feeling such as he had not experienced for a long time. All the

best and happiest moments of his life--especially his earliest

childhood, when he used to be undressed and put to bed, and when leaning

over him his nurse sang him to sleep and he, burying his head in the

pillow, felt happy in the mere consciousness of life--returned to his

memory, not merely as something past but as something present.

The doctors were busily engaged with the wounded man the shape of whose

head seemed familiar to Prince Andrew: they were lifting him up and

trying to quiet him.

"Show it to me.... Oh, ooh... Oh! Oh, ooh!" his frightened moans could

be heard, subdued by suffering and broken by sobs.

Hearing those moans Prince Andrew wanted to weep. Whether because he was

dying without glory, or because he was sorry to part with life, or

because of those memories of a childhood that could not return, or

because he was suffering and others were suffering and that man near him

was groaning so piteously--he felt like weeping childlike, kindly, and

almost happy tears.

The wounded man was shown his amputated leg stained with clotted blood

and with the boot still on.

"Oh! Oh, ooh!" he sobbed, like a woman.

The doctor who had been standing beside him, preventing Prince Andrew

from seeing his face, moved away.

"My God! What is this? Why is he here?" said Prince Andrew to himself.

In the miserable, sobbing, enfeebled man whose leg had just been

amputated, he recognized Anatole Kuragin. Men were supporting him in

their arms and offering him a glass of water, but his trembling, swollen

lips could not grasp its rim. Anatole was sobbing painfully. "Yes, it is

he! Yes, that man is somehow closely and painfully connected with me,"

thought Prince Andrew, not yet clearly grasping what he saw before him.

"What is the connection of that man with my childhood and life?" he

asked himself without finding an answer. And suddenly a new unexpected

memory from that realm of pure and loving childhood presented itself to

him. He remembered Natasha as he had seen her for the first time at the

ball in 1810, with her slender neck and arms and with a frightened happy

face ready for rapture, and love and tenderness for her, stronger and

more vivid than ever, awoke in his soul. He now remembered the

connection that existed between himself and this man who was dimly

gazing at him through tears that filled his swollen eyes. He remembered

everything, and ecstatic pity and love for that man overflowed his happy

heart.

Prince Andrew could no longer restrain himself and wept tender loving

tears for his fellow men, for himself, and for his own and their errors.

"Compassion, love of our brothers, for those who love us and for those

who hate us, love of our enemies; yes, that love which God preached on

earth and which Princess Mary taught me and I did not understand--that

is what made me sorry to part with life, that is what remained for me

had I lived. But now it is too late. I know it!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII

The terrible spectacle of the battlefield covered with dead and wounded,

together with the heaviness of his head and the news that some twenty

generals he knew personally had been killed or wounded, and the

consciousness of the impotence of his once mighty arm, produced an

unexpected impression on Napoleon who usually liked to look at the

killed and wounded, thereby, he considered, testing his strength of

mind. This day the horrible appearance of the battlefield overcame that

strength of mind which he thought constituted his merit and his

greatness. He rode hurriedly from the battlefield and returned to the

Shevardino knoll, where he sat on his campstool, his sallow face swollen

and heavy, his eyes dim, his nose red, and his voice hoarse,

involuntarily listening, with downcast eyes, to the sounds of firing.

With painful dejection he awaited the end of this action, in which he

regarded himself as a participant and which he was unable to arrest. A

personal, human feeling for a brief moment got the better of the

artificial phantasm of life he had served so long. He felt in his own

person the sufferings and death he had witnessed on the battlefield. The

heaviness of his head and chest reminded him of the possibility of

suffering and death for himself. At that moment he did not desire

Moscow, or victory, or glory (what need had he for any more glory?). The

one thing he wished for was rest, tranquillity, and freedom. But when he

had been on the Semenovsk heights the artillery commander had proposed

to him to bring several batteries of artillery up to those heights to

strengthen the fire on the Russian troops crowded in front of Knyazkovo.

Napoleon had assented and had given orders that news should be brought

to him of the effect those batteries produced.

An adjutant came now to inform him that the fire of two hundred guns had

been concentrated on the Russians, as he had ordered, but that they

still held their ground.

"Our fire is mowing them down by rows, but still they hold on," said the

adjutant.

"They want more!..." said Napoleon in a hoarse voice.

"Sire?" asked the adjutant who had not heard the remark.

"They want more!" croaked Napoleon frowning. "Let them have it!"

Even before he gave that order the thing he did not desire, and for

which he gave the order only because he thought it was expected of him,

was being done. And he fell back into that artificial realm of imaginary

greatness, and again--as a horse walking a treadmill thinks it is doing

something for itself--he submissively fulfilled the cruel, sad, gloomy,

and inhuman role predestined for him.

And not for that day and hour alone were the mind and conscience

darkened of this man on whom the responsibility for what was happening

lay more than on all the others who took part in it. Never to the end of

his life could he understand goodness, beauty, or truth, or the

significance of his actions which were too contrary to goodness and

truth, too remote from everything human, for him ever to be able to

grasp their meaning. He could not disavow his actions, belauded as they

were by half the world, and so he had to repudiate truth, goodness, and

all humanity.

Not only on that day, as he rode over the battlefield strewn with men

killed and maimed (by his will as he believed), did he reckon as he

looked at them how many Russians there were for each Frenchman and,

deceiving himself, find reason for rejoicing in the calculation that

there were five Russians for every Frenchman. Not on that day alone did

he write in a letter to Paris that "the battle field was superb,"

because fifty thousand corpses lay there, but even on the island of St.

Helena in the peaceful solitude where he said he intended to devote his

leisure to an account of the great deeds he had done, he wrote:

The Russian war should have been the most popular war of modern times:

it was a war of good sense, for real interests, for the tranquillity and

security of all; it was purely pacific and conservative.

It was a war for a great cause, the end of uncertainties and the

beginning of security. A new horizon and new labors were opening out,

full of well-being and prosperity for all. The European system was

already founded; all that remained was to organize it.

Satisfied on these great points and with tranquility everywhere, I too

should have had my Congress and my Holy Alliance. Those ideas were

stolen from me. In that reunion of great sovereigns we should have

discussed our interests like one family, and have rendered account to

the peoples as clerk to master.

Europe would in this way soon have been, in fact, but one people, and

anyone who traveled anywhere would have found himself always in the

common fatherland. I should have demanded the freedom of all navigable

rivers for everybody, that the seas should be common to all, and that

the great standing armies should be reduced henceforth to mere guards

for the sovereigns.

On returning to France, to the bosom of the great, strong, magnificent,

peaceful, and glorious fatherland, I should have proclaimed her

frontiers immutable; all future wars purely defensive, all

aggrandizement antinational. I should have associated my son in the

Empire; my dictatorship would have been finished, and his constitutional

reign would have begun.

Paris would have been the capital of the world, and the French the envy

of the nations!

My leisure then, and my old age, would have been devoted, in company

with the Empress and during the royal apprenticeship of my son, to

leisurely visiting, with our own horses and like a true country couple,

every corner of the Empire, receiving complaints, redressing wrongs, and

scattering public buildings and benefactions on all sides and

everywhere.

Napoleon, predestined by Providence for the gloomy role of executioner

of the peoples, assured himself that the aim of his actions had been the

peoples' welfare and that he could control the fate of millions and by

the employment of power confer benefactions.

"Of four hundred thousand who crossed the Vistula," he wrote further of

the Russian war, "half were Austrians, Prussians, Saxons, Poles,

Bavarians, Wurttembergers, Mecklenburgers, Spaniards, Italians, and

Neapolitans. The Imperial army, strictly speaking, was one third

composed of Dutch, Belgians, men from the borders of the Rhine,

Piedmontese, Swiss, Genevese, Tuscans, Romans, inhabitants of the

Thirty-second Military Division, of Bremen, of Hamburg, and so on: it

included scarcely a hundred and forty thousand who spoke French. The

Russian expedition actually cost France less than fifty thousand men;

the Russian army in its retreat from Vilna to Moscow lost in the various

battles four times more men than the French army; the burning of Moscow

cost the lives of a hundred thousand Russians who died of cold and want

in the woods; finally, in its march from Moscow to the Oder the Russian

army also suffered from the severity of the season; so that by the time

it reached Vilna it numbered only fifty thousand, and at Kalisch less

than eighteen thousand."

He imagined that the war with Russia came about by his will, and the

horrors that occurred did not stagger his soul. He boldly took the whole

responsibility for what happened, and his darkened mind found

justification in the belief that among the hundreds of thousands who

perished there were fewer Frenchmen than Hessians and Bavarians.

CHAPTER XXXIX

Several tens of thousands of the slain lay in diverse postures and

various uniforms on the fields and meadows belonging to the Davydov

family and to the crown serfs--those fields and meadows where for

hundreds of years the peasants of Borodino, Gorki, Shevardino, and

Semenovsk had reaped their harvests and pastured their cattle. At the

dressing stations the grass and earth were soaked with blood for a space

of some three acres around. Crowds of men of various arms, wounded and

unwounded, with frightened faces, dragged themselves back to Mozhaysk

from the one army and back to Valuevo from the other. Other crowds,

exhausted and hungry, went forward led by their officers. Others held

their ground and continued to fire.

Over the whole field, previously so gaily beautiful with the glitter of

bayonets and cloudlets of smoke in the morning sun, there now spread a

mist of damp and smoke and a strange acid smell of saltpeter and blood.

Clouds gathered and drops of rain began to fall on the dead and wounded,

on the frightened, exhausted, and hesitating men, as if to say: "Enough,

men! Enough! Cease... bethink yourselves! What are you doing?"

To the men of both sides alike, worn out by want of food and rest, it

began equally to appear doubtful whether they should continue to

slaughter one another; all the faces expressed hesitation, and the

question arose in every soul: "For what, for whom, must I kill and be

killed?... You may go and kill whom you please, but I don't want to do

so anymore!" By evening this thought had ripened in every soul. At any

moment these men might have been seized with horror at what they were

doing and might have thrown up everything and run away anywhere.

But though toward the end of the battle the men felt all the horror of

what they were doing, though they would have been glad to leave off,

some incomprehensible, mysterious power continued to control them, and

they still brought up the charges, loaded, aimed, and applied the match,

though only one artilleryman survived out of every three, and though

they stumbled and panted with fatigue, perspiring and stained with blood

and powder. The cannon balls flew just as swiftly and cruelly from both

sides, crushing human bodies, and that terrible work which was not done

by the will of a man but at the will of Him who governs men and worlds

continued.

Anyone looking at the disorganized rear of the Russian army would have

said that, if only the French made one more slight effort, it would

disappear; and anyone looking at the rear of the French army would have

said that the Russians need only make one more slight effort and the

French would be destroyed. But neither the French nor the Russians made

that effort, and the flame of battle burned slowly out.

The Russians did not make that effort because they were not attacking

the French. At the beginning of the battle they stood blocking the way

to Moscow and they still did so at the end of the battle as at the

beginning. But even had the aim of the Russians been to drive the French

from their positions, they could not have made this last effort, for all

the Russian troops had been broken up, there was no part of the Russian

army that had not suffered in the battle, and though still holding their

positions they had lost ONE HALF of their army.

The French, with the memory of all their former victories during fifteen

years, with the assurance of Napoleon's invincibility, with the

consciousness that they had captured part of the battlefield and had

lost only a quarter of their men and still had their Guards intact,

twenty thousand strong, might easily have made that effort. The French

who had attacked the Russian army in order to drive it from its position

ought to have made that effort, for as long as the Russians continued to

block the road to Moscow as before, the aim of the French had not been

attained and all their efforts and losses were in vain. But the French

did not make that effort. Some historians say that Napoleon need only

have used his Old Guards, who were intact, and the battle would have

been won. To speak of what would have happened had Napoleon sent his

Guards is like talking of what would happen if autumn became spring. It

could not be. Napoleon did not give his Guards, not because he did not

want to, but because it could not be done. All the generals, officers,

and soldiers of the French army knew it could not be done, because the

flagging spirit of the troops would not permit it.

It was not Napoleon alone who had experienced that nightmare feeling of

the mighty arm being stricken powerless, but all the generals and

soldiers of his army whether they had taken part in the battle or not,

after all their experience of previous battles--when after one tenth of

such efforts the enemy had fled--experienced a similar feeling of terror

before an enemy who, after losing HALF his men, stood as threateningly

at the end as at the beginning of the battle. The moral force of the

attacking French army was exhausted. Not that sort of victory which is

defined by the capture of pieces of material fastened to sticks, called

standards, and of the ground on which the troops had stood and were

standing, but a moral victory that convinces the enemy of the moral

superiority of his opponent and of his own impotence was gained by the

Russians at Borodino. The French invaders, like an infuriated animal

that has in its onslaught received a mortal wound, felt that they were

perishing, but could not stop, any more than the Russian army, weaker by

one half, could help swerving. By impetus gained, the French army was

still able to roll forward to Moscow, but there, without further effort

on the part of the Russians, it had to perish, bleeding from the mortal

wound it had received at Borodino. The direct consequence of the battle

of Borodino was Napoleon's senseless flight from Moscow, his retreat

along the old Smolensk road, the destruction of the invading army of

five hundred thousand men, and the downfall of Napoleonic France, on

which at Borodino for the first time the hand of an opponent of stronger

spirit had been laid.

BOOK ELEVEN: 1812

CHAPTER I

Absolute continuity of motion is not comprehensible to the human mind.

Laws of motion of any kind become comprehensible to man only when he

examines arbitrarily selected elements of that motion; but at the same

time, a large proportion of human error comes from the arbitrary

division of continuous motion into discontinuous elements. There is a

well known, so-called sophism of the ancients consisting in this, that

Achilles could never catch up with a tortoise he was following, in spite

of the fact that he traveled ten times as fast as the tortoise. By the

time Achilles has covered the distance that separated him from the

tortoise, the tortoise has covered one tenth of that distance ahead of

him: when Achilles has covered that tenth, the tortoise has covered

another one hundredth, and so on forever. This problem seemed to the

ancients insoluble. The absurd answer (that Achilles could never

overtake the tortoise) resulted from this: that motion was arbitrarily

divided into discontinuous elements, whereas the motion both of Achilles

and of the tortoise was continuous.

By adopting smaller and smaller elements of motion we only approach a

solution of the problem, but never reach it. Only when we have admitted

the conception of the infinitely small, and the resulting geometrical

progression with a common ratio of one tenth, and have found the sum of

this progression to infinity, do we reach a solution of the problem.

A modern branch of mathematics having achieved the art of dealing with

the infinitely small can now yield solutions in other more complex

problems of motion which used to appear insoluble.

This modern branch of mathematics, unknown to the ancients, when dealing

with problems of motion admits the conception of the infinitely small,

and so conforms to the chief condition of motion (absolute continuity)

and thereby corrects the inevitable error which the human mind cannot

avoid when it deals with separate elements of motion instead of

examining continuous motion.

In seeking the laws of historical movement just the same thing happens.

The movement of humanity, arising as it does from innumerable arbitrary

human wills, is continuous.

To understand the laws of this continuous movement is the aim of

history. But to arrive at these laws, resulting from the sum of all

those human wills, man's mind postulates arbitrary and disconnected

units. The first method of history is to take an arbitrarily selected

series of continuous events and examine it apart from others, though

there is and can be no beginning to any event, for one event always

flows uninterruptedly from another.

The second method is to consider the actions of some one man--a king or

a commander--as equivalent to the sum of many individual wills; whereas

the sum of individual wills is never expressed by the activity of a

single historic personage.

Historical science in its endeavor to draw nearer to truth continually

takes smaller and smaller units for examination. But however small the

units it takes, we feel that to take any unit disconnected from others,

or to assume a beginning of any phenomenon, or to say that the will of

many men is expressed by the actions of any one historic personage, is

in itself false.

It needs no critical exertion to reduce utterly to dust any deductions

drawn from history. It is merely necessary to select some larger or

smaller unit as the subject of observation--as criticism has every right

to do, seeing that whatever unit history observes must always be

arbitrarily selected.

Only by taking infinitesimally small units for observation (the

differential of history, that is, the individual tendencies of men) and

attaining to the art of integrating them (that is, finding the sum of

these infinitesimals) can we hope to arrive at the laws of history.

The first fifteen years of the nineteenth century in Europe present an

extraordinary movement of millions of people. Men leave their customary

pursuits, hasten from one side of Europe to the other, plunder and

slaughter one another, triumph and are plunged in despair, and for some

years the whole course of life is altered and presents an intensive

movement which first increases and then slackens. What was the cause of

this movement, by what laws was it governed? asks the mind of man.

The historians, replying to this question, lay before us the sayings and

doings of a few dozen men in a building in the city of Paris, calling

these sayings and doings "the Revolution"; then they give a detailed

biography of Napoleon and of certain people favorable or hostile to him;

tell of the influence some of these people had on others, and say: that

is why this movement took place and those are its laws.

But the mind of man not only refuses to believe this explanation, but

plainly says that this method of explanation is fallacious, because in

it a weaker phenomenon is taken as the cause of a stronger. The sum of

human wills produced the Revolution and Napoleon, and only the sum of

those wills first tolerated and then destroyed them.

"But every time there have been conquests there have been conquerors;

every time there has been a revolution in any state there have been

great men," says history. And, indeed, human reason replies: every time

conquerors appear there have been wars, but this does not prove that the

conquerors caused the wars and that it is possible to find the laws of a

war in the personal activity of a single man. Whenever I look at my

watch and its hands point to ten, I hear the bells of the neighboring

church; but because the bells begin to ring when the hands of the clock

reach ten, I have no right to assume that the movement of the bells is

caused by the position of the hands of the watch.

Whenever I see the movement of a locomotive I hear the whistle and see

the valves opening and wheels turning; but I have no right to conclude

that the whistling and the turning of wheels are the cause of the

movement of the engine.

The peasants say that a cold wind blows in late spring because the oaks

are budding, and really every spring cold winds do blow when the oak is

budding. But though I do not know what causes the cold winds to blow

when the oak buds unfold, I cannot agree with the peasants that the

unfolding of the oak buds is the cause of the cold wind, for the force

of the wind is beyond the influence of the buds. I see only a

coincidence of occurrences such as happens with all the phenomena of

life, and I see that however much and however carefully I observe the

hands of the watch, and the valves and wheels of the engine, and the

oak, I shall not discover the cause of the bells ringing, the engine

moving, or of the winds of spring. To that I must entirely change my

point of view and study the laws of the movement of steam, of the bells,

and of the wind. History must do the same. And attempts in this

direction have already been made.

To study the laws of history we must completely change the subject of

our observation, must leave aside kings, ministers, and generals, and

study the common, infinitesimally small elements by which the masses are

moved. No one can say in how far it is possible for man to advance in

this way toward an understanding of the laws of history; but it is

evident that only along that path does the possibility of discovering

the laws of history lie, and that as yet not a millionth part as much

mental effort has been applied in this direction by historians as has

been devoted to describing the actions of various kings, commanders, and

ministers and propounding the historians' own reflections concerning

these actions.

CHAPTER II

The forces of a dozen European nations burst into Russia. The Russian

army and people avoided a collision till Smolensk was reached, and again

from Smolensk to Borodino. The French army pushed on to Moscow, its

goal, its impetus ever increasing as it neared its aim, just as the

velocity of a falling body increases as it approaches the earth. Behind

it were seven hundred miles of hunger-stricken, hostile country; ahead

were a few dozen miles separating it from its goal. Every soldier in

Napoleon's army felt this and the invasion moved on by its own momentum.

The more the Russian army retreated the more fiercely a spirit of hatred

of the enemy flared up, and while it retreated the army increased and

consolidated. At Borodino a collision took place. Neither army was

broken up, but the Russian army retreated immediately after the

collision as inevitably as a ball recoils after colliding with another

having a greater momentum, and with equal inevitability the ball of

invasion that had advanced with such momentum rolled on for some

distance, though the collision had deprived it of all its force.

The Russians retreated eighty miles--to beyond Moscow--and the French

reached Moscow and there came to a standstill. For five weeks after that

there was not a single battle. The French did not move. As a bleeding,

mortally wounded animal licks its wounds, they remained inert in Moscow

for five weeks, and then suddenly, with no fresh reason, fled back: they

made a dash for the Kaluga road, and (after a victory--for at Malo-

Yaroslavets the field of conflict again remained theirs) without

undertaking a single serious battle, they fled still more rapidly back

to Smolensk, beyond Smolensk, beyond the Berezina, beyond Vilna, and

farther still.

On the evening of the twenty-sixth of August, Kutuzov and the whole

Russian army were convinced that the battle of Borodino was a victory.

Kutuzov reported so to the Emperor. He gave orders to prepare for a

fresh conflict to finish the enemy and did this not to deceive anyone,

but because he knew that the enemy was beaten, as everyone who had taken

part in the battle knew it.

But all that evening and next day reports came in one after another of

unheard-of losses, of the loss of half the army, and a fresh battle

proved physically impossible.

It was impossible to give battle before information had been collected,

the wounded gathered in, the supplies of ammunition replenished, the

slain reckoned up, new officers appointed to replace those who had been

killed, and before the men had had food and sleep. And meanwhile, the

very next morning after the battle, the French army advanced of itself

upon the Russians, carried forward by the force of its own momentum now

seemingly increased in inverse proportion to the square of the distance

from its aim. Kutuzov's wish was to attack next day, and the whole army

desired to do so. But to make an attack the wish to do so is not

sufficient, there must also be a possibility of doing it, and that

possibility did not exist. It was impossible not to retreat a day's

march, and then in the same way it was impossible not to retreat another

and a third day's march, and at last, on the first of September when the

army drew near Moscow--despite the strength of the feeling that had

arisen in all ranks--the force of circumstances compelled it to retire

beyond Moscow. And the troops retired one more, last, day's march, and

abandoned Moscow to the enemy.

For people accustomed to think that plans of campaign and battles are

made by generals--as any one of us sitting over a map in his study may

imagine how he would have arranged things in this or that battle--the

questions present themselves: Why did Kutuzov during the retreat not do

this or that? Why did he not take up a position before reaching Fili?

Why did he not retire at once by the Kaluga road, abandoning Moscow? and

so on. People accustomed to think in that way forget, or do not know,

the inevitable conditions which always limit the activities of any

commander in chief. The activity of a commander-in-chief does not at all

resemble the activity we imagine to ourselves when we sit at ease in our

studies examining some campaign on the map, with a certain number of

troops on this and that side in a certain known locality, and begin our

plans from some given moment. A commander-in-chief is never dealing with

the beginning of any event--the position from which we always

contemplate it. The commander-in-chief is always in the midst of a

series of shifting events and so he never can at any moment consider the

whole import of an event that is occurring. Moment by moment the event

is imperceptibly shaping itself, and at every moment of this continuous,

uninterrupted shaping of events the commander-in-chief is in the midst

of a most complex play of intrigues, worries, contingencies,

authorities, projects, counsels, threats, and deceptions and is

continually obliged to reply to innumerable questions addressed to him,

which constantly conflict with one another.

Learned military authorities quite seriously tell us that Kutuzov should

have moved his army to the Kaluga road long before reaching Fili, and

that somebody actually submitted such a proposal to him. But a commander

in chief, especially at a difficult moment, has always before him not

one proposal but dozens simultaneously. And all these proposals, based

on strategics and tactics, contradict each other.

A commander-in-chief's business, it would seem, is simply to choose one

of these projects. But even that he cannot do. Events and time do not

wait. For instance, on the twenty-eighth it is suggested to him to cross

to the Kaluga road, but just then an adjutant gallops up from

Miloradovich asking whether he is to engage the French or retire. An

order must be given him at once, that instant. And the order to retreat

carries us past the turn to the Kaluga road. And after the adjutant

comes the commissary general asking where the stores are to be taken,

and the chief of the hospitals asks where the wounded are to go, and a

courier from Petersburg brings a letter from the sovereign which does

not admit of the possibility of abandoning Moscow, and the commander-in-

chief's rival, the man who is undermining him (and there are always not

merely one but several such), presents a new project diametrically

opposed to that of turning to the Kaluga road, and the commander-in-

chief himself needs sleep and refreshment to maintain his energy and a

respectable general who has been overlooked in the distribution of

rewards comes to complain, and the inhabitants of the district pray to

be defended, and an officer sent to inspect the locality comes in and

gives a report quite contrary to what was said by the officer previously

sent; and a spy, a prisoner, and a general who has been on

reconnaissance, all describe the position of the enemy's army

differently. People accustomed to misunderstand or to forget these

inevitable conditions of a commander-in-chief's actions describe to us,

for instance, the position of the army at Fili and assume that the

commander-in-chief could, on the first of September, quite freely decide

whether to abandon Moscow or defend it; whereas, with the Russian army

less than four miles from Moscow, no such question existed. When had

that question been settled? At Drissa and at Smolensk and most palpably

of all on the twenty-fourth of August at Shevardino and on the twenty-

sixth at Borodino, and each day and hour and minute of the retreat from

Borodino to Fili.

CHAPTER III

When Ermolov, having been sent by Kutuzov to inspect the position, told

the field marshal that it was impossible to fight there before Moscow

and that they must retreat, Kutuzov looked at him in silence.

"Give me your hand," said he and, turning it over so as to feel the

pulse, added: "You are not well, my dear fellow. Think what you are

saying!"

Kutuzov could not yet admit the possibility of retreating beyond Moscow

without a battle.

On the Poklonny Hill, four miles from the Dorogomilov gate of Moscow,

Kutuzov got out of his carriage and sat down on a bench by the roadside.

A great crowd of generals gathered round him, and Count Rostopchin, who

had come out from Moscow, joined them. This brilliant company separated

into several groups who all discussed the advantages and disadvantages

of the position, the state of the army, the plans suggested, the

situation of Moscow, and military questions generally. Though they had

not been summoned for the purpose, and though it was not so called, they

all felt that this was really a council of war. The conversations all

dealt with public questions. If anyone gave or asked for personal news,

it was done in a whisper and they immediately reverted to general

matters. No jokes, or laughter, or smiles even, were seen among all

these men. They evidently all made an effort to hold themselves at the

height the situation demanded. And all these groups, while talking among

themselves, tried to keep near the commander-in-chief (whose bench

formed the center of the gathering) and to speak so that he might

overhear them. The commander in chief listened to what was being said

and sometimes asked them to repeat their remarks, but did not himself

take part in the conversations or express any opinion. After hearing

what was being said by one or other of these groups he generally turned

away with an air of disappointment, as though they were not speaking of

anything he wished to hear. Some discussed the position that had been

chosen, criticizing not the position itself so much as the mental

capacity of those who had chosen it. Others argued that a mistake had

been made earlier and that a battle should have been fought two days

before. Others again spoke of the battle of Salamanca, which was

described by Crosart, a newly arrived Frenchman in a Spanish uniform.

(This Frenchman and one of the German princes serving with the Russian

army were discussing the siege of Saragossa and considering the

possibility of defending Moscow in a similar manner.) Count Rostopchin

was telling a fourth group that he was prepared to die with the city

train bands under the walls of the capital, but that he still could not

help regretting having been left in ignorance of what was happening, and

that had he known it sooner things would have been different.... A fifth

group, displaying the profundity of their strategic perceptions,

discussed the direction the troops would now have to take. A sixth group

was talking absolute nonsense. Kutuzov's expression grew more and more

preoccupied and gloomy. From all this talk he saw only one thing: that

to defend Moscow was a physical impossibility in the full meaning of

those words, that is to say, so utterly impossible that if any senseless

commander were to give orders to fight, confusion would result but the

battle would still not take place. It would not take place because the

commanders not merely all recognized the position to be impossible, but

in their conversations were only discussing what would happen after its

inevitable abandonment. How could the commanders lead their troops to a

field of battle they considered impossible to hold? The lower-grade

officers and even the soldiers (who too reason) also considered the

position impossible and therefore could not go to fight, fully convinced

as they were of defeat. If Bennigsen insisted on the position being

defended and others still discussed it, the question was no longer

important in itself but only as a pretext for disputes and intrigue.

This Kutuzov knew well.

Bennigsen, who had chosen the position, warmly displayed his Russian

patriotism (Kutuzov could not listen to this without wincing) by

insisting that Moscow must be defended. His aim was as clear as daylight

to Kutuzov: if the defense failed, to throw the blame on Kutuzov who had

brought the army as far as the Sparrow Hills without giving battle; if

it succeeded, to claim the success as his own; or if battle were not

given, to clear himself of the crime of abandoning Moscow. But this

intrigue did not now occupy the old man's mind. One terrible question

absorbed him and to that question he heard no reply from anyone. The

question for him now was: "Have I really allowed Napoleon to reach

Moscow, and when did I do so? When was it decided? Can it have been

yesterday when I ordered Platov to retreat, or was it the evening

before, when I had a nap and told Bennigsen to issue orders? Or was it

earlier still?... When, when was this terrible affair decided? Moscow

must be abandoned. The army must retreat and the order to do so must be

given." To give that terrible order seemed to him equivalent to

resigning the command of the army. And not only did he love power to

which he was accustomed (the honours awarded to Prince Prozorovski,

under whom he had served in Turkey, galled him), but he was convinced

that he was destined to save Russia and that that was why, against the

Emperor's wish and by the will of the people, he had been chosen

commander-in-chief. He was convinced that he alone could maintain

command of the army in these difficult circumstances, and that in all

the world he alone could encounter the invincible Napoleon without fear,

and he was horrified at the thought of the order he had to issue. But

something had to be decided, and these conversations around him which

were assuming too free a character must be stopped.

He called the most important generals to him.

"My head, be it good or bad, must depend on itself," said he, rising

from the bench, and he rode to Fili where his carriages were waiting.

CHAPTER IV

The Council of War began to assemble at two in the afternoon in the

better and roomier part of Andrew Savostyanov's hut. The men, women, and

children of the large peasant family crowded into the back room across

the passage. Only Malasha, Andrew's six-year-old granddaughter whom his

Serene Highness had petted and to whom he had given a lump of sugar

while drinking his tea, remained on the top of the brick oven in the

larger room. Malasha looked down from the oven with shy delight at the

faces, uniforms, and decorations of the generals, who one after another

came into the room and sat down on the broad benches in the corner under

the icons. "Granddad" himself, as Malasha in her own mind called

Kutuzov, sat apart in a dark corner behind the oven. He sat, sunk deep

in a folding armchair, and continually cleared his throat and pulled at

the collar of his coat which, though it was unbuttoned, still seemed to

pinch his neck. Those who entered went up one by one to the field

marshal; he pressed the hands of some and nodded to others. His adjutant

Kaysarov was about to draw back the curtain of the window facing

Kutuzov, but the latter moved his hand angrily and Kaysarov understood

that his Serene Highness did not wish his face to be seen.

Round the peasant's deal table, on which lay maps, plans, pencils, and

papers, so many people gathered that the orderlies brought in another

bench and put it beside the table. Ermolov, Kaysarov, and Toll, who had

just arrived, sat down on this bench. In the foremost place, immediately

under the icons, sat Barclay de Tolly, his high forehead merging into

his bald crown. He had a St. George's Cross round his neck and looked

pale and ill. He had been feverish for two days and was now shivering

and in pain. Beside him sat Uvarov, who with rapid gesticulations was

giving him some information, speaking in low tones as they all did.

Chubby little Dokhturov was listening attentively with eyebrows raised

and arms folded on his stomach. On the other side sat Count Ostermann-

Tolstoy, seemingly absorbed in his own thoughts. His broad head with its

bold features and glittering eyes was resting on his hand. Raevski,

twitching forward the black hair on his temples as was his habit,

glanced now at Kutuzov and now at the door with a look of impatience.

Konovnitsyn's firm, handsome, and kindly face was lit up by a tender,

sly smile. His glance met Malasha's, and the expression of his eyes

caused the little girl to smile.

They were all waiting for Bennigsen, who on the pretext of inspecting

the position was finishing his savory dinner. They waited for him from

four till six o'clock and did not begin their deliberations all that

time but talked in low tones of other matters.

Only when Bennigsen had entered the hut did Kutuzov leave his corner and

draw toward the table, but not near enough for the candles that had been

placed there to light up his face.

Bennigsen opened the council with the question: "Are we to abandon

Russia's ancient and sacred capital without a struggle, or are we to

defend it?" A prolonged and general silence followed. There was a frown

on every face and only Kutuzov's angry grunts and occasional cough broke

the silence. All eyes were gazing at him. Malasha too looked at

"Granddad." She was nearest to him and saw how his face puckered; he

seemed about to cry, but this did not last long.

"Russia's ancient and sacred capital!" he suddenly said, repeating

Bennigsen's words in an angry voice and thereby drawing attention to the

false note in them. "Allow me to tell you, your excellency, that that

question has no meaning for a Russian." (He lurched his heavy body

forward.) "Such a question cannot be put; it is senseless! The question

I have asked these gentlemen to meet to discuss is a military one. The

question is that of saving Russia. Is it better to give up Moscow

without a battle, or by accepting battle to risk losing the army as well

as Moscow? That is the question on which I want your opinion," and he

sank back in his chair.

The discussion began. Bennigsen did not yet consider his game lost.

Admitting the view of Barclay and others that a defensive battle at Fili

was impossible, but imbued with Russian patriotism and the love of

Moscow, he proposed to move troops from the right to the left flank

during the night and attack the French right flank the following day.

Opinions were divided, and arguments were advanced for and against that

project. Ermolov, Dokhturov, and Raevski agreed with Bennigsen. Whether

feeling it necessary to make a sacrifice before abandoning the capital

or guided by other, personal considerations, these generals seemed not

to understand that this council could not alter the inevitable course of

events and that Moscow was in effect already abandoned. The other

generals, however, understood it and, leaving aside the question of

Moscow, spoke of the direction the army should take in its retreat.

Malasha, who kept her eyes fixed on what was going on before her,

understood the meaning of the council differently. It seemed to her that

it was only a personal struggle between "Granddad" and "Long-coat" as

she termed Bennigsen. She saw that they grew spiteful when they spoke to

one another, and in her heart she sided with "Granddad." In the midst of

the conversation she noticed "Granddad" give Bennigsen a quick, subtle

glance, and then to her joys she saw that "Granddad" said something to

"Long-coat" which settled him. Bennigsen suddenly reddened and paced

angrily up and down the room. What so affected him was Kutuzov's calm

and quiet comment on the advantage or disadvantage of Bennigsen's

proposal to move troops by night from the right to the left flank to

attack the French right wing.

"Gentlemen," said Kutuzov, "I cannot approve of the count's plan. Moving

troops in close proximity to an enemy is always dangerous, and military

history supports that view. For instance..." Kutuzov seemed to reflect,

searching for an example, then with a clear, naive look at Bennigsen he

added: "Oh yes; take the battle of Friedland, which I think the count

well remembers, and which was... not fully successful, only because our

troops were rearranged too near the enemy..."

There followed a momentary pause, which seemed very long to them all.

The discussion recommenced, but pauses frequently occurred and they all

felt that there was no more to be said.

During one of these pauses Kutuzov heaved a deep sigh as if preparing to

speak. They all looked at him.

"Well, gentlemen, I see that it is I who will have to pay for the broken

crockery," said he, and rising slowly he moved to the table. "Gentlemen,

I have heard your views. Some of you will not agree with me. But I," he

paused, "by the authority entrusted to me by my Sovereign and country,

order a retreat."

After that the generals began to disperse with the solemnity and

circumspect silence of people who are leaving, after a funeral.

Some of the generals, in low tones and in a strain very different from

the way they had spoken during the council, communicated something to

their commander-in-chief.

Malasha, who had long been expected for supper, climbed carefully

backwards down from the oven, her bare little feet catching at its

projections, and slipping between the legs of the generals she darted

out of the room.

When he had dismissed the generals Kutuzov sat a long time with his

elbows on the table, thinking always of the same terrible question:

"When, when did the abandonment of Moscow become inevitable? When was

that done which settled the matter? And who was to blame for it?"

"I did not expect this," said he to his adjutant Schneider when the

latter came in late that night. "I did not expect this! I did not think

this would happen."

"You should take some rest, your Serene Highness," replied Schneider.

"But no! They shall eat horseflesh yet, like the Turks!" exclaimed

Kutuzov without replying, striking the table with his podgy fist. "They

shall too, if only..."

CHAPTER V

At that very time, in circumstances even more important than retreating

without a battle, namely the evacuation and burning of Moscow,

Rostopchin, who is usually represented as being the instigator of that

event, acted in an altogether different manner from Kutuzov.

After the battle of Borodino the abandonment and burning of Moscow was

as inevitable as the retreat of the army beyond Moscow without fighting.

Every Russian might have predicted it, not by reasoning but by the

feeling implanted in each of us and in our fathers.

The same thing that took place in Moscow had happened in all the towns

and villages on Russian soil beginning with Smolensk, without the

participation of Count Rostopchin and his broadsheets. The people

awaited the enemy unconcernedly, did not riot or become excited or tear

anyone to pieces, but faced its fate, feeling within it the strength to

find what it should do at that most difficult moment. And as soon as the

enemy drew near the wealthy classes went away abandoning their property,

while the poorer remained and burned and destroyed what was left.

The consciousness that this would be so and would always be so was and

is present in the heart of every Russian. And a consciousness of this,

and a foreboding that Moscow would be taken, was present in Russian

Moscow society in 1812. Those who had quitted Moscow already in July and

at the beginning of August showed that they expected this. Those who

went away, taking what they could and abandoning their houses and half

their belongings, did so from the latent patriotism which expresses

itself not by phrases or by giving one's children to save the fatherland

and similar unnatural exploits, but unobtrusively, simply, organically,

and therefore in the way that always produces the most powerful results.

"It is disgraceful to run away from danger; only cowards are running

away from Moscow," they were told. In his broadsheets Rostopchin

impressed on them that to leave Moscow was shameful. They were ashamed

to be called cowards, ashamed to leave, but still they left, knowing it

had to be done. Why did they go? It is impossible to suppose that

Rostopchin had scared them by his accounts of horrors Napoleon had

committed in conquered countries. The first people to go away were the

rich educated people who knew quite well that Vienna and Berlin had

remained intact and that during Napoleon's occupation the inhabitants

had spent their time pleasantly in the company of the charming Frenchmen

whom the Russians, and especially the Russian ladies, then liked so

much.

They went away because for Russians there could be no question as to

whether things would go well or ill under French rule in Moscow. It was

out of the question to be under French rule, it would be the worst thing

that could happen. They went away even before the battle of Borodino and

still more rapidly after it, despite Rostopchin's calls to defend Moscow

or the announcement of his intention to take the wonder-working icon of

the Iberian Mother of God and go to fight, or of the balloons that were

to destroy the French, and despite all the nonsense Rostopchin wrote in

his broadsheets. They knew that it was for the army to fight, and that

if it could not succeed it would not do to take young ladies and house

serfs to the Three Hills quarter of Moscow to fight Napoleon, and that

they must go away, sorry as they were to abandon their property to

destruction. They went away without thinking of the tremendous

significance of that immense and wealthy city being given over to

destruction, for a great city with wooden buildings was certain when

abandoned by its inhabitants to be burned. They went away each on his

own account, and yet it was only in consequence of their going away that

the momentous event was accomplished that will always remain the

greatest glory of the Russian people. The lady who, afraid of being

stopped by Count Rostopchin's orders, had already in June moved with her

Negroes and her women jesters from Moscow to her Saratov estate, with a

vague consciousness that she was not Bonaparte's servant, was really,

simply, and truly carrying out the great work which saved Russia. But

Count Rostopchin, who now taunted those who left Moscow and now had the

government offices removed; now distributed quite useless weapons to the

drunken rabble; now had processions displaying the icons, and now

forbade Father Augustin to remove icons or the relics of saints; now

seized all the private carts in Moscow and on one hundred and thirty-six

of them removed the balloon that was being constructed by Leppich; now

hinted that he would burn Moscow and related how he had set fire to his

own house; now wrote a proclamation to the French solemnly upbraiding

them for having destroyed his Orphanage; now claimed the glory of having

hinted that he would burn Moscow and now repudiated the deed; now

ordered the people to catch all spies and bring them to him, and now

reproached them for doing so; now expelled all the French residents from

Moscow, and now allowed Madame Aubert-Chalme (the center of the whole

French colony in Moscow) to remain, but ordered the venerable old

postmaster Klyucharev to be arrested and exiled for no particular

offense; now assembled the people at the Three Hills to fight the French

and now, to get rid of them, handed over to them a man to be killed and

himself drove away by a back gate; now declared that he would not

survive the fall of Moscow, and now wrote French verses in albums

concerning his share in the affair--this man did not understand the

meaning of what was happening but merely wanted to do something himself

that would astonish people, to perform some patriotically heroic feat;

and like a child he made sport of the momentous, and unavoidable event--

the abandonment and burning of Moscow--and tried with his puny hand now

to speed and now to stay the enormous, popular tide that bore him along

with it.

CHAPTER VI

Helene, having returned with the court from Vilna to Petersburg, found

herself in a difficult position.

In Petersburg she had enjoyed the special protection of a grandee who

occupied one of the highest posts in the Empire. In Vilna she had formed

an intimacy with a young foreign prince. When she returned to Petersburg

both the magnate and the prince were there, and both claimed their

rights. Helene was faced by a new problem--how to preserve her intimacy

with both without offending either.

What would have seemed difficult or even impossible to another woman did

not cause the least embarrassment to Countess Bezukhova, who evidently

deserved her reputation of being a very clever woman. Had she attempted

concealment, or tried to extricate herself from her awkward position by

cunning, she would have spoiled her case by acknowledging herself

guilty. But Helene, like a really great man who can do whatever he

pleases, at once assumed her own position to be correct, as she

sincerely believed it to be, and that everyone else was to blame.

The first time the young foreigner allowed himself to reproach her, she

lifted her beautiful head and, half turning to him, said firmly: "That's

just like a man--selfish and cruel! I expected nothing else. A woman

sacrifices herself for you, she suffers, and this is her reward! What

right have you, monseigneur, to demand an account of my attachments and

friendships? He is a man who has been more than a father to me!" The

prince was about to say something, but Helene interrupted him.

"Well, yes," said she, "it may be that he has other sentiments for me

than those of a father, but that is not a reason for me to shut my door

on him. I am not a man, that I should repay kindness with ingratitude!

Know, monseigneur, that in all that relates to my intimate feelings I

render account only to God and to my conscience," she concluded, laying

her hand on her beautiful, fully expanded bosom and looking up to

heaven.

"But for heaven's sake listen to me!"

"Marry me, and I will be your slave!"

"But that's impossible."

"You won't deign to demean yourself by marrying me, you..." said Helene,

beginning to cry.

The prince tried to comfort her, but Helene, as if quite distraught,

said through her tears that there was nothing to prevent her marrying,

that there were precedents (there were up to that time very few, but she

mentioned Napoleon and some other exalted personages), that she had

never been her husband's wife, and that she had been sacrificed.

"But the law, religion..." said the prince, already yielding.

"The law, religion... What have they been invented for if they can't

arrange that?" said Helene.

The prince was surprised that so simple an idea had not occurred to him,

and he applied for advice to the holy brethren of the Society of Jesus,

with whom he was on intimate terms.

A few days later at one of those enchanting fetes which Helene gave at

her country house on the Stone Island, the charming Monsieur de Jobert,

a man no longer young, with snow white hair and brilliant black eyes, a

Jesuit a robe courte \* was presented to her, and in the garden by the

light of the illuminations and to the sound of music talked to her for a

long time of the love of God, of Christ, of the Sacred Heart, and of the

consolations the one true Catholic religion affords in this world and

the next. Helene was touched, and more than once tears rose to her eyes

and to those of Monsieur de Jobert and their voices trembled. A dance,

for which her partner came to seek her, put an end to her discourse with

her future directeur de conscience, but the next evening Monsieur de

Jobert came to see Helene when she was alone, and after that often came

again.

\* Lay member of the Society of Jesus.

One day he took the countess to a Roman Catholic church, where she knelt

down before the altar to which she was led. The enchanting, middle-aged

Frenchman laid his hands on her head and, as she herself afterward

described it, she felt something like a fresh breeze wafted into her

soul. It was explained to her that this was la grace.

After that a long-frocked abbe was brought to her. She confessed to him,

and he absolved her from her sins. Next day she received a box

containing the Sacred Host, which was left at her house for her to

partake of. A few days later Helene learned with pleasure that she had

now been admitted to the true Catholic Church and that in a few days the

Pope himself would hear of her and would send her a certain document.

All that was done around her and to her at this time, all the attention

devoted to her by so many clever men and expressed in such pleasant,

refined ways, and the state of dove-like purity she was now in (she wore

only white dresses and white ribbons all that time) gave her pleasure,

but her pleasure did not cause her for a moment to forget her aim. And

as it always happens in contests of cunning that a stupid person gets

the better of cleverer ones, Helene--having realized that the main

object of all these words and all this trouble was, after converting her

to Catholicism, to obtain money from her for Jesuit institutions (as to

which she received indications)-before parting with her money insisted

that the various operations necessary to free her from her husband

should be performed. In her view the aim of every religion was merely to

preserve certain proprieties while affording satisfaction to human

desires. And with this aim, in one of her talks with her Father

Confessor, she insisted on an answer to the question, in how far was she

bound by her marriage?

They were sitting in the twilight by a window in the drawing room. The

scent of flowers came in at the window. Helene was wearing a white

dress, transparent over her shoulders and bosom. The abbe, a well-fed

man with a plump, clean-shaven chin, a pleasant firm mouth, and white

hands meekly folded on his knees, sat close to Helene and, with a subtle

smile on his lips and a peaceful look of delight at her beauty,

occasionally glanced at her face as he explained his opinion on the

subject. Helene with an uneasy smile looked at his curly hair and his

plump, clean-shaven, blackish cheeks and every moment expected the

conversation to take a fresh turn. But the abbe, though he evidently

enjoyed the beauty of his companion, was absorbed in his mastery of the

matter.

The course of the Father Confessor's arguments ran as follows: "Ignorant

of the import of what you were undertaking, you made a vow of conjugal

fidelity to a man who on his part, by entering the married state without

faith in the religious significance of marriage, committed an act of

sacrilege. That marriage lacked the dual significance it should have

had. Yet in spite of this your vow was binding. You swerved from it.

What did you commit by so acting? A venial, or a mortal, sin? A venial

sin, for you acted without evil intention. If now you married again with

the object of bearing children, your sin might be forgiven. But the

question is again a twofold one: firstly..."

But suddenly Helene, who was getting bored, said with one of her

bewitching smiles: "But I think that having espoused the true religion I

cannot be bound by what a false religion laid upon me."

The director of her conscience was astounded at having the case

presented to him thus with the simplicity of Columbus' egg. He was

delighted at the unexpected rapidity of his pupil's progress, but could

not abandon the edifice of argument he had laboriously constructed.

"Let us understand one another, Countess," said he with a smile, and

began refuting his spiritual daughter's arguments.

CHAPTER VII

Helene understood that the question was very simple and easy from the

ecclesiastical point of view, and that her directors were making

difficulties only because they were apprehensive as to how the matter

would be regarded by the secular authorities.

So she decided that it was necessary to prepare the opinion of society.

She provoked the jealousy of the elderly magnate and told him what she

had told her other suitor; that is, she put the matter so that the only

way for him to obtain a right over her was to marry her. The elderly

magnate was at first as much taken aback by this suggestion of marriage

with a woman whose husband was alive, as the younger man had been, but

Helene's imperturbable conviction that it was as simple and natural as

marrying a maiden had its effect on him too. Had Helene herself shown

the least sign of hesitation, shame, or secrecy, her cause would

certainly have been lost; but not only did she show no signs of secrecy

or shame, on the contrary, with good-natured naivete she told her

intimate friends (and these were all Petersburg) that both the prince

and the magnate had proposed to her and that she loved both and was

afraid of grieving either.

A rumor immediately spread in Petersburg, not that Helene wanted to be

divorced from her husband (had such a report spread many would have

opposed so illegal an intention) but simply that the unfortunate and

interesting Helene was in doubt which of the two men she should marry.

The question was no longer whether this was possible, but only which was

the better match and how the matter would be regarded at court. There

were, it is true, some rigid individuals unable to rise to the height of

such a question, who saw in the project a desecration of the sacrament

of marriage, but there were not many such and they remained silent,

while the majority were interested in Helene's good fortune and in the

question which match would be the more advantageous. Whether it was

right or wrong to remarry while one had a husband living they did not

discuss, for that question had evidently been settled by people "wiser

than you or me," as they said, and to doubt the correctness of that

decision would be to risk exposing one's stupidity and incapacity to

live in society.

Only Marya Dmitrievna Akhrosimova, who had come to Petersburg that

summer to see one of her sons, allowed herself plainly to express an

opinion contrary to the general one. Meeting Helene at a ball she

stopped her in the middle of the room and, amid general silence, said in

her gruff voice: "So wives of living men have started marrying again!

Perhaps you think you have invented a novelty? You have been

forestalled, my dear! It was thought of long ago. It is done in all the

brothels," and with these words Marya Dmitrievna, turning up her wide

sleeves with her usual threatening gesture and glancing sternly round,

moved across the room.

Though people were afraid of Marya Dmitrievna she was regarded in

Petersburg as a buffoon, and so of what she had said they only noticed,

and repeated in a whisper, the one coarse word she had used, supposing

the whole sting of her remark to lie in that word.

Prince Vasili, who of late very often forgot what he had said and

repeated one and the same thing a hundred times, remarked to his

daughter whenever he chanced to see her:

"Helene, I have a word to say to you," and he would lead her aside,

drawing her hand downward. "I have heard of certain projects

concerning... you know. Well my dear child, you know how your father's

heart rejoices to know that you... You have suffered so much.... But, my

dear child, consult only your own heart. That is all I have to say," and

concealing his unvarying emotion he would press his cheek against his

daughter's and move away.

Bilibin, who had not lost his reputation of an exceedingly clever man,

and who was one of the disinterested friends so brilliant a woman as

Helene always has--men friends who can never change into lovers--once

gave her his view of the matter at a small and intimate gathering.

"Listen, Bilibin," said Helene (she always called friends of that sort

by their surnames), and she touched his coat sleeve with her white,

beringed fingers. "Tell me, as you would a sister, what I ought to do.

Which of the two?"

Bilibin wrinkled up the skin over his eyebrows and pondered, with a

smile on his lips.

"You are not taking me unawares, you know," said he. "As a true friend,

I have thought and thought again about your affair. You see, if you

marry the prince"--he meant the younger man--and he crooked one finger,

"you forever lose the chance of marrying the other, and you will

displease the court besides. (You know there is some kind of

connection.) But if you marry the old count you will make his last days

happy, and as widow of the Grand... the prince would no longer be making

a mesalliance by marrying you," and Bilibin smoothed out his forehead.

"That's a true friend!" said Helene beaming, and again touching

Bilibin's sleeve. "But I love them, you know, and don't want to distress

either of them. I would give my life for the happiness of them both."

Bilibin shrugged his shoulders, as much as to say that not even he could

help in that difficulty.

"Une maitresse-femme! \* That's what is called putting things squarely.

She would like to be married to all three at the same time," thought he.

\* A masterly woman.

"But tell me, how will your husband look at the matter?" Bilibin asked,

his reputation being so well established that he did not fear to ask so

naive a question. "Will he agree?"

"Oh, he loves me so!" said Helene, who for some reason imagined that

Pierre too loved her. "He will do anything for me."

Bilibin puckered his skin in preparation for something witty.

"Even divorce you?" said he.

Helene laughed.

Among those who ventured to doubt the justifiability of the proposed

marriage was Helene's mother, Princess Kuragina. She was continually

tormented by jealousy of her daughter, and now that jealousy concerned a

subject near to her own heart, she could not reconcile herself to the

idea. She consulted a Russian priest as to the possibility of divorce

and remarriage during a husband's lifetime, and the priest told her that

it was impossible, and to her delight showed her a text in the Gospel

which (as it seemed to him) plainly forbids remarriage while the husband

is alive.

Armed with these arguments, which appeared to her unanswerable, she

drove to her daughter's early one morning so as to find her alone.

Having listened to her mother's objections, Helene smiled blandly and

ironically.

"But it says plainly: 'Whosoever shall marry her that is divorced...'"

said the old princess.

"Ah, Maman, ne dites pas de betises. Vous ne comprenez rien. Dans ma

position j'ai des devoirs," \* said Helene changing from Russian, in

which language she always felt that her case did not sound quite clear,

into French which suited it better.

\* "Oh, Mamma, don't talk nonsense! You don't understand anything. In my

position I have obligations."

"But, my dear...."

"Oh, Mamma, how is it you don't understand that the Holy Father, who has

the right to grant dispensations..."

Just then the lady companion who lived with Helene came in to announce

that His Highness was in the ballroom and wished to see her.

"Non, dites-lui que je ne veux pas le voir, que je suis furieuse contre

lui, parce qu'il m'a manque parole." \*

\* "No, tell him I don't wish to see him, I am furious with him for not

keeping his word to me."

"Comtesse, a tout peche misericorde," \* said a fair-haired young man

with a long face and nose, as he entered the room.

\* "Countess, there is mercy for every sin."

The old princess rose respectfully and curtsied. The young man who had

entered took no notice of her. The princess nodded to her daughter and

sidled out of the room.

"Yes, she is right," thought the old princess, all her convictions

dissipated by the appearance of His Highness. "She is right, but how is

it that we in our irrecoverable youth did not know it? Yet it is so

simple," she thought as she got into her carriage.

By the beginning of August Helene's affairs were clearly defined and she

wrote a letter to her husband--who, as she imagined, loved her very

much--informing him of her intention to marry N.N. and of her having

embraced the one true faith, and asking him to carry out all the

formalities necessary for a divorce, which would be explained to him by

the bearer of the letter.

And so I pray God to have you, my friend, in His holy and powerful

keeping--Your friend Helene.

This letter was brought to Pierre's house when he was on the field of

Borodino.

CHAPTER VIII

Toward the end of the battle of Borodino, Pierre, having run down from

Raevski's battery a second time, made his way through a gully to

Knyazkovo with a crowd of soldiers, reached the dressing station, and

seeing blood and hearing cries and groans hurried on, still entangled in

the crowds of soldiers.

The one thing he now desired with his whole soul was to get away quickly

from the terrible sensations amid which he had lived that day and return

to ordinary conditions of life and sleep quietly in a room in his own

bed. He felt that only in the ordinary conditions of life would he be

able to understand himself and all he had seen and felt. But such

ordinary conditions of life were nowhere to be found.

Though shells and bullets did not whistle over the road along which he

was going, still on all sides there was what there had been on the field

of battle. There were still the same suffering, exhausted, and sometimes

strangely indifferent faces, the same blood, the same soldiers'

overcoats, the same sounds of firing which, though distant now, still

aroused terror, and besides this there were the foul air and the dust.

Having gone a couple of miles along the Mozhaysk road, Pierre sat down

by the roadside.

Dusk had fallen, and the roar of guns died away. Pierre lay leaning on

his elbow for a long time, gazing at the shadows that moved past him in

the darkness. He was continually imagining that a cannon ball was flying

toward him with a terrific whizz, and then he shuddered and sat up. He

had no idea how long he had been there. In the middle of the night three

soldiers, having brought some firewood, settled down near him and began

lighting a fire.

The soldiers, who threw sidelong glances at Pierre, got the fire to burn

and placed an iron pot on it into which they broke some dried bread and

put a little dripping. The pleasant odor of greasy viands mingled with

the smell of smoke. Pierre sat up and sighed. The three soldiers were

eating and talking among themselves, taking no notice of him.

"And who may you be?" one of them suddenly asked Pierre, evidently

meaning what Pierre himself had in mind, namely: "If you want to eat

we'll give you some food, only let us know whether you are an honest

man."

"I, I..." said Pierre, feeling it necessary to minimize his social

position as much as possible so as to be nearer to the soldiers and

better understood by them. "By rights I am a militia officer, but my men

are not here. I came to the battle and have lost them."

"There now!" said one of the soldiers.

Another shook his head.

"Would you like a little mash?" the first soldier asked, and handed

Pierre a wooden spoon after licking it clean.

Pierre sat down by the fire and began eating the mash, as they called

the food in the cauldron, and he thought it more delicious than any food

he had ever tasted. As he sat bending greedily over it, helping himself

to large spoonfuls and chewing one after another, his face was lit up by

the fire and the soldiers looked at him in silence.

"Where have you to go to? Tell us!" said one of them.

"To Mozhaysk."

"You're a gentleman, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"And what's your name?"

"Peter Kirilych."

"Well then, Peter Kirilych, come along with us, we'll take you there."

In the total darkness the soldiers walked with Pierre to Mozhaysk.

By the time they got near Mozhaysk and began ascending the steep hill

into the town, the cocks were already crowing. Pierre went on with the

soldiers, quite forgetting that his inn was at the bottom of the hill

and that he had already passed it. He would not soon have remembered

this, such was his state of forgetfulness, had he not halfway up the

hill stumbled upon his groom, who had been to look for him in the town

and was returning to the inn. The groom recognized Pierre in the

darkness by his white hat.

"Your excellency!" he said. "Why, we were beginning to despair! How is

it you are on foot? And where are you going, please?"

"Oh, yes!" said Pierre.

The soldiers stopped.

"So you've found your folk?" said one of them. "Well, good-by, Peter

Kirilych--isn't it?"

"Good-bye, Peter Kirilych!" Pierre heard the other voices repeat.

"Good-bye!" he said and turned with his groom toward the inn.

"I ought to give them something!" he thought, and felt in his pocket.

"No, better not!" said another, inner voice.

There was not a room to be had at the inn, they were all occupied.

Pierre went out into the yard and, covering himself up head and all, lay

down in his carriage.

CHAPTER IX

Scarcely had Pierre laid his head on the pillow before he felt himself

falling asleep, but suddenly, almost with the distinctness of reality,

he heard the boom, boom, boom of firing, the thud of projectiles, groans

and cries, and smelled blood and powder, and a feeling of horror and

dread of death seized him. Filled with fright he opened his eyes and

lifted his head from under his cloak. All was tranquil in the yard. Only

someone's orderly passed through the gateway, splashing through the mud,

and talked to the innkeeper. Above Pierre's head some pigeons, disturbed

by the movement he had made in sitting up, fluttered under the dark roof

of the penthouse. The whole courtyard was permeated by a strong peaceful

smell of stable yards, delightful to Pierre at that moment. He could see

the clear starry sky between the dark roofs of two penthouses.

"Thank God, there is no more of that!" he thought, covering up his head

again. "Oh, what a terrible thing is fear, and how shamefully I yielded

to it! But they... they were steady and calm all the time, to the

end..." thought he.

They, in Pierre's mind, were the soldiers, those who had been at the

battery, those who had given him food, and those who had prayed before

the icon. They, those strange men he had not previously known, stood out

clearly and sharply from everyone else.

"To be a soldier, just a soldier!" thought Pierre as he fell asleep, "to

enter communal life completely, to be imbued by what makes them what

they are. But how cast off all the superfluous, devilish burden of my

outer man? There was a time when I could have done it. I could have run

away from my father, as I wanted to. Or I might have been sent to serve

as a soldier after the duel with Dolokhov." And the memory of the dinner

at the English Club when he had challenged Dolokhov flashed through

Pierre's mind, and then he remembered his benefactor at Torzhok. And now

a picture of a solemn meeting of the lodge presented itself to his mind.

It was taking place at the English Club and someone near and dear to him

sat at the end of the table. "Yes, that is he! It is my benefactor. But

he died!" thought Pierre. "Yes, he died, and I did not know he was

alive. How sorry I am that he died, and how glad I am that he is alive

again!" On one side of the table sat Anatole, Dolokhov, Nesvitski,

Denisov, and others like them (in his dream the category to which these

men belonged was as clearly defined in his mind as the category of those

he termed they), and he heard those people, Anatole and Dolokhov,

shouting and singing loudly; yet through their shouting the voice of his

benefactor was heard speaking all the time and the sound of his words

was as weighty and uninterrupted as the booming on the battlefield, but

pleasant and comforting. Pierre did not understand what his benefactor

was saying, but he knew (the categories of thoughts were also quite

distinct in his dream) that he was talking of goodness and the

possibility of being what they were. And they with their simple, kind,

firm faces surrounded his benefactor on all sides. But though they were

kindly they did not look at Pierre and did not know him. Wishing to

speak and to attract their attention, he got up, but at that moment his

legs grew cold and bare.

He felt ashamed, and with one arm covered his legs from which his cloak

had in fact slipped. For a moment as he was rearranging his cloak Pierre

opened his eyes and saw the same penthouse roofs, posts, and yard, but

now they were all bluish, lit up, and glittering with frost or dew.

"It is dawn," thought Pierre. "But that's not what I want. I want to

hear and understand my benefactor's words." Again he covered himself up

with his cloak, but now neither the lodge nor his benefactor was there.

There were only thoughts clearly expressed in words, thoughts that

someone was uttering or that he himself was formulating.

Afterwards when he recalled those thoughts Pierre was convinced that

someone outside himself had spoken them, though the impressions of that

day had evoked them. He had never, it seemed to him, been able to think

and express his thoughts like that when awake.

"To endure war is the most difficult subordination of man's freedom to

the law of God," the voice had said. "Simplicity is submission to the

will of God; you cannot escape from Him. And they are simple. They do

not talk, but act. The spoken word is silver but the unspoken is golden.

Man can be master of nothing while he fears death, but he who does not

fear it possesses all. If there were no suffering, man would not know

his limitations, would not know himself. The hardest thing (Pierre went

on thinking, or hearing, in his dream) is to be able in your soul to

unite the meaning of all. To unite all?" he asked himself. "No, not to

unite. Thoughts cannot be united, but to harness all these thoughts

together is what we need! Yes, one must harness them, must harness

them!" he repeated to himself with inward rapture, feeling that these

words and they alone expressed what he wanted to say and solved the

question that tormented him.

"Yes, one must harness, it is time to harness."

"Time to harness, time to harness, your excellency! Your excellency!"

some voice was repeating. "We must harness, it is time to harness...."

It was the voice of the groom, trying to wake him. The sun shone

straight into Pierre's face. He glanced at the dirty innyard in the

middle of which soldiers were watering their lean horses at the pump

while carts were passing out of the gate. Pierre turned away with

repugnance, and closing his eyes quickly fell back on the carriage seat.

"No, I don't want that, I don't want to see and understand that. I want

to understand what was revealing itself to me in my dream. One second

more and I should have understood it all! But what am I to do? Harness,

but how can I harness everything?" and Pierre felt with horror that the

meaning of all he had seen and thought in the dream had been destroyed.

The groom, the coachman, and the innkeeper told Pierre that an officer

had come with news that the French were already near Mozhaysk and that

our men were leaving it.

Pierre got up and, having told them to harness and overtake him, went on

foot through the town.

The troops were moving on, leaving about ten thousand wounded behind

them. There were wounded in the yards, at the windows of the houses, and

the streets were crowded with them. In the streets, around carts that

were to take some of the wounded away, shouts, curses, and blows could

be heard. Pierre offered the use of his carriage, which had overtaken

him, to a wounded general he knew, and drove with him to Moscow. On the

way Pierre was told of the death of his brother-in-law Anatole and of

that of Prince Andrew.

CHAPTER X

On the thirteenth of August Pierre reached Moscow. Close to the gates of

the city he was met by Count Rostopchin's adjutant.

"We have been looking for you everywhere," said the adjutant. "The count

wants to see you particularly. He asks you to come to him at once on a

very important matter."

Without going home, Pierre took a cab and drove to see the Moscow

commander-in-chief.

Count Rostopchin had only that morning returned to town from his summer

villa at Sokolniki. The anteroom and reception room of his house were

full of officials who had been summoned or had come for orders.

Vasilchikov and Platov had already seen the count and explained to him

that it was impossible to defend Moscow and that it would have to be

surrendered. Though this news was being concealed from the inhabitants,

the officials--the heads of the various government departments--knew

that Moscow would soon be in the enemy's hands, just as Count Rostopchin

himself knew it, and to escape personal responsibility they had all come

to the governor to ask how they were to deal with their various

departments.

As Pierre was entering the reception room a courier from the army came

out of Rostopchin's private room.

In answer to questions with which he was greeted, the courier made a

despairing gesture with his hand and passed through the room.

While waiting in the reception room Pierre with weary eyes watched the

various officials, old and young, military and civilian, who were there.

They all seemed dissatisfied and uneasy. Pierre went up to a group of

men, one of whom he knew. After greeting Pierre they continued their

conversation.

"If they're sent out and brought back again later on it will do no harm,

but as things are now one can't answer for anything."

"But you see what he writes..." said another, pointing to a printed

sheet he held in his hand.

"That's another matter. That's necessary for the people," said the

first.

"What is it?" asked Pierre.

"Oh, it's a fresh broadsheet."

Pierre took it and began reading.

His Serene Highness has passed through Mozhaysk in order to join up with

the troops moving toward him and has taken up a strong position where

the enemy will not soon attack him. Forty eight guns with ammunition

have been sent him from here, and his Serene Highness says he will

defend Moscow to the last drop of blood and is even ready to fight in

the streets. Do not be upset, brothers, that the law courts are closed;

things have to be put in order, and we will deal with villains in our

own way! When the time comes I shall want both town and peasant lads and

will raise the cry a day or two beforehand, but they are not wanted yet

so I hold my peace. An ax will be useful, a hunting spear not bad, but a

three-pronged fork will be best of all: a Frenchman is no heavier than a

sheaf of rye. Tomorrow after dinner I shall take the Iberian icon of the

Mother of God to the wounded in the Catherine Hospital where we will

have some water blessed. That will help them to get well quicker. I,

too, am well now: one of my eyes was sore but now I am on the lookout

with both.

"But military men have told me that it is impossible to fight in the

town," said Pierre, "and that the position..."

"Well, of course! That's what we were saying," replied the first

speaker.

"And what does he mean by 'One of my eyes was sore but now I am on the

lookout with both'?" asked Pierre.

"The count had a sty," replied the adjutant smiling, "and was very much

upset when I told him people had come to ask what was the matter with

him. By the by, Count," he added suddenly, addressing Pierre with a

smile, "we heard that you have family troubles and that the countess,

your wife..."

"I have heard nothing," Pierre replied unconcernedly. "But what have you

heard?"

"Oh, well, you know people often invent things. I only say what I

heard."

"But what did you hear?"

"Well, they say," continued the adjutant with the same smile, "that the

countess, your wife, is preparing to go abroad. I expect it's

nonsense...."

"Possibly," remarked Pierre, looking about him absent-mindedly. "And who

is that?" he asked, indicating a short old man in a clean blue peasant

overcoat, with a big snow-white beard and eyebrows and a ruddy face.

"He? That's a tradesman, that is to say, he's the restaurant keeper,

Vereshchagin. Perhaps you have heard of that affair with the

proclamation."

"Oh, so that is Vereshchagin!" said Pierre, looking at the firm, calm

face of the old man and seeking any indication of his being a traitor.

"That's not he himself, that's the father of the fellow who wrote the

proclamation," said the adjutant. "The young man is in prison and I

expect it will go hard with him."

An old gentleman wearing a star and another official, a German wearing a

cross round his neck, approached the speaker.

"It's a complicated story, you know," said the adjutant. "That

proclamation appeared about two months ago. The count was informed of

it. He gave orders to investigate the matter. Gabriel Ivanovich here

made the inquiries. The proclamation had passed through exactly sixty-

three hands. He asked one, 'From whom did you get it?' 'From so-and-so.'

He went to the next one. 'From whom did you get it?' and so on till he

reached Vereshchagin, a half educated tradesman, you know, 'a pet of a

trader,'" said the adjutant smiling. "They asked him, 'Who gave it you?'

And the point is that we knew whom he had it from. He could only have

had it from the Postmaster. But evidently they had come to some

understanding. He replied: 'From no one; I made it up myself.' They

threatened and questioned him, but he stuck to that: 'I made it up

myself.' And so it was reported to the count, who sent for the man.

'From whom did you get the proclamation?' 'I wrote it myself.' Well, you

know the count," said the adjutant cheerfully, with a smile of pride,

"he flared up dreadfully--and just think of the fellow's audacity,

lying, and obstinacy!"

"And the count wanted him to say it was from Klyucharev? I understand!"

said Pierre.

"Not at all," rejoined the adjutant in dismay. "Klyucharev had his own

sins to answer for without that and that is why he has been banished.

But the point is that the count was much annoyed. 'How could you have

written it yourself?' said he, and he took up the Hamburg Gazette that

was lying on the table. 'Here it is! You did not write it yourself but

translated it, and translated it abominably, because you don't even know

French, you fool.' And what do you think? 'No,' said he, 'I have not

read any papers, I made it up myself.' 'If that's so, you're a traitor

and I'll have you tried, and you'll be hanged! Say from whom you had

it.' 'I have seen no papers, I made it up myself.' And that was the end

of it. The count had the father fetched, but the fellow stuck to it. He

was sent for trial and condemned to hard labor, I believe. Now the

father has come to intercede for him. But he's a good-for-nothing lad!

You know that sort of tradesman's son, a dandy and lady-killer. He

attended some lectures somewhere and imagines that the devil is no match

for him. That's the sort of fellow he is. His father keeps a cookshop

here by the Stone Bridge, and you know there was a large icon of God

Almighty painted with a scepter in one hand and an orb in the other.

Well, he took that icon home with him for a few days and what did he do?

He found some scoundrel of a painter..."

CHAPTER XI

In the middle of this fresh tale Pierre was summoned to the commander in

chief.

When he entered the private room Count Rostopchin, puckering his face,

was rubbing his forehead and eyes with his hand. A short man was saying

something, but when Pierre entered he stopped speaking and went out.

"Ah, how do you do, great warrior?" said Rostopchin as soon as the short

man had left the room. "We have heard of your prowess. But that's not

the point. Between ourselves, mon cher, do you belong to the Masons?" he

went on severely, as though there were something wrong about it which he

nevertheless intended to pardon. Pierre remained silent. "I am well

informed, my friend, but I am aware that there are Masons and I hope

that you are not one of those who on pretense of saving mankind wish to

ruin Russia."

"Yes, I am a Mason," Pierre replied.

"There, you see, mon cher! I expect you know that Messrs. Speranski and

Magnitski have been deported to their proper place. Mr. Klyucharev has

been treated in the same way, and so have others who on the plea of

building up the temple of Solomon have tried to destroy the temple of

their fatherland. You can understand that there are reasons for this and

that I could not have exiled the Postmaster had he not been a harmful

person. It has now come to my knowledge that you lent him your carriage

for his removal from town, and that you have even accepted papers from

him for safe custody. I like you and don't wish you any harm and--as you

are only half my age--I advise you, as a father would, to cease all

communication with men of that stamp and to leave here as soon as

possible."

"But what did Klyucharev do wrong, Count?" asked Pierre.

"That is for me to know, but not for you to ask," shouted Rostopchin.

"If he is accused of circulating Napoleon's proclamation it is not

proved that he did so," said Pierre without looking at Rostopchin, "and

Vereshchagin..."

"There we are!" Rostopchin shouted at Pierre louder than before,

frowning suddenly. "Vereshchagin is a renegade and a traitor who will be

punished as he deserves," said he with the vindictive heat with which

people speak when recalling an insult. "But I did not summon you to

discuss my actions, but to give you advice--or an order if you prefer

it. I beg you to leave the town and break off all communication with

such men as Klyucharev. And I will knock the nonsense out of anybody"--

but probably realizing that he was shouting at Bezukhov who so far was

not guilty of anything, he added, taking Pierre's hand in a friendly

manner, "We are on the eve of a public disaster and I haven't time to be

polite to everybody who has business with me. My head is sometimes in a

whirl. Well, mon cher, what are you doing personally?"

"Why, nothing," answered Pierre without raising his eyes or changing the

thoughtful expression of his face.

The count frowned.

"A word of friendly advice, mon cher. Be off as soon as you can, that's

all I have to tell you. Happy he who has ears to hear. Good-bye, my dear

fellow. Oh, by the by!" he shouted through the doorway after Pierre, "is

it true that the countess has fallen into the clutches of the holy

fathers of the Society of Jesus?"

Pierre did not answer and left Rostopchin's room more sullen and angry

than he had ever before shown himself.

When he reached home it was already getting dark. Some eight people had

come to see him that evening: the secretary of a committee, the colonel

of his battalion, his steward, his major-domo, and various petitioners.

They all had business with Pierre and wanted decisions from him. Pierre

did not understand and was not interested in any of these questions and

only answered them in order to get rid of these people. When left alone

at last he opened and read his wife's letter.

"They, the soldiers at the battery, Prince Andrew killed... that old

man... Simplicity is submission to God. Suffering is necessary... the

meaning of all... one must harness... my wife is getting married... One

must forget and understand..." And going to his bed he threw himself on

it without undressing and immediately fell asleep.

When he awoke next morning the major-domo came to inform him that a

special messenger, a police officer, had come from Count Rostopchin to

know whether Count Bezukhov had left or was leaving the town.

A dozen persons who had business with Pierre were awaiting him in the

drawing room. Pierre dressed hurriedly and, instead of going to see

them, went to the back porch and out through the gate.

From that time till the end of the destruction of Moscow no one of

Bezukhov's household, despite all the search they made, saw Pierre again

or knew where he was.

CHAPTER XII

The Rostovs remained in Moscow till the first of September, that is,

till the eve of the enemy's entry into the city.

After Petya had joined Obolenski's regiment of Cossacks and left for

Belaya Tserkov where that regiment was forming, the countess was seized

with terror. The thought that both her sons were at the war, had both

gone from under her wing, that today or tomorrow either or both of them

might be killed like the three sons of one of her acquaintances, struck

her that summer for the first time with cruel clearness. She tried to

get Nicholas back and wished to go herself to join Petya, or to get him

an appointment somewhere in Petersburg, but neither of these proved

possible. Petya could not return unless his regiment did so or unless he

was transferred to another regiment on active service. Nicholas was

somewhere with the army and had not sent a word since his last letter,

in which he had given a detailed account of his meeting with Princess

Mary. The countess did not sleep at night, or when she did fall asleep

dreamed that she saw her sons lying dead. After many consultations and

conversations, the count at last devised means to tranquillize her. He

got Petya transferred from Obolenski's regiment to Bezukhov's, which was

in training near Moscow. Though Petya would remain in the service, this

transfer would give the countess the consolation of seeing at least one

of her sons under her wing, and she hoped to arrange matters for her

Petya so as not to let him go again, but always get him appointed to

places where he could not possibly take part in a battle. As long as

Nicholas alone was in danger the countess imagined that she loved her

first-born more than all her other children and even reproached herself

for it; but when her youngest: the scapegrace who had been bad at

lessons, was always breaking things in the house and making himself a

nuisance to everybody, that snub-nosed Petya with his merry black eyes

and fresh rosy cheeks where soft down was just beginning to show--when

he was thrown amid those big, dreadful, cruel men who were fighting

somewhere about something and apparently finding pleasure in it--then

his mother thought she loved him more, much more, than all her other

children. The nearer the time came for Petya to return, the more uneasy

grew the countess. She began to think she would never live to see such

happiness. The presence of Sonya, of her beloved Natasha, or even of her

husband irritated her. "What do I want with them? I want no one but

Petya," she thought.

At the end of August the Rostovs received another letter from Nicholas.

He wrote from the province of Voronezh where he had been sent to procure

remounts, but that letter did not set the countess at ease. Knowing that

one son was out of danger she became the more anxious about Petya.

Though by the twentieth of August nearly all the Rostovs' acquaintances

had left Moscow, and though everybody tried to persuade the countess to

get away as quickly as possible, she would not hear of leaving before

her treasure, her adored Petya, returned. On the twenty-eighth of August

he arrived. The passionate tenderness with which his mother received him

did not please the sixteen-year-old officer. Though she concealed from

him her intention of keeping him under her wing, Petya guessed her

designs, and instinctively fearing that he might give way to emotion

when with her--might "become womanish" as he termed it to himself--he

treated her coldly, avoided her, and during his stay in Moscow attached

himself exclusively to Natasha for whom he had always had a particularly

brotherly tenderness, almost lover-like.

Owing to the count's customary carelessness nothing was ready for their

departure by the twenty-eighth of August and the carts that were to come

from their Ryazan and Moscow estates to remove their household

belongings did not arrive till the thirtieth.

From the twenty-eighth till the thirty-first all Moscow was in a bustle

and commotion. Every day thousands of men wounded at Borodino were

brought in by the Dorogomilov gate and taken to various parts of Moscow,

and thousands of carts conveyed the inhabitants and their possessions

out by the other gates. In spite of Rostopchin's broadsheets, or because

of them or independently of them, the strangest and most contradictory

rumors were current in the town. Some said that no one was to be allowed

to leave the city, others on the contrary said that all the icons had

been taken out of the churches and everybody was to be ordered to leave.

Some said there had been another battle after Borodino at which the

French had been routed, while others on the contrary reported that the

Russian army had been destroyed. Some talked about the Moscow militia

which, preceded by the clergy, would go to the Three Hills; others

whispered that Augustin had been forbidden to leave, that traitors had

been seized, that the peasants were rioting and robbing people on their

way from Moscow, and so on. But all this was only talk; in reality

(though the Council of Fili, at which it was decided to abandon Moscow,

had not yet been held) both those who went away and those who remained

behind felt, though they did not show it, that Moscow would certainly be

abandoned, and that they ought to get away as quickly as possible and

save their belongings. It was felt that everything would suddenly break

up and change, but up to the first of September nothing had done so. As

a criminal who is being led to execution knows that he must die

immediately, but yet looks about him and straightens the cap that is

awry on his head, so Moscow involuntarily continued its wonted life,

though it knew that the time of its destruction was near when the

conditions of life to which its people were accustomed to submit would

be completely upset.

During the three days preceding the occupation of Moscow the whole

Rostov family was absorbed in various activities. The head of the

family, Count Ilya Rostov, continually drove about the city collecting

the current rumors from all sides and gave superficial and hasty orders

at home about the preparations for their departure.

The countess watched the things being packed, was dissatisfied with

everything, was constantly in pursuit of Petya who was always running

away from her, and was jealous of Natasha with whom he spent all his

time. Sonya alone directed the practical side of matters by getting

things packed. But of late Sonya had been particularly sad and silent.

Nicholas' letter in which he mentioned Princess Mary had elicited, in

her presence, joyous comments from the countess, who saw an intervention

of Providence in this meeting of the princess and Nicholas.

"I was never pleased at Bolkonski's engagement to Natasha," said the

countess, "but I always wanted Nicholas to marry the princess, and had a

presentiment that it would happen. What a good thing it would be!"

Sonya felt that this was true: that the only possibility of retrieving

the Rostovs' affairs was by Nicholas marrying a rich woman, and that the

princess was a good match. It was very bitter for her. But despite her

grief, or perhaps just because of it, she took on herself all the

difficult work of directing the storing and packing of their things and

was busy for whole days. The count and countess turned to her when they

had any orders to give. Petya and Natasha on the contrary, far from

helping their parents, were generally a nuisance and a hindrance to

everyone. Almost all day long the house resounded with their running

feet, their cries, and their spontaneous laughter. They laughed and were

gay not because there was any reason to laugh, but because gaiety and

mirth were in their hearts and so everything that happened was a cause

for gaiety and laughter to them. Petya was in high spirits because

having left home a boy he had returned (as everybody told him) a fine

young man, because he was at home, because he had left Belaya Tserkov

where there was no hope of soon taking part in a battle and had come to

Moscow where there was to be fighting in a few days, and chiefly because

Natasha, whose lead he always followed, was in high spirits. Natasha was

gay because she had been sad too long and now nothing reminded her of

the cause of her sadness, and because she was feeling well. She was also

happy because she had someone to adore her: the adoration of others was

a lubricant the wheels of her machine needed to make them run freely--

and Petya adored her. Above all, they were gay because there was a war

near Moscow, there would be fighting at the town gates, arms were being

given out, everybody was escaping--going away somewhere, and in general

something extraordinary was happening, and that is always exciting,

especially to the young.

CHAPTER XIII

On Saturday, the thirty-first of August, everything in the Rostovs'

house seemed topsy-turvy. All the doors were open, all the furniture was

being carried out or moved about, and the mirrors and pictures had been

taken down. There were trunks in the rooms, and hay, wrapping paper, and

ropes were scattered about. The peasants and house serfs carrying out

the things were treading heavily on the parquet floors. The yard was

crowded with peasant carts, some loaded high and already corded up,

others still empty.

The voices and footsteps of the many servants and of the peasants who

had come with the carts resounded as they shouted to one another in the

yard and in the house. The count had been out since morning. The

countess had a headache brought on by all the noise and turmoil and was

lying down in the new sitting room with a vinegar compress on her head.

Petya was not at home, he had gone to visit a friend with whom he meant

to obtain a transfer from the militia to the active army. Sonya was in

the ballroom looking after the packing of the glass and china. Natasha

was sitting on the floor of her dismantled room with dresses, ribbons,

and scarves strewn all about her, gazing fixedly at the floor and

holding in her hands the old ball dress (already out of fashion) which

she had worn at her first Petersburg ball.

Natasha was ashamed of doing nothing when everyone else was so busy, and

several times that morning had tried to set to work, but her heart was

not in it, and she could not and did not know how to do anything except

with all her heart and all her might. For a while she had stood beside

Sonya while the china was being packed and tried to help, but soon gave

it up and went to her room to pack her own things. At first she found it

amusing to give away dresses and ribbons to the maids, but when that was

done and what was left had still to be packed, she found it dull.

"Dunyasha, you pack! You will, won't you, dear?" And when Dunyasha

willingly promised to do it all for her, Natasha sat down on the floor,

took her old ball dress, and fell into a reverie quite unrelated to what

ought to have occupied her thoughts now. She was roused from her reverie

by the talk of the maids in the next room (which was theirs) and by the

sound of their hurried footsteps going to the back porch. Natasha got up

and looked out of the window. An enormously long row of carts full of

wounded men had stopped in the street.

The housekeeper, the old nurse, the cooks, coachmen, maids, footmen,

postilions, and scullions stood at the gate, staring at the wounded.

Natasha, throwing a clean pocket handkerchief over her hair and holding

an end of it in each hand, went out into the street.

The former housekeeper, old Mavra Kuzminichna, had stepped out of the

crowd by the gate, gone up to a cart with a hood constructed of bast

mats, and was speaking to a pale young officer who lay inside. Natasha

moved a few steps forward and stopped shyly, still holding her

handkerchief, and listened to what the housekeeper was saying.

"Then you have nobody in Moscow?" she was saying. "You would be more

comfortable somewhere in a house... in ours, for instance... the family

are leaving."

"I don't know if it would be allowed," replied the officer in a weak

voice. "Here is our commanding officer... ask him," and he pointed to a

stout major who was walking back along the street past the row of carts.

Natasha glanced with frightened eyes at the face of the wounded officer

and at once went to meet the major.

"May the wounded men stay in our house?" she asked.

The major raised his hand to his cap with a smile.

"Which one do you want, Ma'am'selle?" said he, screwing up his eyes and

smiling.

Natasha quietly repeated her question, and her face and whole manner

were so serious, though she was still holding the ends of her

handkerchief, that the major ceased smiling and after some reflection--

as if considering in how far the thing was possible--replied in the

affirmative.

"Oh yes, why not? They may," he said.

With a slight inclination of her head, Natasha stepped back quickly to

Mavra Kuzminichna, who stood talking compassionately to the officer.

"They may. He says they may!" whispered Natasha.

The cart in which the officer lay was turned into the Rostovs' yard, and

dozens of carts with wounded men began at the invitation of the

townsfolk to turn into the yards and to draw up at the entrances of the

houses in Povarskaya Street. Natasha was evidently pleased to be dealing

with new people outside the ordinary routine of her life. She and Mavra

Kuzminichna tried to get as many of the wounded as possible into their

yard.

"Your Papa must be told, though," said Mavra Kuzminichna.

"Never mind, never mind, what does it matter? For one day we can move

into the drawing room. They can have all our half of the house."

"There now, young lady, you do take things into your head! Even if we

put them into the wing, the men's room, or the nurse's room, we must ask

permission."

"Well, I'll ask."

Natasha ran into the house and went on tiptoe through the half-open door

into the sitting room, where there was a smell of vinegar and Hoffman's

drops.

"Are you asleep, Mamma?"

"Oh, what sleep-?" said the countess, waking up just as she was dropping

into a doze.

"Mamma darling!" said Natasha, kneeling by her mother and bringing her

face close to her mother's, "I am sorry, forgive me, I'll never do it

again; I woke you up! Mavra Kuzminichna has sent me: they have brought

some wounded here--officers. Will you let them come? They have nowhere

to go. I knew you'd let them come!" she said quickly all in one breath.

"What officers? Whom have they brought? I don't understand anything

about it," said the countess.

Natasha laughed, and the countess too smiled slightly.

"I knew you'd give permission... so I'll tell them," and, having kissed

her mother, Natasha got up and went to the door.

In the hall she met her father, who had returned with bad news.

"We've stayed too long!" said the count with involuntary vexation. "The

club is closed and the police are leaving."

"Papa, is it all right--I've invited some of the wounded into the

house?" said Natasha.

"Of course it is," he answered absently. "That's not the point. I beg

you not to indulge in trifles now, but to help to pack, and tomorrow we

must go, go, go!...."

And the count gave a similar order to the major-domo and the servants.

At dinner Petya having returned home told them the news he had heard. He

said the people had been getting arms in the Kremlin, and that though

Rostopchin's broadsheet had said that he would sound a call two or three

days in advance, the order had certainly already been given for everyone

to go armed to the Three Hills tomorrow, and that there would be a big

battle there.

The countess looked with timid horror at her son's eager, excited face

as he said this. She realized that if she said a word about his not

going to the battle (she knew he enjoyed the thought of the impending

engagement) he would say something about men, honor, and the fatherland-

-something senseless, masculine, and obstinate which there would be no

contradicting, and her plans would be spoiled; and so, hoping to arrange

to leave before then and take Petya with her as their protector and

defender, she did not answer him, but after dinner called the count

aside and implored him with tears to take her away quickly, that very

night if possible. With a woman's involuntary loving cunning she, who

till then had not shown any alarm, said that she would die of fright if

they did not leave that very night. Without any pretense she was now

afraid of everything.

CHAPTER XIV

Madame Schoss, who had been out to visit her daughter, increased the

countess' fears still more by telling what she had seen at a spirit

dealer's in Myasnitski Street. When returning by that street she had

been unable to pass because of a drunken crowd rioting in front of the

shop. She had taken a cab and driven home by a side street and the

cabman had told her that the people were breaking open the barrels at

the drink store, having received orders to do so.

After dinner the whole Rostov household set to work with enthusiastic

haste packing their belongings and preparing for their departure. The

old count, suddenly setting to work, kept passing from the yard to the

house and back again, shouting confused instructions to the hurrying

people, and flurrying them still more. Petya directed things in the

yard. Sonya, owing to the count's contradictory orders, lost her head

and did not know what to do. The servants ran noisily about the house

and yard, shouting and disputing. Natasha, with the ardor characteristic

of all she did suddenly set to work too. At first her intervention in

the business of packing was received skeptically. Everybody expected

some prank from her and did not wish to obey her; but she resolutely and

passionately demanded obedience, grew angry and nearly cried because

they did not heed her, and at last succeeded in making them believe her.

Her first exploit, which cost her immense effort and established her

authority, was the packing of the carpets. The count had valuable

Gobelin tapestries and Persian carpets in the house. When Natasha set to

work two cases were standing open in the ballroom, one almost full up

with crockery, the other with carpets. There was also much china

standing on the tables, and still more was being brought in from the

storeroom. A third case was needed and servants had gone to fetch it.

"Sonya, wait a bit--we'll pack everything into these," said Natasha.

"You can't, Miss, we have tried to," said the butler's assistant.

"No, wait a minute, please."

And Natasha began rapidly taking out of the case dishes and plates

wrapped in paper.

"The dishes must go in here among the carpets," said she.

"Why, it's a mercy if we can get the carpets alone into three cases,"

said the butler's assistant.

"Oh, wait, please!" And Natasha began rapidly and deftly sorting out the

things. "These aren't needed," said she, putting aside some plates of

Kiev ware. "These--yes, these must go among the carpets," she said,

referring to the Saxony china dishes.

"Don't, Natasha! Leave it alone! We'll get it all packed," urged Sonya

reproachfully.

"What a young lady she is!" remarked the major-domo.

But Natasha would not give in. She turned everything out and began

quickly repacking, deciding that the inferior Russian carpets and

unnecessary crockery should not be taken at all. When everything had

been taken out of the cases, they recommenced packing, and it turned out

that when the cheaper things not worth taking had nearly all been

rejected, the valuable ones really did all go into the two cases. Only

the lid of the case containing the carpets would not shut down. A few

more things might have been taken out, but Natasha insisted on having

her own way. She packed, repacked, pressed, made the butler's assistant

and Petya--whom she had drawn into the business of packing--press on the

lid, and made desperate efforts herself.

"That's enough, Natasha," said Sonya. "I see you were right, but just

take out the top one."

"I won't!" cried Natasha, with one hand holding back the hair that hung

over her perspiring face, while with the other she pressed down the

carpets. "Now press, Petya! Press, Vasilich, press hard!" she cried.

The carpets yielded and the lid closed; Natasha, clapping her hands,

screamed with delight and tears fell from her eyes. But this only lasted

a moment. She at once set to work afresh and they now trusted her

completely. The count was not angry even when they told him that Natasha

had countermanded an order of his, and the servants now came to her to

ask whether a cart was sufficiently loaded, and whether it might be

corded up. Thanks to Natasha's directions the work now went on

expeditiously, unnecessary things were left, and the most valuable

packed as compactly as possible.

But hard as they all worked till quite late that night, they could not

get everything packed. The countess had fallen asleep and the count,

having put off their departure till next morning, went to bed.

Sonya and Natasha slept in the sitting room without undressing.

That night another wounded man was driven down the Povarskaya, and Mavra

Kuzminichna, who was standing at the gate, had him brought into the

Rostovs' yard. Mavra Kuzminichna concluded that he was a very important

man. He was being conveyed in a caleche with a raised hood, and was

quite covered by an apron. On the box beside the driver sat a venerable

old attendant. A doctor and two soldiers followed the carriage in a

cart.

"Please come in here. The masters are going away and the whole house

will be empty," said the old woman to the old attendant.

"Well, perhaps," said he with a sigh. "We don't expect to get him home

alive! We have a house of our own in Moscow, but it's a long way from

here, and there's nobody living in it."

"Do us the honor to come in, there's plenty of everything in the

master's house. Come in," said Mavra Kuzminichna. "Is he very ill?" she

asked.

The attendant made a hopeless gesture.

"We don't expect to get him home! We must ask the doctor."

And the old servant got down from the box and went up to the cart.

"All right!" said the doctor.

The old servant returned to the caleche, looked into it, shook his head

disconsolately, told the driver to turn into the yard, and stopped

beside Mavra Kuzminichna.

"O, Lord Jesus Christ!" she murmured.

She invited them to take the wounded man into the house.

"The masters won't object..." she said.

But they had to avoid carrying the man upstairs, and so they took him

into the wing and put him in the room that had been Madame Schoss'.

This wounded man was Prince Andrew Bolkonski.

CHAPTER XV

Moscow's last day had come. It was a clear bright autumn day, a Sunday.

The church bells everywhere were ringing for service, just as usual on

Sundays. Nobody seemed yet to realize what awaited the city.

Only two things indicated the social condition of Moscow--the rabble,

that is the poor people, and the price of commodities. An enormous crowd

of factory hands, house serfs, and peasants, with whom some officials,

seminarists, and gentry were mingled, had gone early that morning to the

Three Hills. Having waited there for Rostopchin who did not turn up,

they became convinced that Moscow would be surrendered, and then

dispersed all about the town to the public houses and cookshops. Prices

too that day indicated the state of affairs. The price of weapons, of

gold, of carts and horses, kept rising, but the value of paper money and

city articles kept falling, so that by midday there were instances of

carters removing valuable goods, such as cloth, and receiving in payment

a half of what they carted, while peasant horses were fetching five

hundred rubles each, and furniture, mirrors, and bronzes were being

given away for nothing.

In the Rostovs' staid old-fashioned house the dissolution of former

conditions of life was but little noticeable. As to the serfs the only

indication was that three out of their huge retinue disappeared during

the night, but nothing was stolen; and as to the value of their

possessions, the thirty peasant carts that had come in from their

estates and which many people envied proved to be extremely valuable and

they were offered enormous sums of money for them. Not only were huge

sums offered for the horses and carts, but on the previous evening and

early in the morning of the first of September, orderlies and servants

sent by wounded officers came to the Rostovs' and wounded men dragged

themselves there from the Rostovs' and from neighboring houses where

they were accommodated, entreating the servants to try to get them a

lift out of Moscow. The major-domo to whom these entreaties were

addressed, though he was sorry for the wounded, resolutely refused,

saying that he dare not even mention the matter to the count. Pity these

wounded men as one might, it was evident that if they were given one

cart there would be no reason to refuse another, or all the carts and

one's own carriages as well. Thirty carts could not save all the wounded

and in the general catastrophe one could not disregard oneself and one's

own family. So thought the major-domo on his master's behalf.

On waking up that morning Count Ilya Rostov left his bedroom softly, so

as not to wake the countess who had fallen asleep only toward morning,

and came out to the porch in his lilac silk dressing gown. In the yard

stood the carts ready corded. The carriages were at the front porch. The

major-domo stood at the porch talking to an elderly orderly and to a

pale young officer with a bandaged arm. On seeing the count the major-

domo made a significant and stern gesture to them both to go away.

"Well, Vasilich, is everything ready?" asked the count, and stroking his

bald head he looked good-naturedly at the officer and the orderly and

nodded to them. (He liked to see new faces.)

"We can harness at once, your excellency."

"Well, that's right. As soon as the countess wakes we'll be off, God

willing! What is it, gentlemen?" he added, turning to the officer. "Are

you staying in my house?"

The officer came nearer and suddenly his face flushed crimson.

"Count, be so good as to allow me... for God's sake, to get into some

corner of one of your carts! I have nothing here with me.... I shall be

all right on a loaded cart..."

Before the officer had finished speaking the orderly made the same

request on behalf of his master.

"Oh, yes, yes, yes!" said the count hastily. "I shall be very pleased,

very pleased. Vasilich, you'll see to it. Just unload one or two carts.

Well, what of it... do what's necessary..." said the count, muttering

some indefinite order.

But at the same moment an expression of warm gratitude on the officer's

face had already sealed the order. The count looked around him. In the

yard, at the gates, at the window of the wings, wounded officers and

their orderlies were to be seen. They were all looking at the count and

moving toward the porch.

"Please step into the gallery, your excellency," said the major-domo.

"What are your orders about the pictures?"

The count went into the house with him, repeating his order not to

refuse the wounded who asked for a lift.

"Well, never mind, some of the things can be unloaded," he added in a

soft, confidential voice, as though afraid of being overheard.

At nine o'clock the countess woke up, and Matrena Timofeevna, who had

been her lady's maid before her marriage and now performed a sort of

chief gendarme's duty for her, came to say that Madame Schoss was much

offended and the young ladies' summer dresses could not be left behind.

On inquiry, the countess learned that Madame Schoss was offended because

her trunk had been taken down from its cart, and all the loads were

being uncorded and the luggage taken out of the carts to make room for

wounded men whom the count in the simplicity of his heart had ordered

that they should take with them. The countess sent for her husband.

"What is this, my dear? I hear that the luggage is being unloaded."

"You know, love, I wanted to tell you... Countess dear... an officer

came to me to ask for a few carts for the wounded. After all, ours are

things that can be bought but think what being left behind means to

them!... Really now, in our own yard--we asked them in ourselves and

there are officers among them.... You know, I think, my dear... let them

be taken... where's the hurry?"

The count spoke timidly, as he always did when talking of money matters.

The countess was accustomed to this tone as a precursor of news of

something detrimental to the children's interests, such as the building

of a new gallery or conservatory, the inauguration of a private theater

or an orchestra. She was accustomed always to oppose anything announced

in that timid tone and considered it her duty to do so.

She assumed her dolefully submissive manner and said to her husband:

"Listen to me, Count, you have managed matters so that we are getting

nothing for the house, and now you wish to throw away all our--all the

children's property! You said yourself that we have a hundred thousand

rubles' worth of things in the house. I don't consent, my dear, I don't!

Do as you please! It's the government's business to look after the

wounded; they know that. Look at the Lopukhins opposite, they cleared

out everything two days ago. That's what other people do. It's only we

who are such fools. If you have no pity on me, have some for the

children."

Flourishing his arms in despair the count left the room without

replying.

"Papa, what are you doing that for?" asked Natasha, who had followed him

into her mother's room.

"Nothing! What business is it of yours?" muttered the count angrily.

"But I heard," said Natasha. "Why does Mamma object?"

"What business is it of yours?" cried the count.

Natasha stepped up to the window and pondered.

"Papa! Here's Berg coming to see us," said she, looking out of the

window.

CHAPTER XVI

Berg, the Rostovs' son-in-law, was already a colonel wearing the orders

of Vladimir and Anna, and he still filled the quiet and agreeable post

of assistant to the head of the staff of the assistant commander of the

first division of the Second Army.

On the first of September he had come to Moscow from the army.

He had nothing to do in Moscow, but he had noticed that everyone in the

army was asking for leave to visit Moscow and had something to do there.

So he considered it necessary to ask for leave of absence for family and

domestic reasons.

Berg drove up to his father-in-law's house in his spruce little trap

with a pair of sleek roans, exactly like those of a certain prince. He

looked attentively at the carts in the yard and while going up to the

porch took out a clean pocket handkerchief and tied a knot in it.

From the anteroom Berg ran with smooth though impatient steps into the

drawing room, where he embraced the count, kissed the hands of Natasha

and Sonya, and hastened to inquire after "Mamma's" health.

"Health, at a time like this?" said the count. "Come, tell us the news!

Is the army retreating or will there be another battle?"

"God Almighty alone can decide the fate of our fatherland, Papa," said

Berg. "The army is burning with a spirit of heroism and the leaders, so

to say, have now assembled in council. No one knows what is coming. But

in general I can tell you, Papa, that such a heroic spirit, the truly

antique valor of the Russian army, which they--which it" (he corrected

himself) "has shown or displayed in the battle of the twenty-sixth--

there are no words worthy to do it justice! I tell you, Papa" (he smote

himself on the breast as a general he had heard speaking had done, but

Berg did it a trifle late for he should have struck his breast at the

words "Russian army"), "I tell you frankly that we, the commanders, far

from having to urge the men on or anything of that kind, could hardly

restrain those... those... yes, those exploits of antique valor," he

went on rapidly. "General Barclay de Tolly risked his life everywhere at

the head of the troops, I can assure you. Our corps was stationed on a

hillside. You can imagine!"

And Berg related all that he remembered of the various tales he had

heard those days. Natasha watched him with an intent gaze that confused

him, as if she were trying to find in his face the answer to some

question.

"Altogether such heroism as was displayed by the Russian warriors cannot

be imagined or adequately praised!" said Berg, glancing round at

Natasha, and as if anxious to conciliate her, replying to her intent

look with a smile. "'Russia is not in Moscow, she lives in the hearts of

her sons!' Isn't it so, Papa?" said he.

Just then the countess came in from the sitting room with a weary and

dissatisfied expression. Berg hurriedly jumped up, kissed her hand,

asked about her health, and, swaying his head from side to side to

express sympathy, remained standing beside her.

"Yes, Mamma, I tell you sincerely that these are hard and sad times for

every Russian. But why are you so anxious? You have still time to get

away...."

"I can't think what the servants are about," said the countess, turning

to her husband. "I have just been told that nothing is ready yet.

Somebody after all must see to things. One misses Mitenka at such times.

There won't be any end to it."

The count was about to say something, but evidently restrained himself.

He got up from his chair and went to the door.

At that moment Berg drew out his handkerchief as if to blow his nose

and, seeing the knot in it, pondered, shaking his head sadly and

significantly.

"And I have a great favor to ask of you, Papa," said he.

"Hm..." said the count, and stopped.

"I was driving past Yusupov's house just now," said Berg with a laugh,

"when the steward, a man I know, ran out and asked me whether I wouldn't

buy something. I went in out of curiosity, you know, and there is a

small chiffonier and a dressing table. You know how dear Vera wanted a

chiffonier like that and how we had a dispute about it." (At the mention

of the chiffonier and dressing table Berg involuntarily changed his tone

to one of pleasure at his admirable domestic arrangements.) "And it's

such a beauty! It pulls out and has a secret English drawer, you know!

And dear Vera has long wanted one. I wish to give her a surprise, you

see. I saw so many of those peasant carts in your yard. Please let me

have one, I will pay the man well, and..."

The count frowned and coughed.

"Ask the countess, I don't give orders."

"If it's inconvenient, please don't," said Berg. "Only I so wanted it,

for dear Vera's sake."

"Oh, go to the devil, all of you! To the devil, the devil, the devil..."

cried the old count. "My head's in a whirl!"

And he left the room. The countess began to cry.

"Yes, Mamma! Yes, these are very hard times!" said Berg.

Natasha left the room with her father and, as if finding it difficult to

reach some decision, first followed him and then ran downstairs.

Petya was in the porch, engaged in giving out weapons to the servants

who were to leave Moscow. The loaded carts were still standing in the

yard. Two of them had been uncorded and a wounded officer was climbing

into one of them helped by an orderly.

"Do you know what it's about?" Petya asked Natasha.

She understood that he meant what were their parents quarreling about.

She did not answer.

"It's because Papa wanted to give up all the carts to the wounded," said

Petya. "Vasilich told me. I consider..."

"I consider," Natasha suddenly almost shouted, turning her angry face to

Petya, "I consider it so horrid, so abominable, so... I don't know what.

Are we despicable Germans?"

Her throat quivered with convulsive sobs and, afraid of weakening and

letting the force of her anger run to waste, she turned and rushed

headlong up the stairs.

Berg was sitting beside the countess consoling her with the respectful

attention of a relative. The count, pipe in hand, was pacing up and down

the room, when Natasha, her face distorted by anger, burst in like a

tempest and approached her mother with rapid steps.

"It's horrid! It's abominable!" she screamed. "You can't possibly have

ordered it!"

Berg and the countess looked at her, perplexed and frightened. The count

stood still at the window and listened.

"Mamma, it's impossible: see what is going on in the yard!" she cried.

"They will be left!..."

"What's the matter with you? Who are 'they'? What do you want?"

"Why, the wounded! It's impossible, Mamma. It's monstrous!... No, Mamma

darling, it's not the thing. Please forgive me, darling.... Mamma, what

does it matter what we take away? Only look what is going on in the

yard... Mamma!... It's impossible!"

The count stood by the window and listened without turning round.

Suddenly he sniffed and put his face closer to the window.

The countess glanced at her daughter, saw her face full of shame for her

mother, saw her agitation, and understood why her husband did not turn

to look at her now, and she glanced round quite disconcerted.

"Oh, do as you like! Am I hindering anyone?" she said, not surrendering

at once.

"Mamma, darling, forgive me!"

But the countess pushed her daughter away and went up to her husband.

"My dear, you order what is right.... You know I don't understand about

it," said she, dropping her eyes shamefacedly.

"The eggs... the eggs are teaching the hen," muttered the count through

tears of joy, and he embraced his wife who was glad to hide her look of

shame on his breast.

"Papa! Mamma! May I see to it? May I?..." asked Natasha. "We will still

take all the most necessary things."

The count nodded affirmatively, and Natasha, at the rapid pace at which

she used to run when playing at tag, ran through the ballroom to the

anteroom and downstairs into the yard.

The servants gathered round Natasha, but could not believe the strange

order she brought them until the count himself, in his wife's name,

confirmed the order to give up all the carts to the wounded and take the

trunks to the storerooms. When they understood that order the servants

set to work at this new task with pleasure and zeal. It no longer seemed

strange to them but on the contrary it seemed the only thing that could

be done, just as a quarter of an hour before it had not seemed strange

to anyone that the wounded should be left behind and the goods carted

away but that had seemed the only thing to do.

The whole household, as if to atone for not having done it sooner, set

eagerly to work at the new task of placing the wounded in the carts. The

wounded dragged themselves out of their rooms and stood with pale but

happy faces round the carts. The news that carts were to be had spread

to the neighboring houses, from which wounded men began to come into the

Rostovs' yard. Many of the wounded asked them not to unload the carts

but only to let them sit on the top of the things. But the work of

unloading, once started, could not be arrested. It seemed not to matter

whether all or only half the things were left behind. Cases full of

china, bronzes, pictures, and mirrors that had been so carefully packed

the night before now lay about the yard, and still they went on

searching for and finding possibilities of unloading this or that and

letting the wounded have another and yet another cart.

"We can take four more men," said the steward. "They can have my trap,

or else what is to become of them?"

"Let them have my wardrobe cart," said the countess. "Dunyasha can go

with me in the carriage."

They unloaded the wardrobe cart and sent it to take wounded men from a

house two doors off. The whole household, servants included, was bright

and animated. Natasha was in a state of rapturous excitement such as she

had not known for a long time.

"What could we fasten this onto?" asked the servants, trying to fix a

trunk on the narrow footboard behind a carriage. "We must keep at least

one cart."

"What's in it?" asked Natasha.

"The count's books."

"Leave it, Vasilich will put it away. It's not wanted."

The phaeton was full of people and there was a doubt as to where Count

Peter could sit.

"On the box. You'll sit on the box, won't you, Petya?" cried Natasha.

Sonya too was busy all this time, but the aim of her efforts was quite

different from Natasha's. She was putting away the things that had to be

left behind and making a list of them as the countess wished, and she

tried to get as much taken away with them as possible.

CHAPTER XVII

Before two o'clock in the afternoon the Rostovs' four carriages, packed

full and with the horses harnessed, stood at the front door. One by one

the carts with the wounded had moved out of the yard.

The caleche in which Prince Andrew was being taken attracted Sonya's

attention as it passed the front porch. With the help of a maid she was

arranging a seat for the countess in the huge high coach that stood at

the entrance.

"Whose caleche is that?" she inquired, leaning out of the carriage

window.

"Why, didn't you know, Miss?" replied the maid. "The wounded prince: he

spent the night in our house and is going with us."

"But who is it? What's his name?"

"It's our intended that was--Prince Bolkonski himself! They say he is

dying," replied the maid with a sigh.

Sonya jumped out of the coach and ran to the countess. The countess,

tired out and already dressed in shawl and bonnet for her journey, was

pacing up and down the drawing room, waiting for the household to

assemble for the usual silent prayer with closed doors before starting.

Natasha was not in the room.

"Mamma," said Sonya, "Prince Andrew is here, mortally wounded. He is

going with us."

The countess opened her eyes in dismay and, seizing Sonya's arm, glanced

around.

"Natasha?" she murmured.

At that moment this news had only one significance for both of them.

They knew their Natasha, and alarm as to what would happen if she heard

this news stifled all sympathy for the man they both liked.

"Natasha does not know yet, but he is going with us," said Sonya.

"You say he is dying?"

Sonya nodded.

The countess put her arms around Sonya and began to cry.

"The ways of God are past finding out!" she thought, feeling that the

Almighty Hand, hitherto unseen, was becoming manifest in all that was

now taking place.

"Well, Mamma? Everything is ready. What's the matter?" asked Natasha, as

with animated face she ran into the room.

"Nothing," answered the countess. "If everything is ready let us start."

And the countess bent over her reticule to hide her agitated face. Sonya

embraced Natasha and kissed her.

Natasha looked at her inquiringly.

"What is it? What has happened?"

"Nothing... No..."

"Is it something very bad for me? What is it?" persisted Natasha with

her quick intuition.

Sonya sighed and made no reply. The count, Petya, Madame Schoss, Mavra

Kuzminichna, and Vasilich came into the drawing room and, having closed

the doors, they all sat down and remained for some moments silently

seated without looking at one another.

The count was the first to rise, and with a loud sigh crossed himself

before the icon. All the others did the same. Then the count embraced

Mavra Kuzminichna and Vasilich, who were to remain in Moscow, and while

they caught at his hand and kissed his shoulder he patted their backs

lightly with some vaguely affectionate and comforting words. The

countess went into the oratory and there Sonya found her on her knees

before the icons that had been left here and there hanging on the wall.

(The most precious ones, with which some family tradition was connected,

were being taken with them.)

In the porch and in the yard the men whom Petya had armed with swords

and daggers, with trousers tucked inside their high boots and with belts

and girdles tightened, were taking leave of those remaining behind.

As is always the case at a departure, much had been forgotten or put in

the wrong place, and for a long time two menservants stood one on each

side of the open door and the carriage steps waiting to help the

countess in, while maids rushed with cushions and bundles from the house

to the carriages, the caleche, the phaeton, and back again.

"They always will forget everything!" said the countess. "Don't you know

I can't sit like that?"

And Dunyasha, with clenched teeth, without replying but with an

aggrieved look on her face, hastily got into the coach to rearrange the

seat.

"Oh, those servants!" said the count, swaying his head.

Efim, the old coachman, who was the only one the countess trusted to

drive her, sat perched up high on the box and did not so much as glance

round at what was going on behind him. From thirty years' experience he

knew it would be some time yet before the order, "Be off, in God's

name!" would be given him: and he knew that even when it was said he

would be stopped once or twice more while they sent back to fetch

something that had been forgotten, and even after that he would again be

stopped and the countess herself would lean out of the window and beg

him for the love of heaven to drive carefully down the hill. He knew all

this and therefore waited calmly for what would happen, with more

patience than the horses, especially the near one, the chestnut Falcon,

who was pawing the ground and champing his bit. At last all were seated,

the carriage steps were folded and pulled up, the door was shut,

somebody was sent for a traveling case, and the countess leaned out and

said what she had to say. Then Efim deliberately doffed his hat and

began crossing himself. The postilion and all the other servants did the

same. "Off, in God's name!" said Efim, putting on his hat. "Start!" The

postilion started the horses, the off pole horse tugged at his collar,

the high springs creaked, and the body of the coach swayed. The footman

sprang onto the box of the moving coach which jolted as it passed out of

the yard onto the uneven roadway; the other vehicles jolted in their

turn, and the procession of carriages moved up the street. In the

carriages, the caleche, and the phaeton, all crossed themselves as they

passed the church opposite the house. Those who were to remain in Moscow

walked on either side of the vehicles seeing the travelers off.

Rarely had Natasha experienced so joyful a feeling as now, sitting in

the carriage beside the countess and gazing at the slowly receding walls

of forsaken, agitated Moscow. Occasionally she leaned out of the

carriage window and looked back and then forward at the long train of

wounded in front of them. Almost at the head of the line she could see

the raised hood of Prince Andrew's caleche. She did not know who was in

it, but each time she looked at the procession her eyes sought that

caleche. She knew it was right in front.

In Kudrino, from the Nikitski, Presnya, and Podnovinsk Streets came

several other trains of vehicles similar to the Rostovs', and as they

passed along the Sadovaya Street the carriages and carts formed two rows

abreast.

As they were going round the Sukharev water tower Natasha, who was

inquisitively and alertly scrutinizing the people driving or walking

past, suddenly cried out in joyful surprise:

"Dear me! Mamma, Sonya, look, it's he!"

"Who? Who?"

"Look! Yes, on my word, it's Bezukhov!" said Natasha, putting her head

out of the carriage and staring at a tall, stout man in a coachman's

long coat, who from his manner of walking and moving was evidently a

gentleman in disguise, and who was passing under the arch of the

Sukharev tower accompanied by a small, sallow-faced, beardless old man

in a frieze coat.

"Yes, it really is Bezukhov in a coachman's coat, with a queer-looking

old boy. Really," said Natasha, "look, look!"

"No, it's not he. How can you talk such nonsense?"

"Mamma," screamed Natasha, "I'll stake my head it's he! I assure you!

Stop, stop!" she cried to the coachman.

But the coachman could not stop, for from the Meshchanski Street came

more carts and carriages, and the Rostovs were being shouted at to move

on and not block the way.

In fact, however, though now much farther off than before, the Rostovs

all saw Pierre--or someone extraordinarily like him--in a coachman's

coat, going down the street with head bent and a serious face beside a

small, beardless old man who looked like a footman. That old man noticed

a face thrust out of the carriage window gazing at them, and

respectfully touching Pierre's elbow said something to him and pointed

to the carriage. Pierre, evidently engrossed in thought, could not at

first understand him. At length when he had understood and looked in the

direction the old man indicated, he recognized Natasha, and following

his first impulse stepped instantly and rapidly toward the coach. But

having taken a dozen steps he seemed to remember something and stopped.

Natasha's face, leaning out of the window, beamed with quizzical

kindliness.

"Peter Kirilovich, come here! We have recognized you! This is

wonderful!" she cried, holding out her hand to him. "What are you doing?

Why are you like this?"

Pierre took her outstretched hand and kissed it awkwardly as he walked

along beside her while the coach still moved on.

"What is the matter, Count?" asked the countess in a surprised and

commiserating tone.

"What? What? Why? Don't ask me," said Pierre, and looked round at

Natasha whose radiant, happy expression--of which he was conscious

without looking at her--filled him with enchantment.

"Are you remaining in Moscow, then?"

Pierre hesitated.

"In Moscow?" he said in a questioning tone. "Yes, in Moscow. Good-bye!"

"Ah, if only I were a man! I'd certainly stay with you. How splendid!"

said Natasha. "Mamma, if you'll let me, I'll stay!"

Pierre glanced absently at Natasha and was about to say something, but

the countess interrupted him.

"You were at the battle, we heard."

"Yes, I was," Pierre answered. "There will be another battle

tomorrow..." he began, but Natasha interrupted him.

"But what is the matter with you, Count? You are not like yourself...."

"Oh, don't ask me, don't ask me! I don't know myself. Tomorrow... But

no! Good-bye, good-by!" he muttered. "It's an awful time!" and dropping

behind the carriage he stepped onto the pavement.

Natasha continued to lean out of the window for a long time, beaming at

him with her kindly, slightly quizzical, happy smile.

CHAPTER XVIII

For the last two days, ever since leaving home, Pierre had been living

in the empty house of his deceased benefactor, Bazdeev. This is how it

happened.

When he woke up on the morning after his return to Moscow and his

interview with Count Rostopchin, he could not for some time make out

where he was and what was expected of him. When he was informed that

among others awaiting him in his reception room there was a Frenchman

who had brought a letter from his wife, the Countess Helene, he felt

suddenly overcome by that sense of confusion and hopelessness to which

he was apt to succumb. He felt that everything was now at an end, all

was in confusion and crumbling to pieces, that nobody was right or

wrong, the future held nothing, and there was no escape from this

position. Smiling unnaturally and muttering to himself, he first sat

down on the sofa in an attitude of despair, then rose, went to the door

of the reception room and peeped through the crack, returned flourishing

his arms, and took up a book. His major-domo came in a second time to

say that the Frenchman who had brought the letter from the countess was

very anxious to see him if only for a minute, and that someone from

Bazdeev's widow had called to ask Pierre to take charge of her husband's

books, as she herself was leaving for the country.

"Oh, yes, in a minute; wait... or no! No, of course... go and say I will

come directly," Pierre replied to the major-domo.

But as soon as the man had left the room Pierre took up his hat which

was lying on the table and went out of his study by the other door.

There was no one in the passage. He went along the whole length of this

passage to the stairs and, frowning and rubbing his forehead with both

hands, went down as far as the first landing. The hall porter was

standing at the front door. From the landing where Pierre stood there

was a second staircase leading to the back entrance. He went down that

staircase and out into the yard. No one had seen him. But there were

some carriages waiting, and as soon as Pierre stepped out of the gate

the coachmen and the yard porter noticed him and raised their caps to

him. When he felt he was being looked at he behaved like an ostrich

which hides its head in a bush in order not to be seen: he hung his head

and quickening his pace went down the street.

Of all the affairs awaiting Pierre that day the sorting of Joseph

Bazdeev's books and papers appeared to him the most necessary.

He hired the first cab he met and told the driver to go to the

Patriarch's Ponds, where the widow Bazdeev's house was.

Continually turning round to look at the rows of loaded carts that were

making their way from all sides out of Moscow, and balancing his bulky

body so as not to slip out of the ramshackle old vehicle, Pierre,

experiencing the joyful feeling of a boy escaping from school, began to

talk to his driver.

The man told him that arms were being distributed today at the Kremlin

and that tomorrow everyone would be sent out beyond the Three Hills

gates and a great battle would be fought there.

Having reached the Patriarch's Ponds Pierre found the Bazdeevs' house,

where he had not been for a long time past. He went up to the gate.

Gerasim, that sallow beardless old man Pierre had seen at Torzhok five

years before with Joseph Bazdeev, came out in answer to his knock.

"At home?" asked Pierre.

"Owing to the present state of things Sophia Danilovna has gone to the

Torzhok estate with the children, your excellency."

"I will come in all the same, I have to look through the books," said

Pierre.

"Be so good as to step in. Makar Alexeevich, the brother of my late

master--may the kingdom of heaven be his--has remained here, but he is

in a weak state as you know," said the old servant.

Pierre knew that Makar Alexeevich was Joseph Bazdeev's half-insane

brother and a hard drinker.

"Yes, yes, I know. Let us go in..." said Pierre and entered the house.

A tall, bald-headed old man with a red nose, wearing a dressing gown and

with galoshes on his bare feet, stood in the anteroom. On seeing Pierre

he muttered something angrily and went away along the passage.

"He was a very clever man but has now grown quite feeble, as your honor

sees," said Gerasim. "Will you step into the study?" Pierre nodded. "As

it was sealed up so it has remained, but Sophia Danilovna gave orders

that if anyone should come from you they were to have the books."

Pierre went into that gloomy study which he had entered with such

trepidation in his benefactor's lifetime. The room, dusty and untouched

since the death of Joseph Bazdeev was now even gloomier.

Gerasim opened one of the shutters and left the room on tiptoe. Pierre

went round the study, approached the cupboard in which the manuscripts

were kept, and took out what had once been one of the most important,

the holy of holies of the order. This was the authentic Scotch Acts with

Bazdeev's notes and explanations. He sat down at the dusty writing

table, and, having laid the manuscripts before him, opened them out,

closed them, finally pushed them away, and resting his head on his hand

sank into meditation.

Gerasim looked cautiously into the study several times and saw Pierre

always sitting in the same attitude.

More than two hours passed and Gerasim took the liberty of making a

slight noise at the door to attract his attention, but Pierre did not

hear him.

"Is the cabman to be discharged, your honor?"

"Oh yes!" said Pierre, rousing himself and rising hurriedly. "Look

here," he added, taking Gerasim by a button of his coat and looking down

at the old man with moist, shining, and ecstatic eyes, "I say, do you

know that there is going to be a battle tomorrow?"

"We heard so," replied the man.

"I beg you not to tell anyone who I am, and to do what I ask you."

"Yes, your excellency," replied Gerasim. "Will you have something to

eat?"

"No, but I want something else. I want peasant clothes and a pistol,"

said Pierre, unexpectedly blushing.

"Yes, your excellency," said Gerasim after thinking for a moment.

All the rest of that day Pierre spent alone in his benefactor's study,

and Gerasim heard him pacing restlessly from one corner to another and

talking to himself. And he spent the night on a bed made up for him

there.

Gerasim, being a servant who in his time had seen many strange things,

accepted Pierre's taking up his residence in the house without surprise,

and seemed pleased to have someone to wait on. That same evening--

without even asking himself what they were wanted for--he procured a

coachman's coat and cap for Pierre, and promised to get him the pistol

next day. Makar Alexeevich came twice that evening shuffling along in

his galoshes as far as the door and stopped and looked ingratiatingly at

Pierre. But as soon as Pierre turned toward him he wrapped his dressing

gown around him with a shamefaced and angry look and hurried away. It

was when Pierre (wearing the coachman's coat which Gerasim had procured

for him and had disinfected by steam) was on his way with the old man to

buy the pistol at the Sukharev market that he met the Rostovs.

CHAPTER XIX

Kutuzov's order to retreat through Moscow to the Ryazan road was issued

at night on the first of September.

The first troops started at once, and during the night they marched

slowly and steadily without hurry. At daybreak, however, those nearing

the town at the Dorogomilov bridge saw ahead of them masses of soldiers

crowding and hurrying across the bridge, ascending on the opposite side

and blocking the streets and alleys, while endless masses of troops were

bearing down on them from behind, and an unreasoning hurry and alarm

overcame them. They all rushed forward to the bridge, onto it, and to

the fords and the boats. Kutuzov himself had driven round by side

streets to the other side of Moscow.

By ten o'clock in the morning of the second of September, only the rear

guard remained in the Dorogomilov suburb, where they had ample room. The

main army was on the other side of Moscow or beyond it.

At that very time, at ten in the morning of the second of September,

Napoleon was standing among his troops on the Poklonny Hill looking at

the panorama spread out before him. From the twenty-sixth of August to

the second of September, that is from the battle of Borodino to the

entry of the French into Moscow, during the whole of that agitating,

memorable week, there had been the extraordinary autumn weather that

always comes as a surprise, when the sun hangs low and gives more heat

than in spring, when everything shines so brightly in the rare clear

atmosphere that the eyes smart, when the lungs are strengthened and

refreshed by inhaling the aromatic autumn air, when even the nights are

warm, and when in those dark warm nights, golden stars startle and

delight us continually by falling from the sky.

At ten in the morning of the second of September this weather still

held.

The brightness of the morning was magical. Moscow seen from the Poklonny

Hill lay spaciously spread out with her river, her gardens, and her

churches, and she seemed to be living her usual life, her cupolas

glittering like stars in the sunlight.

The view of the strange city with its peculiar architecture, such as he

had never seen before, filled Napoleon with the rather envious and

uneasy curiosity men feel when they see an alien form of life that has

no knowledge of them. This city was evidently living with the full force

of its own life. By the indefinite signs which, even at a distance,

distinguish a living body from a dead one, Napoleon from the Poklonny

Hill perceived the throb of life in the town and felt, as it were, the

breathing of that great and beautiful body.

Every Russian looking at Moscow feels her to be a mother; every

foreigner who sees her, even if ignorant of her significance as the

mother city, must feel her feminine character, and Napoleon felt it.

"Cette ville asiatique aux innombrables eglises, Moscou la sainte. La

voila done enfin, cette fameuse ville! Il etait temps," \* said he, and

dismounting he ordered a plan of Moscow to be spread out before him, and

summoned Lelorgne d'Ideville, the interpreter.

\* "That Asiatic city of the innumerable churches, holy Moscow! Here it

is then at last, that famous city. It was high time."

"A town captured by the enemy is like a maid who has lost her honor,"

thought he (he had said so to Tuchkov at Smolensk). From that point of

view he gazed at the Oriental beauty he had not seen before. It seemed

strange to him that his long-felt wish, which had seemed unattainable,

had at last been realized. In the clear morning light he gazed now at

the city and now at the plan, considering its details, and the assurance

of possessing it agitated and awed him.

"But could it be otherwise?" he thought. "Here is this capital at my

feet. Where is Alexander now, and of what is he thinking? A strange,

beautiful, and majestic city; and a strange and majestic moment! In what

light must I appear to them!" thought he, thinking of his troops. "Here

she is, the reward for all those fainthearted men," he reflected,

glancing at those near him and at the troops who were approaching and

forming up. "One word from me, one movement of my hand, and that ancient

capital of the Tsars would perish. But my clemency is always ready to

descend upon the vanquished. I must be magnanimous and truly great. But

no, it can't be true that I am in Moscow," he suddenly thought. "Yet

here she is lying at my feet, with her golden domes and crosses

scintillating and twinkling in the sunshine. But I shall spare her. On

the ancient monuments of barbarism and despotism I will inscribe great

words of justice and mercy.... It is just this which Alexander will feel

most painfully, I know him." (It seemed to Napoleon that the chief

import of what was taking place lay in the personal struggle between

himself and Alexander.) "From the height of the Kremlin--yes, there is

the Kremlin, yes--I will give them just laws; I will teach them the

meaning of true civilization, I will make generations of boyars remember

their conqueror with love. I will tell the deputation that I did not,

and do not, desire war, that I have waged war only against the false

policy of their court; that I love and respect Alexander and that in

Moscow I will accept terms of peace worthy of myself and of my people. I

do not wish to utilize the fortunes of war to humiliate an honored

monarch. 'Boyars,' I will say to them, 'I do not desire war, I desire

the peace and welfare of all my subjects.' However, I know their

presence will inspire me, and I shall speak to them as I always do:

clearly, impressively, and majestically. But can it be true that I am in

Moscow? Yes, there she lies."

"Qu'on m'amene les boyars," \* said he to his suite.

\* "Bring the boyars to me."

A general with a brilliant suite galloped off at once to fetch the

boyars.

Two hours passed. Napoleon had lunched and was again standing in the

same place on the Poklonny Hill awaiting the deputation. His speech to

the boyars had already taken definite shape in his imagination. That

speech was full of dignity and greatness as Napoleon understood it.

He was himself carried away by the tone of magnanimity he intended to

adopt toward Moscow. In his imagination he appointed days for assemblies

at the palace of the Tsars, at which Russian notables and his own would

mingle. He mentally appointed a governor, one who would win the hearts

of the people. Having learned that there were many charitable

institutions in Moscow he mentally decided that he would shower favors

on them all. He thought that, as in Africa he had to put on a burnoose

and sit in a mosque, so in Moscow he must be beneficent like the Tsars.

And in order finally to touch the hearts of the Russians--and being like

all Frenchmen unable to imagine anything sentimental without a reference

to ma chere, ma tendre, ma pauvre mere \* --he decided that he would

place an inscription on all these establishments in large letters: "This

establishment is dedicated to my dear mother." Or no, it should be

simply: Maison de ma Mere, \*(2) he concluded. "But am I really in

Moscow? Yes, here it lies before me, but why is the deputation from the

city so long in appearing?" he wondered.

\* "My dear, my tender, my poor mother."

\* (2) "House of my Mother."

Meanwhile an agitated consultation was being carried on in whispers

among his generals and marshals at the rear of his suite. Those sent to

fetch the deputation had returned with the news that Moscow was empty,

that everyone had left it. The faces of those who were not conferring

together were pale and perturbed. They were not alarmed by the fact that

Moscow had been abandoned by its inhabitants (grave as that fact

seemed), but by the question how to tell the Emperor--without putting

him in the terrible position of appearing ridiculous--that he had been

awaiting the boyars so long in vain: that there were drunken mobs left

in Moscow but no one else. Some said that a deputation of some sort must

be scraped together, others disputed that opinion and maintained that

the Emperor should first be carefully and skillfully prepared, and then

told the truth.

"He will have to be told, all the same," said some gentlemen of the

suite. "But, gentlemen..."

The position was the more awkward because the Emperor, meditating upon

his magnanimous plans, was pacing patiently up and down before the

outspread map, occasionally glancing along the road to Moscow from under

his lifted hand with a bright and proud smile.

"But it's impossible..." declared the gentlemen of the suite, shrugging

their shoulders but not venturing to utter the implied word--le

ridicule...

At last the Emperor, tired of futile expectation, his actor's instinct

suggesting to him that the sublime moment having been too long drawn out

was beginning to lose its sublimity, gave a sign with his hand. A single

report of a signaling gun followed, and the troops, who were already

spread out on different sides of Moscow, moved into the city through

Tver, Kaluga, and Dorogomilov gates. Faster and faster, vying with one

another, they moved at the double or at a trot, vanishing amid the

clouds of dust they raised and making the air ring with a deafening roar

of mingling shouts.

Drawn on by the movement of his troops Napoleon rode with them as far as

the Dorogomilov gate, but there again stopped and, dismounting from his

horse, paced for a long time by the Kammer-Kollezski rampart, awaiting

the deputation.

CHAPTER XX

Meanwhile Moscow was empty. There were still people in it, perhaps a

fiftieth part of its former inhabitants had remained, but it was empty.

It was empty in the sense that a dying queenless hive is empty.

In a queenless hive no life is left though to a superficial glance it

seems as much alive as other hives.

The bees circle round a queenless hive in the hot beams of the midday

sun as gaily as around the living hives; from a distance it smells of

honey like the others, and bees fly in and out in the same way. But one

has only to observe that hive to realize that there is no longer any

life in it. The bees do not fly in the same way, the smell and the sound

that meet the beekeeper are not the same. To the beekeeper's tap on the

wall of the sick hive, instead of the former instant unanimous humming

of tens of thousands of bees with their abdomens threateningly

compressed, and producing by the rapid vibration of their wings an

aerial living sound, the only reply is a disconnected buzzing from

different parts of the deserted hive. From the alighting board, instead

of the former spirituous fragrant smell of honey and venom, and the warm

whiffs of crowded life, comes an odor of emptiness and decay mingling

with the smell of honey. There are no longer sentinels sounding the

alarm with their abdomens raised, and ready to die in defense of the

hive. There is no longer the measured quiet sound of throbbing activity,

like the sound of boiling water, but diverse discordant sounds of

disorder. In and out of the hive long black robber bees smeared with

honey fly timidly and shiftily. They do not sting, but crawl away from

danger. Formerly only bees laden with honey flew into the hive, and they

flew out empty; now they fly out laden. The beekeeper opens the lower

part of the hive and peers in. Instead of black, glossy bees--tamed by

toil, clinging to one another's legs and drawing out the wax, with a

ceaseless hum of labor--that used to hang in long clusters down to the

floor of the hive, drowsy shriveled bees crawl about separately in

various directions on the floor and walls of the hive. Instead of a

neatly glued floor, swept by the bees with the fanning of their wings,

there is a floor littered with bits of wax, excrement, dying bees

scarcely moving their legs, and dead ones that have not been cleared

away.

The beekeeper opens the upper part of the hive and examines the super.

Instead of serried rows of bees sealing up every gap in the combs and

keeping the brood warm, he sees the skillful complex structures of the

combs, but no longer in their former state of purity. All is neglected

and foul. Black robber bees are swiftly and stealthily prowling about

the combs, and the short home bees, shriveled and listless as if they

were old, creep slowly about without trying to hinder the robbers,

having lost all motive and all sense of life. Drones, bumblebees, wasps,

and butterflies knock awkwardly against the walls of the hive in their

flight. Here and there among the cells containing dead brood and honey

an angry buzzing can sometimes be heard. Here and there a couple of

bees, by force of habit and custom cleaning out the brood cells, with

efforts beyond their strength laboriously drag away a dead bee or

bumblebee without knowing why they do it. In another corner two old bees

are languidly fighting, or cleaning themselves, or feeding one another,

without themselves knowing whether they do it with friendly or hostile

intent. In a third place a crowd of bees, crushing one another, attack

some victim and fight and smother it, and the victim, enfeebled or

killed, drops from above slowly and lightly as a feather, among the heap

of corpses. The keeper opens the two center partitions to examine the

brood cells. In place of the former close dark circles formed by

thousands of bees sitting back to back and guarding the high mystery of

generation, he sees hundreds of dull, listless, and sleepy shells of

bees. They have almost all died unawares, sitting in the sanctuary they

had guarded and which is now no more. They reek of decay and death. Only

a few of them still move, rise, and feebly fly to settle on the enemy's

hand, lacking the spirit to die stinging him; the rest are dead and fall

as lightly as fish scales. The beekeeper closes the hive, chalks a mark

on it, and when he has time tears out its contents and burns it clean.

So in the same way Moscow was empty when Napoleon, weary, uneasy, and

morose, paced up and down in front of the Kammer-Kollezski rampart,

awaiting what to his mind was a necessary, if but formal, observance of

the proprieties--a deputation.

In various corners of Moscow there still remained a few people aimlessly

moving about, following their old habits and hardly aware of what they

were doing.

When with due circumspection Napoleon was informed that Moscow was

empty, he looked angrily at his informant, turned away, and silently

continued to walk to and fro.

"My carriage!" he said.

He took his seat beside the aide-de-camp on duty and drove into the

suburb. "Moscow deserted!" he said to himself. "What an incredible

event!"

He did not drive into the town, but put up at an inn in the Dorogomilov

suburb.

The coup de theatre had not come off.

CHAPTER XXI

The Russian troops were passing through Moscow from two o'clock at night

till two in the afternoon and bore away with them the wounded and the

last of the inhabitants who were leaving.

The greatest crush during the movement of the troops took place at the

Stone, Moskva, and Yauza bridges.

While the troops, dividing into two parts when passing around the

Kremlin, were thronging the Moskva and the Stone bridges, a great many

soldiers, taking advantage of the stoppage and congestion, turned back

from the bridges and slipped stealthily and silently past the church of

Vasili the Beatified and under the Borovitski gate, back up the hill to

the Red Square where some instinct told them they could easily take

things not belonging to them. Crowds of the kind seen at cheap sales

filled all the passages and alleys of the Bazaar. But there were no

dealers with voices of ingratiating affability inviting customers to

enter; there were no hawkers, nor the usual motley crowd of female

purchasers--but only soldiers, in uniforms and overcoats though without

muskets, entering the Bazaar empty-handed and silently making their way

out through its passages with bundles. Tradesmen and their assistants

(of whom there were but few) moved about among the soldiers quite

bewildered. They unlocked their shops and locked them up again, and

themselves carried goods away with the help of their assistants. On the

square in front of the Bazaar were drummers beating the muster call. But

the roll of the drums did not make the looting soldiers run in the

direction of the drum as formerly, but made them, on the contrary, run

farther away. Among the soldiers in the shops and passages some men were

to be seen in gray coats, with closely shaven heads. Two officers, one

with a scarf over his uniform and mounted on a lean, dark-gray horse,

the other in an overcoat and on foot, stood at the corner of Ilyinka

Street, talking. A third officer galloped up to them.

"The general orders them all to be driven out at once, without fail.

This is outrageous! Half the men have dispersed."

"Where are you off to?... Where?..." he shouted to three infantrymen

without muskets who, holding up the skirts of their overcoats, were

slipping past him into the Bazaar passage. "Stop, you rascals!"

"But how are you going to stop them?" replied another officer. "There is

no getting them together. The army should push on before the rest bolt,

that's all!"

"How can one push on? They are stuck there, wedged on the bridge, and

don't move. Shouldn't we put a cordon round to prevent the rest from

running away?"

"Come, go in there and drive them out!" shouted the senior officer.

The officer in the scarf dismounted, called up a drummer, and went with

him into the arcade. Some soldiers started running away in a group. A

shopkeeper with red pimples on his cheeks near the nose, and a calm,

persistent, calculating expression on his plump face, hurriedly and

ostentatiously approached the officer, swinging his arms.

"Your honor!" said he. "Be so good as to protect us! We won't grudge

trifles, you are welcome to anything--we shall be delighted! Pray!...

I'll fetch a piece of cloth at once for such an honorable gentleman, or

even two pieces with pleasure. For we feel how it is; but what's all

this--sheer robbery! If you please, could not guards be placed if only

to let us close the shop...."

Several shopkeepers crowded round the officer.

"Eh, what twaddle!" said one of them, a thin, stern-looking man. "When

one's head is gone one doesn't weep for one's hair! Take what any of you

like!" And flourishing his arm energetically he turned sideways to the

officer.

"It's all very well for you, Ivan Sidorych, to talk," said the first

tradesman angrily. "Please step inside, your honor!"

"Talk indeed!" cried the thin one. "In my three shops here I have a

hundred thousand rubles' worth of goods. Can they be saved when the army

has gone? Eh, what people! 'Against God's might our hands can't fight.'"

"Come inside, your honor!" repeated the tradesman, bowing.

The officer stood perplexed and his face showed indecision.

"It's not my business!" he exclaimed, and strode on quickly down one of

the passages.

From one open shop came the sound of blows and vituperation, and just as

the officer came up to it a man in a gray coat with a shaven head was

flung out violently.

This man, bent double, rushed past the tradesman and the officer. The

officer pounced on the soldiers who were in the shops, but at that

moment fearful screams reached them from the huge crowd on the Moskva

bridge and the officer ran out into the square.

"What is it? What is it?" he asked, but his comrade was already

galloping off past Vasili the Beatified in the direction from which the

screams came.

The officer mounted his horse and rode after him. When he reached the

bridge he saw two unlimbered guns, the infantry crossing the bridge,

several overturned carts, and frightened and laughing faces among the

troops. Beside the cannon a cart was standing to which two horses were

harnessed. Four borzois with collars were pressing close to the wheels.

The cart was loaded high, and at the very top, beside a child's chair

with its legs in the air, sat a peasant woman uttering piercing and

desperate shrieks. He was told by his fellow officers that the screams

of the crowd and the shrieks of the woman were due to the fact that

General Ermolov, coming up to the crowd and learning that soldiers were

dispersing among the shops while crowds of civilians blocked the bridge,

had ordered two guns to be unlimbered and made a show of firing at the

bridge. The crowd, crushing one another, upsetting carts, and shouting

and squeezing desperately, had cleared off the bridge and the troops

were now moving forward.

CHAPTER XXII

Meanwhile, the city itself was deserted. There was hardly anyone in the

streets. The gates and shops were all closed, only here and there round

the taverns solitary shouts or drunken songs could be heard. Nobody

drove through the streets and footsteps were rarely heard. The

Povarskaya was quite still and deserted. The huge courtyard of the

Rostovs' house was littered with wisps of hay and with dung from the

horses, and not a soul was to be seen there. In the great drawing room

of the house, which had been left with all it contained, were two

people. They were the yard porter Ignat, and the page boy Mishka,

Vasilich's grandson who had stayed in Moscow with his grandfather.

Mishka had opened the clavichord and was strumming on it with one

finger. The yard porter, his arms akimbo, stood smiling with

satisfaction before the large mirror.

"Isn't it fine, eh, Uncle Ignat?" said the boy, suddenly beginning to

strike the keyboard with both hands.

"Only fancy!" answered Ignat, surprised at the broadening grin on his

face in the mirror.

"Impudence! Impudence!" they heard behind them the voice of Mavra

Kuzminichna who had entered silently. "How he's grinning, the fat mug!

Is that what you're here for? Nothing's cleared away down there and

Vasilich is worn out. Just you wait a bit!"

Ignat left off smiling, adjusted his belt, and went out of the room with

meekly downcast eyes.

"Aunt, I did it gently," said the boy.

"I'll give you something gently, you monkey you!" cried Mavra

Kuzminichna, raising her arm threateningly. "Go and get the samovar to

boil for your grandfather."

Mavra Kuzminichna flicked the dust off the clavichord and closed it, and

with a deep sigh left the drawing room and locked its main door.

Going out into the yard she paused to consider where she should go next-

-to drink tea in the servants' wing with Vasilich, or into the storeroom

to put away what still lay about.

She heard the sound of quick footsteps in the quiet street. Someone

stopped at the gate, and the latch rattled as someone tried to open it.

Mavra Kuzminichna went to the gate.

"Who do you want?"

"The count--Count Ilya Andreevich Rostov."

"And who are you?"

"An officer, I have to see him," came the reply in a pleasant, well-bred

Russian voice.

Mavra Kuzminichna opened the gate and an officer of eighteen, with the

round face of a Rostov, entered the yard.

"They have gone away, sir. Went away yesterday at vespertime," said

Mavra Kuzminichna cordially.

The young officer standing in the gateway, as if hesitating whether to

enter or not, clicked his tongue.

"Ah, how annoying!" he muttered. "I should have come yesterday.... Ah,

what a pity."

Meanwhile, Mavra Kuzminichna was attentively and sympathetically

examining the familiar Rostov features of the young man's face, his

tattered coat and trodden-down boots.

"What did you want to see the count for?" she asked.

"Oh well... it can't be helped!" said he in a tone of vexation and

placed his hand on the gate as if to leave.

He again paused in indecision.

"You see," he suddenly said, "I am a kinsman of the count's and he has

been very kind to me. As you see" (he glanced with an amused air and

good-natured smile at his coat and boots) "my things are worn out and I

have no money, so I was going to ask the count..."

Mavra Kuzminichna did not let him finish.

"Just wait a minute, sir. One little moment," said she.

And as soon as the officer let go of the gate handle she turned and,

hurrying away on her old legs, went through the back yard to the

servants' quarters.

While Mavra Kuzminichna was running to her room the officer walked about

the yard gazing at his worn-out boots with lowered head and a faint

smile on his lips. "What a pity I've missed Uncle! What a nice old

woman! Where has she run off to? And how am I to find the nearest way to

overtake my regiment, which must by now be getting near the Rogozhski

gate?" thought he. Just then Mavra Kuzminichna appeared from behind the

corner of the house with a frightened yet resolute look, carrying a

rolled-up check kerchief in her hand. While still a few steps from the

officer she unfolded the kerchief and took out of it a white twenty-

five-ruble assignat and hastily handed it to him.

"If his excellency had been at home, as a kinsman he would of course...

but as it is..."

Mavra Kuzminichna grew abashed and confused. The officer did not

decline, but took the note quietly and thanked her.

"If the count had been at home..." Mavra Kuzminichna went on

apologetically. "Christ be with you, sir! May God preserve you!" said

she, bowing as she saw him out.

Swaying his head and smiling as if amused at himself, the officer ran

almost at a trot through the deserted streets toward the Yauza bridge to

overtake his regiment.

But Mavra Kuzminichna stood at the closed gate for some time with moist

eyes, pensively swaying her head and feeling an unexpected flow of

motherly tenderness and pity for the unknown young officer.

CHAPTER XXIII

From an unfinished house on the Varvarka, the ground floor of which was

a dramshop, came drunken shouts and songs. On benches round the tables

in a dirty little room sat some ten factory hands. Tipsy and perspiring,

with dim eyes and wide-open mouths, they were all laboriously singing

some song or other. They were singing discordantly, arduously, and with

great effort, evidently not because they wished to sing, but because

they wanted to show they were drunk and on a spree. One, a tall, fair-

haired lad in a clean blue coat, was standing over the others. His face

with its fine straight nose would have been handsome had it not been for

his thin, compressed, twitching lips and dull, gloomy, fixed eyes.

Evidently possessed by some idea, he stood over those who were singing,

and solemnly and jerkily flourished above their heads his white arm with

the sleeve turned up to the elbow, trying unnaturally to spread out his

dirty fingers. The sleeve of his coat kept slipping down and he always

carefully rolled it up again with his left hand, as if it were most

important that the sinewy white arm he was flourishing should be bare.

In the midst of the song cries were heard, and fighting and blows in the

passage and porch. The tall lad waved his arm.

"Stop it!" he exclaimed peremptorily. "There's a fight, lads!" And,

still rolling up his sleeve, he went out to the porch.

The factory hands followed him. These men, who under the leadership of

the tall lad were drinking in the dramshop that morning, had brought the

publican some skins from the factory and for this had had drink served

them. The blacksmiths from a neighboring smithy, hearing the sounds of

revelry in the tavern and supposing it to have been broken into, wished

to force their way in too and a fight in the porch had resulted.

The publican was fighting one of the smiths at the door, and when the

workmen came out the smith, wrenching himself free from the tavern

keeper, fell face downward on the pavement.

Another smith tried to enter the doorway, pressing against the publican

with his chest.

The lad with the turned-up sleeve gave the smith a blow in the face and

cried wildly: "They're fighting us, lads!"

At that moment the first smith got up and, scratching his bruised face

to make it bleed, shouted in a tearful voice: "Police! Murder!...

They've killed a man, lads!"

"Oh, gracious me, a man beaten to death--killed!..." screamed a woman

coming out of a gate close by.

A crowd gathered round the bloodstained smith.

"Haven't you robbed people enough--taking their last shirts?" said a

voice addressing the publican. "What have you killed a man for, you

thief?"

The tall lad, standing in the porch, turned his bleared eyes from the

publican to the smith and back again as if considering whom he ought to

fight now.

"Murderer!" he shouted suddenly to the publican. "Bind him, lads!"

"I daresay you would like to bind me!" shouted the publican, pushing

away the men advancing on him, and snatching his cap from his head he

flung it on the ground.

As if this action had some mysterious and menacing significance, the

workmen surrounding the publican paused in indecision.

"I know the law very well, mates! I'll take the matter to the captain of

police. You think I won't get to him? Robbery is not permitted to

anybody now a days!" shouted the publican, picking up his cap.

"Come along then! Come along then!" the publican and the tall young

fellow repeated one after the other, and they moved up the street

together.

The bloodstained smith went beside them. The factory hands and others

followed behind, talking and shouting.

At the corner of the Moroseyka, opposite a large house with closed

shutters and bearing a bootmaker's signboard, stood a score of thin,

worn-out, gloomy-faced bootmakers, wearing overalls and long tattered

coats.

"He should pay folks off properly," a thin workingman, with frowning

brows and a straggly beard, was saying.

"But he's sucked our blood and now he thinks he's quit of us. He's been

misleading us all the week and now that he's brought us to this pass

he's made off."

On seeing the crowd and the bloodstained man the workman ceased

speaking, and with eager curiosity all the bootmakers joined the moving

crowd.

"Where are all the folks going?"

"Why, to the police, of course!"

"I say, is it true that we have been beaten?" "And what did you think?

Look what folks are saying."

Questions and answers were heard. The publican, taking advantage of the

increased crowd, dropped behind and returned to his tavern.

The tall youth, not noticing the disappearance of his foe, waved his

bare arm and went on talking incessantly, attracting general attention

to himself. It was around him that the people chiefly crowded, expecting

answers from him to the questions that occupied all their minds.

"He must keep order, keep the law, that's what the government is there

for. Am I not right, good Christians?" said the tall youth, with a

scarcely perceptible smile. "He thinks there's no government! How can

one do without government? Or else there would be plenty who'd rob us."

"Why talk nonsense?" rejoined voices in the crowd. "Will they give up

Moscow like this? They told you that for fun, and you believed it!

Aren't there plenty of troops on the march? Let him in, indeed! That's

what the government is for. You'd better listen to what people are

saying," said some of the mob pointing to the tall youth.

By the wall of China-Town a smaller group of people were gathered round

a man in a frieze coat who held a paper in his hand.

"An ukase, they are reading an ukase! Reading an ukase!" cried voices in

the crowd, and the people rushed toward the reader.

The man in the frieze coat was reading the broadsheet of August 31. When

the crowd collected round him he seemed confused, but at the demand of

the tall lad who had pushed his way up to him, he began in a rather

tremulous voice to read the sheet from the beginning.

"Early tomorrow I shall go to his Serene Highness," he read ("Sirin

Highness," said the tall fellow with a triumphant smile on his lips and

a frown on his brow), "to consult with him to act, and to aid the army

to exterminate these scoundrels. We too will take part..." the reader

went on, and then paused ("Do you see," shouted the youth victoriously,

"he's going to clear up the whole affair for you...."), "in destroying

them, and will send these visitors to the devil. I will come back to

dinner, and we'll set to work. We will do, completely do, and undo these

scoundrels."

The last words were read out in the midst of complete silence. The tall

lad hung his head gloomily. It was evident that no one had understood

the last part. In particular, the words "I will come back to dinner,"

evidently displeased both reader and audience. The people's minds were

tuned to a high pitch and this was too simple and needlessly

comprehensible--it was what any one of them might have said and

therefore was what an ukase emanating from the highest authority should

not say.

They all stood despondent and silent. The tall youth moved his lips and

swayed from side to side.

"We should ask him... that's he himself?"... "Yes, ask him indeed!...

Why not? He'll explain"... voices in the rear of the crowd were suddenly

heard saying, and the general attention turned to the police

superintendent's trap which drove into the square attended by two

mounted dragoons.

The superintendent of police, who had gone that morning by Count

Rostopchin's orders to burn the barges and had in connection with that

matter acquired a large sum of money which was at that moment in his

pocket, on seeing a crowd bearing down upon him told his coachman to

stop.

"What people are these?" he shouted to the men, who were moving singly

and timidly in the direction of his trap.

"What people are these?" he shouted again, receiving no answer.

"Your honor..." replied the shopman in the frieze coat, "your honor, in

accord with the proclamation of his highest excellency the count, they

desire to serve, not sparing their lives, and it is not any kind of

riot, but as his highest excellence said..."

"The count has not left, he is here, and an order will be issued

concerning you," said the superintendent of police. "Go on!" he ordered

his coachman.

The crowd halted, pressing around those who had heard what the

superintendent had said, and looking at the departing trap.

The superintendent of police turned round at that moment with a scared

look, said something to his coachman, and his horses increased their

speed.

"It's a fraud, lads! Lead the way to him, himself!" shouted the tall

youth. "Don't let him go, lads! Let him answer us! Keep him!" shouted

different people and the people dashed in pursuit of the trap.

Following the superintendent of police and talking loudly the crowd went

in the direction of the Lubyanka Street.

"There now, the gentry and merchants have gone away and left us to

perish. Do they think we're dogs?" voices in the crowd were heard saying

more and more frequently.

CHAPTER XXIV

On the evening of the first of September, after his interview with

Kutuzov, Count Rostopchin had returned to Moscow mortified and offended

because he had not been invited to attend the council of war, and

because Kutuzov had paid no attention to his offer to take part in the

defense of the city; amazed also at the novel outlook revealed to him at

the camp, which treated the tranquillity of the capital and its

patriotic fervor as not merely secondary but quite irrelevant and

unimportant matters. Distressed, offended, and surprised by all this,

Rostopchin had returned to Moscow. After supper he lay down on a sofa

without undressing, and was awakened soon after midnight by a courier

bringing him a letter from Kutuzov. This letter requested the count to

send police officers to guide the troops through the town, as the army

was retreating to the Ryazan road beyond Moscow. This was not news to

Rostopchin. He had known that Moscow would be abandoned not merely since

his interview the previous day with Kutuzov on the Poklonny Hill but

ever since the battle of Borodino, for all the generals who came to

Moscow after that battle had said unanimously that it was impossible to

fight another battle, and since then the government property had been

removed every night, and half the inhabitants had left the city with

Rostopchin's own permission. Yet all the same this information

astonished and irritated the count, coming as it did in the form of a

simple note with an order from Kutuzov, and received at night, breaking

in on his beauty sleep.

When later on in his memoirs Count Rostopchin explained his actions at

this time, he repeatedly says that he was then actuated by two important

considerations: to maintain tranquillity in Moscow and expedite the

departure of the inhabitants. If one accepts this twofold aim all

Rostopchin's actions appear irreproachable. "Why were the holy relics,

the arms, ammunition, gunpowder, and stores of corn not removed? Why

were thousands of inhabitants deceived into believing that Moscow would

not be given up--and thereby ruined?" "To preserve the tranquillity of

the city," explains Count Rostopchin. "Why were bundles of useless

papers from the government offices, and Leppich's balloon and other

articles removed?" "To leave the town empty," explains Count Rostopchin.

One need only admit that public tranquillity is in danger and any action

finds a justification.

All the horrors of the reign of terror were based only on solicitude for

public tranquillity.

On what, then, was Count Rostopchin's fear for the tranquillity of

Moscow based in 1812? What reason was there for assuming any probability

of an uprising in the city? The inhabitants were leaving it and the

retreating troops were filling it. Why should that cause the masses to

riot?

Neither in Moscow nor anywhere in Russia did anything resembling an

insurrection ever occur when the enemy entered a town. More than ten

thousand people were still in Moscow on the first and second of

September, and except for a mob in the governor's courtyard, assembled

there at his bidding, nothing happened. It is obvious that there would

have been even less reason to expect a disturbance among the people if

after the battle of Borodino, when the surrender of Moscow became

certain or at least probable, Rostopchin instead of exciting the people

by distributing arms and broadsheets had taken steps to remove all the

holy relics, the gunpowder, munitions, and money, and had told the

population plainly that the town would be abandoned.

Rostopchin, though he had patriotic sentiments, was a sanguine and

impulsive man who had always moved in the highest administrative circles

and had no understanding at all of the people he supposed himself to be

guiding. Ever since the enemy's entry into Smolensk he had in

imagination been playing the role of director of the popular feeling of

"the heart of Russia." Not only did it seem to him (as to all

administrators) that he controlled the external actions of Moscow's

inhabitants, but he also thought he controlled their mental attitude by

means of his broadsheets and posters, written in a coarse tone which the

people despise in their own class and do not understand from those in

authority. Rostopchin was so pleased with the fine role of leader of

popular feeling, and had grown so used to it, that the necessity of

relinquishing that role and abandoning Moscow without any heroic display

took him unawares and he suddenly felt the ground slip away from under

his feet, so that he positively did not know what to do. Though he knew

it was coming, he did not till the last moment wholeheartedly believe

that Moscow would be abandoned, and did not prepare for it. The

inhabitants left against his wishes. If the government offices were

removed, this was only done on the demand of officials to whom the count

yielded reluctantly. He was absorbed in the role he had created for

himself. As is often the case with those gifted with an ardent

imagination, though he had long known that Moscow would be abandoned he

knew it only with his intellect, he did not believe it in his heart and

did not adapt himself mentally to this new position of affairs.

All his painstaking and energetic activity (in how far it was useful and

had any effect on the people is another question) had been simply

directed toward arousing in the masses his own feeling of patriotic

hatred of the French.

But when events assumed their true historical character, when expressing

hatred for the French in words proved insufficient, when it was not even

possible to express that hatred by fighting a battle, when self-

confidence was of no avail in relation to the one question before

Moscow, when the whole population streamed out of Moscow as one man,

abandoning their belongings and proving by that negative action all the

depth of their national feeling, then the role chosen by Rostopchin

suddenly appeared senseless. He unexpectedly felt himself ridiculous,

weak, and alone, with no ground to stand on.

When, awakened from his sleep, he received that cold, peremptory note

from Kutuzov, he felt the more irritated the more he felt himself to

blame. All that he had been specially put in charge of, the state

property which he should have removed, was still in Moscow and it was no

longer possible to take the whole of it away.

"Who is to blame for it? Who has let things come to such a pass?" he

ruminated. "Not I, of course. I had everything ready. I had Moscow

firmly in hand. And this is what they have let it come to! Villains!

Traitors!" he thought, without clearly defining who the villains and

traitors were, but feeling it necessary to hate those traitors whoever

they might be who were to blame for the false and ridiculous position in

which he found himself.

All that night Count Rostopchin issued orders, for which people came to

him from all parts of Moscow. Those about him had never seen the count

so morose and irritable.

"Your excellency, the Director of the Registrar's Department has sent

for instructions... From the Consistory, from the Senate, from the

University, from the Foundling Hospital, the Suffragan has sent...

asking for information.... What are your orders about the Fire Brigade?

From the governor of the prison... from the superintendent of the

lunatic asylum..." All night long such announcements were continually

being received by the count.

To all these inquiries he gave brief and angry replies indicating that

orders from him were not now needed, that the whole affair, carefully

prepared by him, had now been ruined by somebody, and that that somebody

would have to bear the whole responsibility for all that might happen.

"Oh, tell that blockhead," he said in reply to the question from the

Registrar's Department, "that he should remain to guard his documents.

Now why are you asking silly questions about the Fire Brigade? They have

horses, let them be off to Vladimir, and not leave them to the French."

"Your excellency, the superintendent of the lunatic asylum has come:

what are your commands?"

"My commands? Let them go away, that's all.... And let the lunatics out

into the town. When lunatics command our armies God evidently means

these other madmen to be free."

In reply to an inquiry about the convicts in the prison, Count

Rostopchin shouted angrily at the governor:

"Do you expect me to give you two battalions--which we have not got--for

a convoy? Release them, that's all about it!"

"Your excellency, there are some political prisoners, Meshkov,

Vereshchagin..."

"Vereshchagin! Hasn't he been hanged yet?" shouted Rostopchin. "Bring

him to me!"

CHAPTER XXV

Toward nine o'clock in the morning, when the troops were already moving

through Moscow, nobody came to the count any more for instructions.

Those who were able to get away were going of their own accord, those

who remained behind decided for themselves what they must do.

The count ordered his carriage that he might drive to Sokolniki, and sat

in his study with folded hands, morose, sallow, and taciturn.

In quiet and untroubled times it seems to every administrator that it is

only by his efforts that the whole population under his rule is kept

going, and in this consciousness of being indispensable every

administrator finds the chief reward of his labor and efforts. While the

sea of history remains calm the ruler-administrator in his frail bark,

holding on with a boat hook to the ship of the people and himself

moving, naturally imagines that his efforts move the ship he is holding

on to. But as soon as a storm arises and the sea begins to heave and the

ship to move, such a delusion is no longer possible. The ship moves

independently with its own enormous motion, the boat hook no longer

reaches the moving vessel, and suddenly the administrator, instead of

appearing a ruler and a source of power, becomes an insignificant,

useless, feeble man.

Rostopchin felt this, and it was this which exasperated him.

The superintendent of police, whom the crowd had stopped, went in to see

him at the same time as an adjutant who informed the count that the

horses were harnessed. They were both pale, and the superintendent of

police, after reporting that he had executed the instructions he had

received, informed the count that an immense crowd had collected in the

courtyard and wished to see him.

Without saying a word Rostopchin rose and walked hastily to his light,

luxurious drawing room, went to the balcony door, took hold of the

handle, let it go again, and went to the window from which he had a

better view of the whole crowd. The tall lad was standing in front,

flourishing his arm and saying something with a stern look. The blood-

stained smith stood beside him with a gloomy face. A drone of voices was

audible through the closed window.

"Is my carriage ready?" asked Rostopchin, stepping back from the window.

"It is, your excellency," replied the adjutant.

Rostopchin went again to the balcony door.

"But what do they want?" he asked the superintendent of police.

"Your excellency, they say they have got ready, according to your

orders, to go against the French, and they shouted something about

treachery. But it is a turbulent crowd, your excellency--I hardly

managed to get away from it. Your excellency, I venture to suggest..."

"You may go. I don't need you to tell me what to do!" exclaimed

Rostopchin angrily.

He stood by the balcony door looking at the crowd.

"This is what they have done with Russia! This is what they have done

with me!" thought he, full of an irrepressible fury that welled up

within him against the someone to whom what was happening might be

attributed. As often happens with passionate people, he was mastered by

anger but was still seeking an object on which to vent it. "Here is that

mob, the dregs of the people," he thought as he gazed at the crowd:

"this rabble they have roused by their folly! They want a victim," he

thought as he looked at the tall lad flourishing his arm. And this

thought occurred to him just because he himself desired a victim,

something on which to vent his rage.

"Is the carriage ready?" he asked again.

"Yes, your excellency. What are your orders about Vereshchagin? He is

waiting at the porch," said the adjutant.

"Ah!" exclaimed Rostopchin, as if struck by an unexpected recollection.

And rapidly opening the door he went resolutely out onto the balcony.

The talking instantly ceased, hats and caps were doffed, and all eyes

were raised to the count.

"Good morning, lads!" said the count briskly and loudly. "Thank you for

coming. I'll come out to you in a moment, but we must first settle with

the villain. We must punish the villain who has caused the ruin of

Moscow. Wait for me!"

And the count stepped as briskly back into the room and slammed the door

behind him.

A murmur of approbation and satisfaction ran through the crowd. "He'll

settle with all the villains, you'll see! And you said the French...

He'll show you what law is!" the mob were saying as if reproving one

another for their lack of confidence.

A few minutes later an officer came hurriedly out of the front door,

gave an order, and the dragoons formed up in line. The crowd moved

eagerly from the balcony toward the porch. Rostopchin, coming out there

with quick angry steps, looked hastily around as if seeking someone.

"Where is he?" he inquired. And as he spoke he saw a young man coming

round the corner of the house between two dragoons. He had a long thin

neck, and his head, that had been half shaved, was again covered by

short hair. This young man was dressed in a threadbare blue cloth coat

lined with fox fur, that had once been smart, and dirty hempen convict

trousers, over which were pulled his thin, dirty, trodden-down boots. On

his thin, weak legs were heavy chains which hampered his irresolute

movements.

"Ah!" said Rostopchin, hurriedly turning away his eyes from the young

man in the fur-lined coat and pointing to the bottom step of the porch.

"Put him there."

The young man in his clattering chains stepped clumsily to the spot

indicated, holding away with one finger the coat collar which chafed his

neck, turned his long neck twice this way and that, sighed, and

submissively folded before him his thin hands, unused to work.

For several seconds while the young man was taking his place on the step

the silence continued. Only among the back rows of the people, who were

all pressing toward the one spot, could sighs, groans, and the shuffling

of feet be heard.

While waiting for the young man to take his place on the step Rostopchin

stood frowning and rubbing his face with his hand.

"Lads!" said he, with a metallic ring in his voice. "This man,

Vereshchagin, is the scoundrel by whose doing Moscow is perishing."

The young man in the fur-lined coat, stooping a little, stood in a

submissive attitude, his fingers clasped before him. His emaciated young

face, disfigured by the half-shaven head, hung down hopelessly. At the

count's first words he raised it slowly and looked up at him as if

wishing to say something or at least to meet his eye. But Rostopchin did

not look at him. A vein in the young man's long thin neck swelled like a

cord and went blue behind the ear, and suddenly his face flushed.

All eyes were fixed on him. He looked at the crowd, and rendered more

hopeful by the expression he read on the faces there, he smiled sadly

and timidly, and lowering his head shifted his feet on the step.

"He has betrayed his Tsar and his country, he has gone over to

Bonaparte. He alone of all the Russians has disgraced the Russian name,

he has caused Moscow to perish," said Rostopchin in a sharp, even voice,

but suddenly he glanced down at Vereshchagin who continued to stand in

the same submissive attitude. As if inflamed by the sight, he raised his

arm and addressed the people, almost shouting:

"Deal with him as you think fit! I hand him over to you."

The crowd remained silent and only pressed closer and closer to one

another. To keep one another back, to breathe in that stifling

atmosphere, to be unable to stir, and to await something unknown,

uncomprehended, and terrible, was becoming unbearable. Those standing in

front, who had seen and heard what had taken place before them, all

stood with wide-open eyes and mouths, straining with all their strength,

and held back the crowd that was pushing behind them.

"Beat him!... Let the traitor perish and not disgrace the Russian name!"

shouted Rostopchin. "Cut him down. I command it."

Hearing not so much the words as the angry tone of Rostopchin's voice,

the crowd moaned and heaved forward, but again paused.

"Count!" exclaimed the timid yet theatrical voice of Vereshchagin in the

midst of the momentary silence that ensued, "Count! One God is above us

both...." He lifted his head and again the thick vein in his thin neck

filled with blood and the color rapidly came and went in his face.

He did not finish what he wished to say.

"Cut him down! I command it..." shouted Rostopchin, suddenly growing

pale like Vereshchagin.

"Draw sabers!" cried the dragoon officer, drawing his own.

Another still stronger wave flowed through the crowd and reaching the

front ranks carried it swaying to the very steps of the porch. The tall

youth, with a stony look on his face, and rigid and uplifted arm, stood

beside Vereshchagin.

"Saber him!" the dragoon officer almost whispered.

And one of the soldiers, his face all at once distorted with fury,

struck Vereshchagin on the head with the blunt side of his saber.

"Ah!" cried Vereshchagin in meek surprise, looking round with a

frightened glance as if not understanding why this was done to him. A

similar moan of surprise and horror ran through the crowd. "O Lord!"

exclaimed a sorrowful voice.

But after the exclamation of surprise that had escaped from Vereshchagin

he uttered a plaintive cry of pain, and that cry was fatal. The barrier

of human feeling, strained to the utmost, that had held the crowd in

check suddenly broke. The crime had begun and must now be completed. The

plaintive moan of reproach was drowned by the threatening and angry roar

of the crowd. Like the seventh and last wave that shatters a ship, that

last irresistible wave burst from the rear and reached the front ranks,

carrying them off their feet and engulfing them all. The dragoon was

about to repeat his blow. Vereshchagin with a cry of horror, covering

his head with his hands, rushed toward the crowd. The tall youth,

against whom he stumbled, seized his thin neck with his hands and,

yelling wildly, fell with him under the feet of the pressing, struggling

crowd.

Some beat and tore at Vereshchagin, others at the tall youth. And the

screams of those that were being trampled on and of those who tried to

rescue the tall lad only increased the fury of the crowd. It was a long

time before the dragoons could extricate the bleeding youth, beaten

almost to death. And for a long time, despite the feverish haste with

which the mob tried to end the work that had been begun, those who were

hitting, throttling, and tearing at Vereshchagin were unable to kill

him, for the crowd pressed from all sides, swaying as one mass with them

in the center and rendering it impossible for them either to kill him or

let him go.

"Hit him with an ax, eh!... Crushed?... Traitor, he sold Christ....

Still alive... tenacious... serves him right! Torture serves a thief

right. Use the hatchet!... What--still alive?"

Only when the victim ceased to struggle and his cries changed to a long-

drawn, measured death rattle did the crowd around his prostrate,

bleeding corpse begin rapidly to change places. Each one came up,

glanced at what had been done, and with horror, reproach, and

astonishment pushed back again.

"O Lord! The people are like wild beasts! How could he be alive?" voices

in the crowd could be heard saying. "Quite a young fellow too... must

have been a merchant's son. What men!... and they say he's not the right

one.... How not the right one?... O Lord! And there's another has been

beaten too--they say he's nearly done for.... Oh, the people... Aren't

they afraid of sinning?..." said the same mob now, looking with pained

distress at the dead body with its long, thin, half-severed neck and its

livid face stained with blood and dust.

A painstaking police officer, considering the presence of a corpse in

his excellency's courtyard unseemly, told the dragoons to take it away.

Two dragoons took it by its distorted legs and dragged it along the

ground. The gory, dust-stained, half-shaven head with its long neck

trailed twisting along the ground. The crowd shrank back from it.

At the moment when Vereshchagin fell and the crowd closed in with savage

yells and swayed about him, Rostopchin suddenly turned pale and, instead

of going to the back entrance where his carriage awaited him, went with

hurried steps and bent head, not knowing where and why, along the

passage leading to the rooms on the ground floor. The count's face was

white and he could not control the feverish twitching of his lower jaw.

"This way, your excellency... Where are you going?... This way,

please..." said a trembling, frightened voice behind him.

Count Rostopchin was unable to reply and, turning obediently, went in

the direction indicated. At the back entrance stood his caleche. The

distant roar of the yelling crowd was audible even there. He hastily

took his seat and told the coachman to drive him to his country house in

Sokolniki.

When they reached the Myasnitski Street and could no longer hear the

shouts of the mob, the count began to repent. He remembered with

dissatisfaction the agitation and fear he had betrayed before his

subordinates. "The mob is terrible--disgusting," he said to himself in

French. "They are like wolves whom nothing but flesh can appease."

"Count! One God is above us both!"--Vereshchagin's words suddenly

recurred to him, and a disagreeable shiver ran down his back. But this

was only a momentary feeling and Count Rostopchin smiled disdainfully at

himself. "I had other duties," thought he. "The people had to be

appeased. Many other victims have perished and are perishing for the

public good"--and he began thinking of his social duties to his family

and to the city entrusted to him, and of himself--not himself as

Theodore Vasilyevich Rostopchin (he fancied that Theodore Vasilyevich

Rostopchin was sacrificing himself for the public good) but himself as

governor, the representative of authority and of the Tsar. "Had I been

simply Theodore Vasilyevich my course of action would have been quite

different, but it was my duty to safeguard my life and dignity as

commander-in-chief."

Lightly swaying on the flexible springs of his carriage and no longer

hearing the terrible sounds of the crowd, Rostopchin grew physically

calm and, as always happens, as soon as he became physically tranquil

his mind devised reasons why he should be mentally tranquil too. The

thought which tranquillized Rostopchin was not a new one. Since the

world began and men have killed one another no one has ever committed

such a crime against his fellow man without comforting himself with this

same idea. This idea is le bien public, the hypothetical welfare of

other people.

To a man not swayed by passion that welfare is never certain, but he who

commits such a crime always knows just where that welfare lies. And

Rostopchin now knew it.

Not only did his reason not reproach him for what he had done, but he

even found cause for self-satisfaction in having so successfully

contrived to avail himself of a convenient opportunity to punish a

criminal and at the same time pacify the mob.

"Vereshchagin was tried and condemned to death," thought Rostopchin

(though the Senate had only condemned Vereshchagin to hard labor), "he

was a traitor and a spy. I could not let him go unpunished and so I have

killed two birds with one stone: to appease the mob I gave them a victim

and at the same time punished a miscreant."

Having reached his country house and begun to give orders about domestic

arrangements, the count grew quite tranquil.

Half an hour later he was driving with his fast horses across the

Sokolniki field, no longer thinking of what had occurred but considering

what was to come. He was driving to the Yauza bridge where he had heard

that Kutuzov was. Count Rostopchin was mentally preparing the angry and

stinging reproaches he meant to address to Kutuzov for his deception. He

would make that foxy old courtier feel that the responsibility for all

the calamities that would follow the abandonment of the city and the

ruin of Russia (as Rostopchin regarded it) would fall upon his doting

old head. Planning beforehand what he would say to Kutuzov, Rostopchin

turned angrily in his caleche and gazed sternly from side to side.

The Sokolniki field was deserted. Only at the end of it, in front of the

almshouse and the lunatic asylum, could be seen some people in white and

others like them walking singly across the field shouting and

gesticulating.

One of these was running to cross the path of Count Rostopchin's

carriage, and the count himself, his coachman, and his dragoons looked

with vague horror and curiosity at these released lunatics and

especially at the one running toward them.

Swaying from side to side on his long, thin legs in his fluttering

dressing gown, this lunatic was running impetuously, his gaze fixed on

Rostopchin, shouting something in a hoarse voice and making signs to him

to stop. The lunatic's solemn, gloomy face was thin and yellow, with its

beard growing in uneven tufts. His black, agate pupils with saffron-

yellow whites moved restlessly near the lower eyelids.

"Stop! Pull up, I tell you!" he cried in a piercing voice, and again

shouted something breathlessly with emphatic intonations and gestures.

Coming abreast of the caleche he ran beside it.

"Thrice have they slain me, thrice have I risen from the dead. They

stoned me, crucified me... I shall rise... shall rise... shall rise.

They have torn my body. The kingdom of God will be overthrown... Thrice

will I overthrow it and thrice re-establish it!" he cried, raising his

voice higher and higher.

Count Rostopchin suddenly grew pale as he had done when the crowd closed

in on Vereshchagin. He turned away. "Go fas... faster!" he cried in a

trembling voice to his coachman. The caleche flew over the ground as

fast as the horses could draw it, but for a long time Count Rostopchin

still heard the insane despairing screams growing fainter in the

distance, while his eyes saw nothing but the astonished, frightened,

bloodstained face of "the traitor" in the fur-lined coat.

Recent as that mental picture was, Rostopchin already felt that it had

cut deep into his heart and drawn blood. Even now he felt clearly that

the gory trace of that recollection would not pass with time, but that

the terrible memory would, on the contrary, dwell in his heart ever more

cruelly and painfully to the end of his life. He seemed still to hear

the sound of his own words: "Cut him down! I command it...."

"Why did I utter those words? It was by some accident I said them.... I

need not have said them," he thought. "And then nothing would have

happened." He saw the frightened and then infuriated face of the dragoon

who dealt the blow, the look of silent, timid reproach that boy in the

fur-lined coat had turned upon him. "But I did not do it for my own

sake. I was bound to act that way.... The mob, the traitor... the public

welfare," thought he.

Troops were still crowding at the Yauza bridge. It was hot. Kutuzov,

dejected and frowning, sat on a bench by the bridge toying with his whip

in the sand when a caleche dashed up noisily. A man in a general's

uniform with plumes in his hat went up to Kutuzov and said something in

French. It was Count Rostopchin. He told Kutuzov that he had come

because Moscow, the capital, was no more and only the army remained.

"Things would have been different if your Serene Highness had not told

me that you would not abandon Moscow without another battle; all this

would not have happened," he said.

Kutuzov looked at Rostopchin as if, not grasping what was said to him,

he was trying to read something peculiar written at that moment on the

face of the man addressing him. Rostopchin grew confused and became

silent. Kutuzov slightly shook his head and not taking his penetrating

gaze from Rostopchin's face muttered softly:

"No! I shall not give up Moscow without a battle!"

Whether Kutuzov was thinking of something entirely different when he

spoke those words, or uttered them purposely, knowing them to be

meaningless, at any rate Rostopchin made no reply and hastily left him.

And strange to say, the Governor of Moscow, the proud Count Rostopchin,

took up a Cossack whip and went to the bridge where he began with shouts

to drive on the carts that blocked the way.

CHAPTER XXVI

Toward four o'clock in the afternoon Murat's troops were entering

Moscow. In front rode a detachment of Wurttemberg hussars and behind

them rode the King of Naples himself accompanied by a numerous suite.

About the middle of the Arbat Street, near the Church of the Miraculous

Icon of St. Nicholas, Murat halted to await news from the advanced

detachment as to the condition in which they had found the citadel, le

Kremlin.

Around Murat gathered a group of those who had remained in Moscow. They

all stared in timid bewilderment at the strange, long-haired commander

dressed up in feathers and gold.

"Is that their Tsar himself? He's not bad!" low voices could be heard

saying.

An interpreter rode up to the group.

"Take off your cap... your caps!" These words went from one to another

in the crowd. The interpreter addressed an old porter and asked if it

was far to the Kremlin. The porter, listening in perplexity to the

unfamiliar Polish accent and not realizing that the interpreter was

speaking Russian, did not understand what was being said to him and

slipped behind the others.

Murat approached the interpreter and told him to ask where the Russian

army was. One of the Russians understood what was asked and several

voices at once began answering the interpreter. A French officer,

returning from the advanced detachment, rode up to Murat and reported

that the gates of the citadel had been barricaded and that there was

probably an ambuscade there.

"Good!" said Murat and, turning to one of the gentlemen in his suite,

ordered four light guns to be moved forward to fire at the gates.

The guns emerged at a trot from the column following Murat and advanced

up the Arbat. When they reached the end of the Vozdvizhenka Street they

halted and drew in the Square. Several French officers superintended the

placing of the guns and looked at the Kremlin through field glasses.

The bells in the Kremlin were ringing for vespers, and this sound

troubled the French. They imagined it to be a call to arms. A few

infantrymen ran to the Kutafyev Gate. Beams and wooden screens had been

put there, and two musket shots rang out from under the gate as soon as

an officer and men began to run toward it. A general who was standing by

the guns shouted some words of command to the officer, and the latter

ran back again with his men.

The sound of three more shots came from the gate.

One shot struck a French soldier's foot, and from behind the screens

came the strange sound of a few voices shouting. Instantly as at a word

of command the expression of cheerful serenity on the faces of the

French general, officers, and men changed to one of determined

concentrated readiness for strife and suffering. To all of them from the

marshal to the least soldier, that place was not the Vozdvizhenka,

Mokhavaya, or Kutafyev Street, nor the Troitsa Gate (places familiar in

Moscow), but a new battlefield which would probably prove sanguinary.

And all made ready for that battle. The cries from the gates ceased. The

guns were advanced, the artillerymen blew the ash off their linstocks,

and an officer gave the word "Fire!" This was followed by two whistling

sounds of canister shot, one after another. The shot rattled against the

stone of the gate and upon the wooden beams and screens, and two

wavering clouds of smoke rose over the Square.

A few instants after the echo of the reports resounding over the stone-

built Kremlin had died away the French heard a strange sound above their

head. Thousands of crows rose above the walls and circled in the air,

cawing and noisily flapping their wings. Together with that sound came a

solitary human cry from the gateway and amid the smoke appeared the

figure of a bareheaded man in a peasant's coat. He grasped a musket and

took aim at the French. "Fire!" repeated the officer once more, and the

reports of a musket and of two cannon shots were heard simultaneously.

The gate was again hidden by smoke.

Nothing more stirred behind the screens and the French infantry soldiers

and officers advanced to the gate. In the gateway lay three wounded and

four dead. Two men in peasant coats ran away at the foot of the wall,

toward the Znamenka.

"Clear that away!" said the officer, pointing to the beams and the

corpses, and the French soldiers, after dispatching the wounded, threw

the corpses over the parapet.

Who these men were nobody knew. "Clear that away!" was all that was said

of them, and they were thrown over the parapet and removed later on that

they might not stink. Thiers alone dedicates a few eloquent lines to

their memory: "These wretches had occupied the sacred citadel, having

supplied themselves with guns from the arsenal, and fired" (the

wretches) "at the French. Some of them were sabered and the Kremlin was

purged of their presence."

Murat was informed that the way had been cleared. The French entered the

gates and began pitching their camp in the Senate Square. Out of the

windows of the Senate House the soldiers threw chairs into the Square

for fuel and kindled fires there.

Other detachments passed through the Kremlin and encamped along the

Moroseyka, the Lubyanka, and Pokrovka Streets. Others quartered

themselves along the Vozdvizhenka, the Nikolski, and the Tverskoy

Streets. No masters of the houses being found anywhere, the French were

not billeted on the inhabitants as is usual in towns but lived in it as

in a camp.

Though tattered, hungry, worn out, and reduced to a third of their

original number, the French entered Moscow in good marching order. It

was a weary and famished, but still a fighting and menacing army. But it

remained an army only until its soldiers had dispersed into their

different lodgings. As soon as the men of the various regiments began to

disperse among the wealthy and deserted houses, the army was lost

forever and there came into being something nondescript, neither

citizens nor soldiers but what are known as marauders. When five weeks

later these same men left Moscow, they no longer formed an army. They

were a mob of marauders, each carrying a quantity of articles which

seemed to him valuable or useful. The aim of each man when he left

Moscow was no longer, as it had been, to conquer, but merely to keep

what he had acquired. Like a monkey which puts its paw into the narrow

neck of a jug, and having seized a handful of nuts will not open its

fist for fear of losing what it holds, and therefore perishes, the

French when they left Moscow had inevitably to perish because they

carried their loot with them, yet to abandon what they had stolen was as

impossible for them as it is for the monkey to open its paw and let go

of its nuts. Ten minutes after each regiment had entered a Moscow

district, not a soldier or officer was left. Men in military uniforms

and Hessian boots could be seen through the windows, laughing and

walking through the rooms. In cellars and storerooms similar men were

busy among the provisions, and in the yards unlocking or breaking open

coach house and stable doors, lighting fires in kitchens and kneading

and baking bread with rolled-up sleeves, and cooking; or frightening,

amusing, or caressing women and children. There were many such men both

in the shops and houses--but there was no army.

Order after order was issued by the French commanders that day

forbidding the men to disperse about the town, sternly forbidding any

violence to the inhabitants or any looting, and announcing a roll call

for that very evening. But despite all these measures the men, who had

till then constituted an army, flowed all over the wealthy, deserted

city with its comforts and plentiful supplies. As a hungry herd of

cattle keeps well together when crossing a barren field, but gets out of

hand and at once disperses uncontrollably as soon as it reaches rich

pastures, so did the army disperse all over the wealthy city.

No residents were left in Moscow, and the soldiers--like water

percolating through sand--spread irresistibly through the city in all

directions from the Kremlin into which they had first marched. The

cavalry, on entering a merchant's house that had been abandoned and

finding there stabling more than sufficient for their horses, went on,

all the same, to the next house which seemed to them better. Many of

them appropriated several houses, chalked their names on them, and

quarreled and even fought with other companies for them. Before they had

had time to secure quarters the soldiers ran out into the streets to see

the city and, hearing that everything had been abandoned, rushed to

places where valuables were to be had for the taking. The officers

followed to check the soldiers and were involuntarily drawn into doing

the same. In Carriage Row carriages had been left in the shops, and

generals flocked there to select caleches and coaches for themselves.

The few inhabitants who had remained invited commanding officers to

their houses, hoping thereby to secure themselves from being plundered.

There were masses of wealth and there seemed no end to it. All around

the quarters occupied by the French were other regions still unexplored

and unoccupied where, they thought, yet greater riches might be found.

And Moscow engulfed the army ever deeper and deeper. When water is

spilled on dry ground both the dry ground and the water disappear and

mud results; and in the same way the entry of the famished army into the

rich and deserted city resulted in fires and looting and the destruction

of both the army and the wealthy city.

The French attributed the Fire of Moscow au patriotisme feroce de

Rostopchine, \* the Russians to the barbarity of the French. In reality,

however, it was not, and could not be, possible to explain the burning

of Moscow by making any individual, or any group of people, responsible

for it. Moscow was burned because it found itself in a position in which

any town built of wood was bound to burn, quite apart from whether it

had, or had not, a hundred and thirty inferior fire engines. Deserted

Moscow had to burn as inevitably as a heap of shavings has to burn on

which sparks continually fall for several days. A town built of wood,

where scarcely a day passes without conflagrations when the house owners

are in residence and a police force is present, cannot help burning when

its inhabitants have left it and it is occupied by soldiers who smoke

pipes, make campfires of the Senate chairs in the Senate Square, and

cook themselves meals twice a day. In peacetime it is only necessary to

billet troops in the villages of any district and the number of fires in

that district immediately increases. How much then must the probability

of fire be increased in an abandoned, wooden town where foreign troops

are quartered. "Le patriotisme feroce de Rostopchine" and the barbarity

of the French were not to blame in the matter. Moscow was set on fire by

the soldiers' pipes, kitchens, and campfires, and by the carelessness of

enemy soldiers occupying houses they did not own. Even if there was any

arson (which is very doubtful, for no one had any reason to burn the

houses--in any case a troublesome and dangerous thing to do), arson

cannot be regarded as the cause, for the same thing would have happened

without any incendiarism.

\* To Rostopchin's ferocious patriotism.

However tempting it might be for the French to blame Rostopchin's

ferocity and for Russians to blame the scoundrel Bonaparte, or later on

to place an heroic torch in the hands of their own people, it is

impossible not to see that there could be no such direct cause of the

fire, for Moscow had to burn as every village, factory, or house must

burn which is left by its owners and in which strangers are allowed to

live and cook their porridge. Moscow was burned by its inhabitants, it

is true, but by those who had abandoned it and not by those who remained

in it. Moscow when occupied by the enemy did not remain intact like

Berlin, Vienna, and other towns, simply because its inhabitants

abandoned it and did not welcome the French with bread and salt, nor

bring them the keys of the city.

CHAPTER XXVII

The absorption of the French by Moscow, radiating starwise as it did,

only reached the quarter where Pierre was staying by the evening of the

second of September.

After the last two days spent in solitude and unusual circumstances,

Pierre was in a state bordering on insanity. He was completely obsessed

by one persistent thought. He did not know how or when this thought had

taken such possession of him, but he remembered nothing of the past,

understood nothing of the present, and all he saw and heard appeared to

him like a dream.

He had left home only to escape the intricate tangle of life's demands

that enmeshed him, and which in his present condition he was unable to

unravel. He had gone to Joseph Alexeevich's house, on the plea of

sorting the deceased's books and papers, only in search of rest from

life's turmoil, for in his mind the memory of Joseph Alexeevich was

connected with a world of eternal, solemn, and calm thoughts, quite

contrary to the restless confusion into which he felt himself being

drawn. He sought a quiet refuge, and in Joseph Alexeevich's study he

really found it. When he sat with his elbows on the dusty writing table

in the deathlike stillness of the study, calm and significant memories

of the last few days rose one after another in his imagination,

particularly of the battle of Borodino and of that vague sense of his

own insignificance and insincerity compared with the truth, simplicity,

and strength of the class of men he mentally classed as they. When

Gerasim roused him from his reverie the idea occurred to him of taking

part in the popular defense of Moscow which he knew was projected. And

with that object he had asked Gerasim to get him a peasant's coat and a

pistol, confiding to him his intentions of remaining in Joseph

Alexeevich's house and keeping his name secret. Then during the first

day spent in inaction and solitude (he tried several times to fix his

attention on the masonic manuscripts, but was unable to do so) the idea

that had previously occurred to him of the cabalistic significance of

his name in connection with Bonaparte's more than once vaguely presented

itself. But the idea that he, L'russe Besuhof, was destined to set a

limit to the power of the Beast was as yet only one of the fancies that

often passed through his mind and left no trace behind.

When, having bought the coat merely with the object of taking part among

the people in the defense of Moscow, Pierre had met the Rostovs and

Natasha had said to him: "Are you remaining in Moscow?... How splendid!"

the thought flashed into his mind that it really would be a good thing,

even if Moscow were taken, for him to remain there and do what he was

predestined to do.

Next day, with the sole idea of not sparing himself and not lagging in

any way behind them, Pierre went to the Three Hills gate. But when he

returned to the house convinced that Moscow would not be defended, he

suddenly felt that what before had seemed to him merely a possibility

had now become absolutely necessary and inevitable. He must remain in

Moscow, concealing his name, and must meet Napoleon and kill him, and

either perish or put an end to the misery of all Europe--which it seemed

to him was solely due to Napoleon.

Pierre knew all the details of the attempt on Bonaparte's life in 1809

by a German student in Vienna, and knew that the student had been shot.

And the risk to which he would expose his life by carrying out his

design excited him still more.

Two equally strong feelings drew Pierre irresistibly to this purpose.

The first was a feeling of the necessity of sacrifice and suffering in

view of the common calamity, the same feeling that had caused him to go

to Mozhaysk on the twenty-fifth and to make his way to the very thick of

the battle and had now caused him to run away from his home and, in

place of the luxury and comfort to which he was accustomed, to sleep on

a hard sofa without undressing and eat the same food as Gerasim. The

other was that vague and quite Russian feeling of contempt for

everything conventional, artificial, and human--for everything the

majority of men regard as the greatest good in the world. Pierre had

first experienced this strange and fascinating feeling at the Sloboda

Palace, when he had suddenly felt that wealth, power, and life--all that

men so painstakingly acquire and guard--if it has any worth has so only

by reason of the joy with which it can all be renounced.

It was the feeling that induces a volunteer recruit to spend his last

penny on drink, and a drunken man to smash mirrors or glasses for no

apparent reason and knowing that it will cost him all the money he

possesses: the feeling which causes a man to perform actions which from

an ordinary point of view are insane, to test, as it were, his personal

power and strength, affirming the existence of a higher, nonhuman

criterion of life.

From the very day Pierre had experienced this feeling for the first time

at the Sloboda Palace he had been continuously under its influence, but

only now found full satisfaction for it. Moreover, at this moment Pierre

was supported in his design and prevented from renouncing it by what he

had already done in that direction. If he were now to leave Moscow like

everyone else, his flight from home, the peasant coat, the pistol, and

his announcement to the Rostovs that he would remain in Moscow would all

become not merely meaningless but contemptible and ridiculous, and to

this Pierre was very sensitive.

Pierre's physical condition, as is always the case, corresponded to his

mental state. The unaccustomed coarse food, the vodka he drank during

those days, the absence of wine and cigars, his dirty unchanged linen,

two almost sleepless nights passed on a short sofa without bedding--all

this kept him in a state of excitement bordering on insanity.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon. The French had already entered

Moscow. Pierre knew this, but instead of acting he only thought about

his undertaking, going over its minutest details in his mind. In his

fancy he did not clearly picture to himself either the striking of the

blow or the death of Napoleon, but with extraordinary vividness and

melancholy enjoyment imagined his own destruction and heroic endurance.

"Yes, alone, for the sake of all, I must do it or perish!" he thought.

"Yes, I will approach... and then suddenly... with pistol or dagger? But

that is all the same! 'It is not I but the hand of Providence that

punishes thee,' I shall say," thought he, imagining what he would say

when killing Napoleon. "Well then, take me and execute me!" he went on,

speaking to himself and bowing his head with a sad but firm expression.

While Pierre, standing in the middle of the room, was talking to himself

in this way, the study door opened and on the threshold appeared the

figure of Makar Alexeevich, always so timid before but now quite

transformed.

His dressing gown was unfastened, his face red and distorted. He was

obviously drunk. On seeing Pierre he grew confused at first, but

noticing embarrassment on Pierre's face immediately grew bold and,

staggering on his thin legs, advanced into the middle of the room.

"They're frightened," he said confidentially in a hoarse voice. "I say I

won't surrender, I say... Am I not right, sir?"

He paused and then suddenly seeing the pistol on the table seized it

with unexpected rapidity and ran out into the corridor.

Gerasim and the porter, who had followed Makar Alexeevich, stopped him

in the vestibule and tried to take the pistol from him. Pierre, coming

out into the corridor, looked with pity and repulsion at the half-crazy

old man. Makar Alexeevich, frowning with exertion, held on to the pistol

and screamed hoarsely, evidently with some heroic fancy in his head.

"To arms! Board them! No, you shan't get it," he yelled.

"That will do, please, that will do. Have the goodness--please, sir, to

let go! Please, sir..." pleaded Gerasim, trying carefully to steer Makar

Alexeevich by the elbows back to the door.

"Who are you? Bonaparte!..." shouted Makar Alexeevich.

"That's not right, sir. Come to your room, please, and rest. Allow me to

have the pistol."

"Be off, thou base slave! Touch me not! See this?" shouted Makar

Alexeevich, brandishing the pistol. "Board them!"

"Catch hold!" whispered Gerasim to the porter.

They seized Makar Alexeevich by the arms and dragged him to the door.

The vestibule was filled with the discordant sounds of a struggle and of

a tipsy, hoarse voice.

Suddenly a fresh sound, a piercing feminine scream, reverberated from

the porch and the cook came running into the vestibule.

"It's them! Gracious heavens! O Lord, four of them, horsemen!" she

cried.

Gerasim and the porter let Makar Alexeevich go, and in the now silent

corridor the sound of several hands knocking at the front door could be

heard.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Pierre, having decided that until he had carried out his design he would

disclose neither his identity nor his knowledge of French, stood at the

half-open door of the corridor, intending to conceal himself as soon as

the French entered. But the French entered and still Pierre did not

retire--an irresistible curiosity kept him there.

There were two of them. One was an officer--a tall, soldierly, handsome

man--the other evidently a private or an orderly, sunburned, short, and

thin, with sunken cheeks and a dull expression. The officer walked in

front, leaning on a stick and slightly limping. When he had advanced a

few steps he stopped, having apparently decided that these were good

quarters, turned round to the soldiers standing at the entrance, and in

a loud voice of command ordered them to put up the horses. Having done

that, the officer, lifting his elbow with a smart gesture, stroked his

mustache and lightly touched his hat.

"Bonjour, la compagnie!" \* said he gaily, smiling and looking about him.

\* "Good day, everybody!"

No one gave any reply.

"Vous etes le bourgeois?" \* the officer asked Gerasim.

\* "Are you the master here?"

Gerasim gazed at the officer with an alarmed and inquiring look.

"Quartier, quartier, logement!" said the officer, looking down at the

little man with a condescending and good-natured smile. "Les francais

sont de bons enfants. Que diable! Voyons! Ne nous fachons pas, mon

vieux!" \* added he, clapping the scared and silent Gerasim on the

shoulder. "Well, does no one speak French in this establishment?" he

asked again in French, looking around and meeting Pierre's eyes. Pierre

moved away from the door.

\* "Quarters, quarters, lodgings! The French are good fellows. What the

devil! There, don't let us be cross, old fellow!"

Again the officer turned to Gerasim and asked him to show him the rooms

in the house.

"Master, not here--don't understand... me, you..." said Gerasim, trying

to render his words more comprehensible by contorting them.

Still smiling, the French officer spread out his hands before Gerasim's

nose, intimating that he did not understand him either, and moved,

limping, to the door at which Pierre was standing. Pierre wished to go

away and conceal himself, but at that moment he saw Makar Alexeevich

appearing at the open kitchen door with the pistol in his hand. With a

madman's cunning, Makar Alexeevich eyed the Frenchman, raised his

pistol, and took aim.

"Board them!" yelled the tipsy man, trying to press the trigger. Hearing

the yell the officer turned round, and at the same moment Pierre threw

himself on the drunkard. Just when Pierre snatched at and struck up the

pistol Makar Alexeevich at last got his fingers on the trigger, there

was a deafening report, and all were enveloped in a cloud of smoke. The

Frenchman turned pale and rushed to the door.

Forgetting his intention of concealing his knowledge of French, Pierre,

snatching away the pistol and throwing it down, ran up to the officer

and addressed him in French.

"You are not wounded?" he asked.

"I think not," answered the Frenchman, feeling himself over. "But I have

had a lucky escape this time," he added, pointing to the damaged plaster

of the wall. "Who is that man?" said he, looking sternly at Pierre.

"Oh, I am really in despair at what has occurred," said Pierre rapidly,

quite forgetting the part he had intended to play. "He is an unfortunate

madman who did not know what he was doing."

The officer went up to Makar Alexeevich and took him by the collar.

Makar Alexeevich was standing with parted lips, swaying, as if about to

fall asleep, as he leaned against the wall.

"Brigand! You shall pay for this," said the Frenchman, letting go of

him. "We French are merciful after victory, but we do not pardon

traitors," he added, with a look of gloomy dignity and a fine energetic

gesture.

Pierre continued, in French, to persuade the officer not to hold that

drunken imbecile to account. The Frenchman listened in silence with the

same gloomy expression, but suddenly turned to Pierre with a smile. For

a few seconds he looked at him in silence. His handsome face assumed a

melodramatically gentle expression and he held out his hand.

"You have saved my life. You are French," said he.

For a Frenchman that deduction was indubitable. Only a Frenchman could

perform a great deed, and to save his life--the life of M. Ramballe,

captain of the 13th Light Regiment--was undoubtedly a very great deed.

But however indubitable that conclusion and the officer's conviction

based upon it, Pierre felt it necessary to disillusion him.

"I am Russian," he said quickly.

"Tut, tut, tut! Tell that to others," said the officer, waving his

finger before his nose and smiling. "You shall tell me all about that

presently. I am delighted to meet a compatriot. Well, and what are we to

do with this man?" he added, addressing himself to Pierre as to a

brother.

Even if Pierre were not a Frenchman, having once received that loftiest

of human appellations he could not renounce it, said the officer's look

and tone. In reply to his last question Pierre again explained who Makar

Alexeevich was and how just before their arrival that drunken imbecile

had seized the loaded pistol which they had not had time to recover from

him, and begged the officer to let the deed go unpunished.

The Frenchman expanded his chest and made a majestic gesture with his

arm.

"You have saved my life! You are French. You ask his pardon? I grant it

you. Lead that man away!" said he quickly and energetically, and taking

the arm of Pierre whom he had promoted to be a Frenchman for saving his

life, he went with him into the room.

The soldiers in the yard, hearing the shot, came into the passage asking

what had happened, and expressed their readiness to punish the culprits,

but the officer sternly checked them.

"You will be called in when you are wanted," he said.

The soldiers went out again, and the orderly, who had meanwhile had time

to visit the kitchen, came up to his officer.

"Captain, there is soup and a leg of mutton in the kitchen," said he.

"Shall I serve them up?"

"Yes, and some wine," answered the captain.

CHAPTER XXIX

When the French officer went into the room with Pierre the latter again

thought it his duty to assure him that he was not French and wished to

go away, but the officer would not hear of it. He was so very polite,

amiable, good-natured, and genuinely grateful to Pierre for saving his

life that Pierre had not the heart to refuse, and sat down with him in

the parlor--the first room they entered. To Pierre's assurances that he

was not a Frenchman, the captain, evidently not understanding how anyone

could decline so flattering an appellation, shrugged his shoulders and

said that if Pierre absolutely insisted on passing for a Russian let it

be so, but for all that he would be forever bound to Pierre by gratitude

for saving his life.

Had this man been endowed with the slightest capacity for perceiving the

feelings of others, and had he at all understood what Pierre's feelings

were, the latter would probably have left him, but the man's animated

obtuseness to everything other than himself disarmed Pierre.

"A Frenchman or a Russian prince incognito," said the officer, looking

at Pierre's fine though dirty linen and at the ring on his finger. "I

owe my life to you and offer you my friendship. A Frenchman never

forgets either an insult or a service. I offer you my friendship. That

is all I can say."

There was so much good nature and nobility (in the French sense of the

word) in the officer's voice, in the expression of his face and in his

gestures, that Pierre, unconsciously smiling in response to the

Frenchman's smile, pressed the hand held out to him.

"Captain Ramballe, of the 13th Light Regiment, Chevalier of the Legion

of Honor for the affair on the seventh of September," he introduced

himself, a self-satisfied irrepressible smile puckering his lips under

his mustache. "Will you now be so good as to tell me with whom I have

the honor of conversing so pleasantly, instead of being in the ambulance

with that maniac's bullet in my body?"

Pierre replied that he could not tell him his name and, blushing, began

to try to invent a name and to say something about his reason for

concealing it, but the Frenchman hastily interrupted him.

"Oh, please!" said he. "I understand your reasons. You are an officer...

a superior officer perhaps. You have borne arms against us. That's not

my business. I owe you my life. That is enough for me. I am quite at

your service. You belong to the gentry?" he concluded with a shade of

inquiry in his tone. Pierre bent his head. "Your baptismal name, if you

please. That is all I ask. Monsieur Pierre, you say.... That's all I

want to know."

When the mutton and an omelet had been served and a samovar and vodka

brought, with some wine which the French had taken from a Russian cellar

and brought with them, Ramballe invited Pierre to share his dinner, and

himself began to eat greedily and quickly like a healthy and hungry man,

munching his food rapidly with his strong teeth, continually smacking

his lips, and repeating--"Excellent! Delicious!" His face grew red and

was covered with perspiration. Pierre was hungry and shared the dinner

with pleasure. Morel, the orderly, brought some hot water in a saucepan

and placed a bottle of claret in it. He also brought a bottle of kvass,

taken from the kitchen for them to try. That beverage was already known

to the French and had been given a special name. They called it limonade

de cochon (pig's lemonade), and Morel spoke well of the limonade de

cochon he had found in the kitchen. But as the captain had the wine they

had taken while passing through Moscow, he left the kvass to Morel and

applied himself to the bottle of Bordeaux. He wrapped the bottle up to

its neck in a table napkin and poured out wine for himself and for

Pierre. The satisfaction of his hunger and the wine rendered the captain

still more lively and he chatted incessantly all through dinner.

"Yes, my dear Monsieur Pierre, I owe you a fine votive candle for saving

me from that maniac.... You see, I have bullets enough in my body

already. Here is one I got at Wagram" (he touched his side) "and a

second at Smolensk"--he showed a scar on his cheek--"and this leg which

as you see does not want to march, I got that on the seventh at the

great battle of la Moskowa. Sacre Dieu! It was splendid! That deluge of

fire was worth seeing. It was a tough job you set us there, my word! You

may be proud of it! And on my honor, in spite of the cough I caught

there, I should be ready to begin again. I pity those who did not see

it."

"I was there," said Pierre.

"Bah, really? So much the better! You are certainly brave foes. The

great redoubt held out well, by my pipe!" continued the Frenchman. "And

you made us pay dear for it. I was at it three times--sure as I sit

here. Three times we reached the guns and three times we were thrown

back like cardboard figures. Oh, it was beautiful, Monsieur Pierre! Your

grenadiers were splendid, by heaven! I saw them close up their ranks six

times in succession and march as if on parade. Fine fellows! Our King of

Naples, who knows what's what, cried 'Bravo!' Ha, ha! So you are one of

us soldiers!" he added, smiling, after a momentary pause. "So much the

better, so much the better, Monsieur Pierre! Terrible in battle...

gallant... with the fair" (he winked and smiled), "that's what the

French are, Monsieur Pierre, aren't they?"

The captain was so naively and good-humoredly gay, so real, and so

pleased with himself that Pierre almost winked back as he looked merrily

at him. Probably the word "gallant" turned the captain's thoughts to the

state of Moscow.

"Apropos, tell me please, is it true that the women have all left

Moscow? What a queer idea! What had they to be afraid of?"

"Would not the French ladies leave Paris if the Russians entered it?"

asked Pierre.

"Ha, ha, ha!" The Frenchman emitted a merry, sanguine chuckle, patting

Pierre on the shoulder. "What a thing to say!" he exclaimed. "Paris?...

But Paris, Paris..."

"Paris--the capital of the world," Pierre finished his remark for him.

The captain looked at Pierre. He had a habit of stopping short in the

middle of his talk and gazing intently with his laughing, kindly eyes.

"Well, if you hadn't told me you were Russian, I should have wagered

that you were Parisian! You have that... I don't know what, that..." and

having uttered this compliment, he again gazed at him in silence.

"I have been in Paris. I spent years there," said Pierre.

"Oh yes, one sees that plainly. Paris!... A man who doesn't know Paris

is a savage. You can tell a Parisian two leagues off. Paris is Talma, la

Duchenois, Potier, the Sorbonne, the boulevards," and noticing that his

conclusion was weaker than what had gone before, he added quickly:

"There is only one Paris in the world. You have been to Paris and have

remained Russian. Well, I don't esteem you the less for it."

Under the influence of the wine he had drunk, and after the days he had

spent alone with his depressing thoughts, Pierre involuntarily enjoyed

talking with this cheerful and good-natured man.

"To return to your ladies--I hear they are lovely. What a wretched idea

to go and bury themselves in the steppes when the French army is in

Moscow. What a chance those girls have missed! Your peasants, now--

that's another thing; but you civilized people, you ought to know us

better than that. We took Vienna, Berlin, Madrid, Naples, Rome, Warsaw,

all the world's capitals.... We are feared, but we are loved. We are

nice to know. And then the Emperor..." he began, but Pierre interrupted

him.

"The Emperor," Pierre repeated, and his face suddenly became sad and

embarrassed, "is the Emperor...?"

"The Emperor? He is generosity, mercy, justice, order, genius--that's

what the Emperor is! It is I, Ramballe, who tell you so.... I assure you

I was his enemy eight years ago. My father was an emigrant count.... But

that man has vanquished me. He has taken hold of me. I could not resist

the sight of the grandeur and glory with which he has covered France.

When I understood what he wanted--when I saw that he was preparing a bed

of laurels for us, you know, I said to myself: 'That is a monarch,' and

I devoted myself to him! So there! Oh yes, mon cher, he is the greatest

man of the ages past or future."

"Is he in Moscow?" Pierre stammered with a guilty look.

The Frenchman looked at his guilty face and smiled.

"No, he will make his entry tomorrow," he replied, and continued his

talk.

Their conversation was interrupted by the cries of several voices at the

gate and by Morel, who came to say that some Wurttemberg hussars had

come and wanted to put up their horses in the yard where the captain's

horses were. This difficulty had arisen chiefly because the hussars did

not understand what was said to them in French.

The captain had their senior sergeant called in, and in a stern voice

asked him to what regiment he belonged, who was his commanding officer,

and by what right he allowed himself to claim quarters that were already

occupied. The German who knew little French, answered the two first

questions by giving the names of his regiment and of his commanding

officer, but in reply to the third question which he did not understand

said, introducing broken French into his own German, that he was the

quartermaster of the regiment and his commander had ordered him to

occupy all the houses one after another. Pierre, who knew German,

translated what the German said to the captain and gave the captain's

reply to the Wurttemberg hussar in German. When he had understood what

was said to him, the German submitted and took his men elsewhere. The

captain went out into the porch and gave some orders in a loud voice.

When he returned to the room Pierre was sitting in the same place as

before, with his head in his hands. His face expressed suffering. He

really was suffering at that moment. When the captain went out and he

was left alone, suddenly he came to himself and realized the position he

was in. It was not that Moscow had been taken or that the happy

conquerors were masters in it and were patronizing him. Painful as that

was it was not that which tormented Pierre at the moment. He was

tormented by the consciousness of his own weakness. The few glasses of

wine he had drunk and the conversation with this good-natured man had

destroyed the mood of concentrated gloom in which he had spent the last

few days and which was essential for the execution of his design. The

pistol, dagger, and peasant coat were ready. Napoleon was to enter the

town next day. Pierre still considered that it would be a useful and

worthy action to slay the evildoer, but now he felt that he would not do

it. He did not know why, but he felt a foreboding that he would not

carry out his intention. He struggled against the confession of his

weakness but dimly felt that he could not overcome it and that his

former gloomy frame of mind, concerning vengeance, killing, and self-

sacrifice, had been dispersed like dust by contact with the first man he

met.

The captain returned to the room, limping slightly and whistling a tune.

The Frenchman's chatter which had previously amused Pierre now repelled

him. The tune he was whistling, his gait, and the gesture with which he

twirled his mustache, all now seemed offensive. "I will go away

immediately. I won't say another word to him," thought Pierre. He

thought this, but still sat in the same place. A strange feeling of

weakness tied him to the spot; he wished to get up and go away, but

could not do so.

The captain, on the other hand, seemed very cheerful. He paced up and

down the room twice. His eyes shone and his mustache twitched as if he

were smiling to himself at some amusing thought.

"The colonel of those Wurttembergers is delightful," he suddenly said.

"He's a German, but a nice fellow all the same.... But he's a German."

He sat down facing Pierre. "By the way, you know German, then?"

Pierre looked at him in silence.

"What is the German for 'shelter'?"

"Shelter?" Pierre repeated. "The German for shelter is Unterkunft."

"How do you say it?" the captain asked quickly and doubtfully.

"Unterkunft," Pierre repeated.

"Onterkoff," said the captain and looked at Pierre for some seconds with

laughing eyes. "These Germans are first-rate fools, don't you think so,

Monsieur Pierre?" he concluded.

"Well, let's have another bottle of this Moscow Bordeaux, shall we?

Morel will warm us up another little bottle. Morel!" he called out

gaily.

Morel brought candles and a bottle of wine. The captain looked at Pierre

by the candlelight and was evidently struck by the troubled expression

on his companion's face. Ramballe, with genuine distress and sympathy in

his face, went up to Pierre and bent over him.

"There now, we're sad," said he, touching Pierre's hand. "Have I upset

you? No, really, have you anything against me?" he asked Pierre.

"Perhaps it's the state of affairs?"

Pierre did not answer, but looked cordially into the Frenchman's eyes

whose expression of sympathy was pleasing to him.

"Honestly, without speaking of what I owe you, I feel friendship for

you. Can I do anything for you? Dispose of me. It is for life and death.

I say it with my hand on my heart!" said he, striking his chest.

"Thank you," said Pierre.

The captain gazed intently at him as he had done when he learned that

"shelter" was Unterkunft in German, and his face suddenly brightened.

"Well, in that case, I drink to our friendship!" he cried gaily, filling

two glasses with wine.

Pierre took one of the glasses and emptied it. Ramballe emptied his too,

again pressed Pierre's hand, and leaned his elbows on the table in a

pensive attitude.

"Yes, my dear friend," he began, "such is fortune's caprice. Who would

have said that I should be a soldier and a captain of dragoons in the

service of Bonaparte, as we used to call him? Yet here I am in Moscow

with him. I must tell you, mon cher," he continued in the sad and

measured tones of a man who intends to tell a long story, "that our name

is one of the most ancient in France."

And with a Frenchman's easy and naive frankness the captain told Pierre

the story of his ancestors, his childhood, youth, and manhood, and all

about his relations and his financial and family affairs, "ma pauvre

mere" playing of course an important part in the story.

"But all that is only life's setting, the real thing is love--love! Am I

not right, Monsieur Pierre?" said he, growing animated. "Another glass?"

Pierre again emptied his glass and poured himself out a third.

"Oh, women, women!" and the captain, looking with glistening eyes at

Pierre, began talking of love and of his love affairs.

There were very many of these, as one could easily believe, looking at

the officer's handsome, self-satisfied face, and noting the eager

enthusiasm with which he spoke of women. Though all Ramballe's love

stories had the sensual character which Frenchmen regard as the special

charm and poetry of love, yet he told his story with such sincere

conviction that he alone had experienced and known all the charm of love

and he described women so alluringly that Pierre listened to him with

curiosity.

It was plain that l'amour which the Frenchman was so fond of was not

that low and simple kind that Pierre had once felt for his wife, nor was

it the romantic love stimulated by himself that he experienced for

Natasha. (Ramballe despised both these kinds of love equally: the one he

considered the "love of clodhoppers" and the other the "love of

simpletons.") L'amour which the Frenchman worshiped consisted

principally in the unnaturalness of his relation to the woman and in a

combination of incongruities giving the chief charm to the feeling.

Thus the captain touchingly recounted the story of his love for a

fascinating marquise of thirty-five and at the same time for a charming,

innocent child of seventeen, daughter of the bewitching marquise. The

conflict of magnanimity between the mother and the daughter, ending in

the mother's sacrificing herself and offering her daughter in marriage

to her lover, even now agitated the captain, though it was the memory of

a distant past. Then he recounted an episode in which the husband played

the part of the lover, and he--the lover--assumed the role of the

husband, as well as several droll incidents from his recollections of

Germany, where "shelter" is called Unterkunft and where the husbands eat

sauerkraut and the young girls are "too blonde."

Finally, the latest episode in Poland still fresh in the captain's

memory, and which he narrated with rapid gestures and glowing face, was

of how he had saved the life of a Pole (in general, the saving of life

continually occurred in the captain's stories) and the Pole had

entrusted to him his enchanting wife (parisienne de coeur) while himself

entering the French service. The captain was happy, the enchanting

Polish lady wished to elope with him, but, prompted by magnanimity, the

captain restored the wife to the husband, saying as he did so: "I have

saved your life, and I save your honor!" Having repeated these words the

captain wiped his eyes and gave himself a shake, as if driving away the

weakness which assailed him at this touching recollection.

Listening to the captain's tales, Pierre--as often happens late in the

evening and under the influence of wine--followed all that was told him,

understood it all, and at the same time followed a train of personal

memories which, he knew not why, suddenly arose in his mind. While

listening to these love stories his own love for Natasha unexpectedly

rose to his mind, and going over the pictures of that love in his

imagination he mentally compared them with Ramballe's tales. Listening

to the story of the struggle between love and duty, Pierre saw before

his eyes every minutest detail of his last meeting with the object of

his love at the Sukharev water tower. At the time of that meeting it had

not produced an effect upon him--he had not even once recalled it. But

now it seemed to him that that meeting had had in it something very

important and poetic.

"Peter Kirilovich, come here! We have recognized you," he now seemed to

hear the words she had uttered and to see before him her eyes, her

smile, her traveling hood, and a stray lock of her hair... and there

seemed to him something pathetic and touching in all this.

Having finished his tale about the enchanting Polish lady, the captain

asked Pierre if he had ever experienced a similar impulse to sacrifice

himself for love and a feeling of envy of the legitimate husband.

Challenged by this question Pierre raised his head and felt a need to

express the thoughts that filled his mind. He began to explain that he

understood love for a women somewhat differently. He said that in all

his life he had loved and still loved only one woman, and that she could

never be his.

"Tiens!" said the captain.

Pierre then explained that he had loved this woman from his earliest

years, but that he had not dared to think of her because she was too

young, and because he had been an illegitimate son without a name.

Afterwards when he had received a name and wealth he dared not think of

her because he loved her too well, placing her far above everything in

the world, and especially therefore above himself.

When he had reached this point, Pierre asked the captain whether he

understood that.

The captain made a gesture signifying that even if he did not understand

it he begged Pierre to continue.

"Platonic love, clouds..." he muttered.

Whether it was the wine he had drunk, or an impulse of frankness, or the

thought that this man did not, and never would, know any of those who

played a part in his story, or whether it was all these things together,

something loosened Pierre's tongue. Speaking thickly and with a faraway

look in his shining eyes, he told the whole story of his life: his

marriage, Natasha's love for his best friend, her betrayal of him, and

all his own simple relations with her. Urged on by Ramballe's questions

he also told what he had at first concealed--his own position and even

his name.

More than anything else in Pierre's story the captain was impressed by

the fact that Pierre was very rich, had two mansions in Moscow, and that

he had abandoned everything and not left the city, but remained there

concealing his name and station.

When it was late at night they went out together into the street. The

night was warm and light. To the left of the house on the Pokrovka a

fire glowed--the first of those that were beginning in Moscow. To the

right and high up in the sky was the sickle of the waning moon and

opposite to it hung that bright comet which was connected in Pierre's

heart with his love. At the gate stood Gerasim, the cook, and two

Frenchmen. Their laughter and their mutually incomprehensible remarks in

two languages could be heard. They were looking at the glow seen in the

town.

There was nothing terrible in the one small, distant fire in the immense

city.

Gazing at the high starry sky, at the moon, at the comet, and at the

glow from the fire, Pierre experienced a joyful emotion. "There now, how

good it is, what more does one need?" thought he. And suddenly

remembering his intention he grew dizzy and felt so faint that he leaned

against the fence to save himself from falling.

Without taking leave of his new friend, Pierre left the gate with

unsteady steps and returning to his room lay down on the sofa and

immediately fell asleep.

CHAPTER XXX

The glow of the first fire that began on the second of September was

watched from the various roads by the fugitive Muscovites and by the

retreating troops, with many different feelings.

The Rostov party spent the night at Mytishchi, fourteen miles from

Moscow. They had started so late on the first of September, the road had

been so blocked by vehicles and troops, so many things had been

forgotten for which servants were sent back, that they had decided to

spend that night at a place three miles out of Moscow. The next morning

they woke late and were again delayed so often that they only got as far

as Great Mytishchi. At ten o'clock that evening the Rostov family and

the wounded traveling with them were all distributed in the yards and

huts of that large village. The Rostovs' servants and coachmen and the

orderlies of the wounded officers, after attending to their masters, had

supper, fed the horses, and came out into the porches.

In a neighboring hut lay Raevski's adjutant with a fractured wrist. The

awful pain he suffered made him moan incessantly and piteously, and his

moaning sounded terrible in the darkness of the autumn night. He had

spent the first night in the same yard as the Rostovs. The countess said

she had been unable to close her eyes on account of his moaning, and at

Mytishchi she moved into a worse hut simply to be farther away from the

wounded man.

In the darkness of the night one of the servants noticed, above the high

body of a coach standing before the porch, the small glow of another

fire. One glow had long been visible and everybody knew that it was

Little Mytishchi burning--set on fire by Mamonov's Cossacks.

"But look here, brothers, there's another fire!" remarked an orderly.

All turned their attention to the glow.

"But they told us Little Mytishchi had been set on fire by Mamonov's

Cossacks."

"But that's not Mytishchi, it's farther away."

"Look, it must be in Moscow!"

Two of the gazers went round to the other side of the coach and sat down

on its steps.

"It's more to the left, why, Little Mytishchi is over there, and this is

right on the other side."

Several men joined the first two.

"See how it's flaring," said one. "That's a fire in Moscow: either in

the Sushchevski or the Rogozhski quarter."

No one replied to this remark and for some time they all gazed silently

at the spreading flames of the second fire in the distance.

Old Daniel Terentich, the count's valet (as he was called), came up to

the group and shouted at Mishka.

"What are you staring at, you good-for-nothing?... The count will be

calling and there's nobody there; go and gather the clothes together."

"I only ran out to get some water," said Mishka.

"But what do you think, Daniel Terentich? Doesn't it look as if that

glow were in Moscow?" remarked one of the footmen.

Daniel Terentich made no reply, and again for a long time they were all

silent. The glow spread, rising and falling, farther and farther still.

"God have mercy.... It's windy and dry..." said another voice.

"Just look! See what it's doing now. O Lord! You can even see the crows

flying. Lord have mercy on us sinners!"

"They'll put it out, no fear!"

"Who's to put it out?" Daniel Terentich, who had hitherto been silent,

was heard to say. His voice was calm and deliberate. "Moscow it is,

brothers," said he. "Mother Moscow, the white..." his voice faltered,

and he gave way to an old man's sob.

And it was as if they had all only waited for this to realize the

significance for them of the glow they were watching. Sighs were heard,

words of prayer, and the sobbing of the count's old valet.

CHAPTER XXXI

The valet, returning to the cottage, informed the count that Moscow was

burning. The count donned his dressing gown and went out to look. Sonya

and Madame Schoss, who had not yet undressed, went out with him. Only

Natasha and the countess remained in the room. Petya was no longer with

the family, he had gone on with his regiment which was making for

Troitsa.

The countess, on hearing that Moscow was on fire, began to cry. Natasha,

pale, with a fixed look, was sitting on the bench under the icons just

where she had sat down on arriving and paid no attention to her father's

words. She was listening to the ceaseless moaning of the adjutant, three

houses off.

"Oh, how terrible," said Sonya returning from the yard chilled and

frightened. "I believe the whole of Moscow will burn, there's an awful

glow! Natasha, do look! You can see it from the window," she said to her

cousin, evidently wishing to distract her mind.

But Natasha looked at her as if not understanding what was said to her

and again fixed her eyes on the corner of the stove. She had been in

this condition of stupor since the morning, when Sonya, to the surprise

and annoyance of the countess, had for some unaccountable reason found

it necessary to tell Natasha of Prince Andrew's wound and of his being

with their party. The countess had seldom been so angry with anyone as

she was with Sonya. Sonya had cried and begged to be forgiven and now,

as if trying to atone for her fault, paid unceasing attention to her

cousin.

"Look, Natasha, how dreadfully it is burning!" said she.

"What's burning?" asked Natasha. "Oh, yes, Moscow."

And as if in order not to offend Sonya and to get rid of her, she turned

her face to the window, looked out in such a way that it was evident

that she could not see anything, and again settled down in her former

attitude.

"But you didn't see it!"

"Yes, really I did," Natasha replied in a voice that pleaded to be left

in peace.

Both the countess and Sonya understood that, naturally, neither Moscow

nor the burning of Moscow nor anything else could seem of importance to

Natasha.

The count returned and lay down behind the partition. The countess went

up to her daughter and touched her head with the back of her hand as she

was wont to do when Natasha was ill, then touched her forehead with her

lips as if to feel whether she was feverish, and finally kissed her.

"You are cold. You are trembling all over. You'd better lie down," said

the countess.

"Lie down? All right, I will. I'll lie down at once," said Natasha.

When Natasha had been told that morning that Prince Andrew was seriously

wounded and was traveling with their party, she had at first asked many

questions: Where was he going? How was he wounded? Was it serious? And

could she see him? But after she had been told that she could not see

him, that he was seriously wounded but that his life was not in danger,

she ceased to ask questions or to speak at all, evidently disbelieving

what they told her, and convinced that say what she might she would

still be told the same. All the way she had sat motionless in a corner

of the coach with wide open eyes, and the expression in them which the

countess knew so well and feared so much, and now she sat in the same

way on the bench where she had seated herself on arriving. She was

planning something and either deciding or had already decided something

in her mind. The countess knew this, but what it might be she did not

know, and this alarmed and tormented her.

"Natasha, undress, darling; lie down on my bed."

A bed had been made on a bedstead for the countess only. Madame Schoss

and the two girls were to sleep on some hay on the floor.

"No, Mamma, I will lie down here on the floor," Natasha replied

irritably and she went to the window and opened it. Through the open

window the moans of the adjutant could be heard more distinctly. She put

her head out into the damp night air, and the countess saw her slim neck

shaking with sobs and throbbing against the window frame. Natasha knew

it was not Prince Andrew who was moaning. She knew Prince Andrew was in

the same yard as themselves and in a part of the hut across the passage;

but this dreadful incessant moaning made her sob. The countess exchanged

a look with Sonya.

"Lie down, darling; lie down, my pet," said the countess, softly

touching Natasha's shoulders. "Come, lie down."

"Oh, yes... I'll lie down at once," said Natasha, and began hurriedly

undressing, tugging at the tapes of her petticoat.

When she had thrown off her dress and put on a dressing jacket, she sat

down with her foot under her on the bed that had been made up on the

floor, jerked her thin and rather short plait of hair to the front, and

began replaiting it. Her long, thin, practiced fingers rapidly

unplaited, replaited, and tied up her plait. Her head moved from side to

side from habit, but her eyes, feverishly wide, looked fixedly before

her. When her toilet for the night was finished she sank gently onto the

sheet spread over the hay on the side nearest the door.

"Natasha, you'd better lie in the middle," said Sonya.

"I'll stay here," muttered Natasha. "Do lie down," she added crossly,

and buried her face in the pillow.

The countess, Madame Schoss, and Sonya undressed hastily and lay down.

The small lamp in front of the icons was the only light left in the

room. But in the yard there was a light from the fire at Little

Mytishchi a mile and a half away, and through the night came the noise

of people shouting at a tavern Mamonov's Cossacks had set up across the

street, and the adjutant's unceasing moans could still be heard.

For a long time Natasha listened attentively to the sounds that reached

her from inside and outside the room and did not move. First she heard

her mother praying and sighing and the creaking of her bed under her,

then Madame Schoss' familiar whistling snore and Sonya's gentle

breathing. Then the countess called to Natasha. Natasha did not answer.

"I think she's asleep, Mamma," said Sonya softly.

After a short silence the countess spoke again but this time no one

replied.

Soon after that Natasha heard her mother's even breathing. Natasha did

not move, though her little bare foot, thrust out from under the quilt,

was growing cold on the bare floor.

As if to celebrate a victory over everybody, a cricket chirped in a

crack in the wall. A cock crowed far off and another replied near by.

The shouting in the tavern had died down; only the moaning of the

adjutant was heard. Natasha sat up.

"Sonya, are you asleep? Mamma?" she whispered.

No one replied. Natasha rose slowly and carefully, crossed herself, and

stepped cautiously on the cold and dirty floor with her slim, supple,

bare feet. The boards of the floor creaked. Stepping cautiously from one

foot to the other she ran like a kitten the few steps to the door and

grasped the cold door handle.

It seemed to her that something heavy was beating rhythmically against

all the walls of the room: it was her own heart, sinking with alarm and

terror and overflowing with love.

She opened the door and stepped across the threshold and onto the cold,

damp earthen floor of the passage. The cold she felt refreshed her. With

her bare feet she touched a sleeping man, stepped over him, and opened

the door into the part of the hut where Prince Andrew lay. It was dark

in there. In the farthest corner, on a bench beside a bed on which

something was lying, stood a tallow candle with a long, thick, and

smoldering wick.

From the moment she had been told that morning of Prince Andrew's wound

and his presence there, Natasha had resolved to see him. She did not

know why she had to, she knew the meeting would be painful, but felt the

more convinced that it was necessary.

All day she had lived only in hope of seeing him that night. But now

that the moment had come she was filled with dread of what she might

see. How was he maimed? What was left of him? Was he like that incessant

moaning of the adjutant's? Yes, he was altogether like that. In her

imagination he was that terrible moaning personified. When she saw an

indistinct shape in the corner, and mistook his knees raised under the

quilt for his shoulders, she imagined a horrible body there, and stood

still in terror. But an irresistible impulse drew her forward. She

cautiously took one step and then another, and found herself in the

middle of a small room containing baggage. Another man--Timokhin--was

lying in a corner on the benches beneath the icons, and two others--the

doctor and a valet--lay on the floor.

The valet sat up and whispered something. Timokhin, kept awake by the

pain in his wounded leg, gazed with wide-open eyes at this strange

apparition of a girl in a white chemise, dressing jacket, and nightcap.

The valet's sleepy, frightened exclamation, "What do you want? What's

the matter?" made Natasha approach more swiftly to what was lying in the

corner. Horribly unlike a man as that body looked, she must see him. She

passed the valet, the snuff fell from the candle wick, and she saw

Prince Andrew clearly with his arms outside the quilt, and such as she

had always seen him.

He was the same as ever, but the feverish color of his face, his

glittering eyes rapturously turned toward her, and especially his neck,

delicate as a child's, revealed by the turn-down collar of his shirt,

gave him a peculiarly innocent, childlike look, such as she had never

seen on him before. She went up to him and with a swift, flexible,

youthful movement dropped on her knees.

He smiled and held out his hand to her.

CHAPTER XXXII

Seven days had passed since Prince Andrew found himself in the ambulance

station on the field of Borodino. His feverish state and the

inflammation of his bowels, which were injured, were in the doctor's

opinion sure to carry him off. But on the seventh day he ate with

pleasure a piece of bread with some tea, and the doctor noticed that his

temperature was lower. He had regained consciousness that morning. The

first night after they left Moscow had been fairly warm and he had

remained in the caleche, but at Mytishchi the wounded man himself asked

to be taken out and given some tea. The pain caused by his removal into

the hut had made him groan aloud and again lose consciousness. When he

had been placed on his camp bed he lay for a long time motionless with

closed eyes. Then he opened them and whispered softly: "And the tea?"

His remembering such a small detail of everyday life astonished the

doctor. He felt Prince Andrew's pulse, and to his surprise and

dissatisfaction found it had improved. He was dissatisfied because he

knew by experience that if his patient did not die now, he would do so a

little later with greater suffering. Timokhin, the red-nosed major of

Prince Andrew's regiment, had joined him in Moscow and was being taken

along with him, having been wounded in the leg at the battle of

Borodino. They were accompanied by a doctor, Prince Andrew's valet, his

coachman, and two orderlies.

They gave Prince Andrew some tea. He drank it eagerly, looking with

feverish eyes at the door in front of him as if trying to understand and

remember something.

"I don't want any more. Is Timokhin here?" he asked.

Timokhin crept along the bench to him.

"I am here, your excellency."

"How's your wound?"

"Mine, sir? All right. But how about you?"

Prince Andrew again pondered as if trying to remember something.

"Couldn't one get a book?" he asked.

"What book?"

"The Gospels. I haven't one."

The doctor promised to procure it for him and began to ask how he was

feeling. Prince Andrew answered all his questions reluctantly but

reasonably, and then said he wanted a bolster placed under him as he was

uncomfortable and in great pain. The doctor and valet lifted the cloak

with which he was covered and, making wry faces at the noisome smell of

mortifying flesh that came from the wound, began examining that dreadful

place. The doctor was very much displeased about something and made a

change in the dressings, turning the wounded man over so that he groaned

again and grew unconscious and delirious from the agony. He kept asking

them to get him the book and put it under him.

"What trouble would it be to you?" he said. "I have not got one. Please

get it for me and put it under for a moment," he pleaded in a piteous

voice.

The doctor went into the passage to wash his hands.

"You fellows have no conscience," said he to the valet who was pouring

water over his hands. "For just one moment I didn't look after you...

It's such pain, you know, that I wonder how he can bear it."

"By the Lord Jesus Christ, I thought we had put something under him!"

said the valet.

The first time Prince Andrew understood where he was and what was the

matter with him and remembered being wounded and how was when he asked

to be carried into the hut after his caleche had stopped at Mytishchi.

After growing confused from pain while being carried into the hut he

again regained consciousness, and while drinking tea once more recalled

all that had happened to him, and above all vividly remembered the

moment at the ambulance station when, at the sight of the sufferings of

a man he disliked, those new thoughts had come to him which promised him

happiness. And those thoughts, though now vague and indefinite, again

possessed his soul. He remembered that he had now a new source of

happiness and that this happiness had something to do with the Gospels.

That was why he asked for a copy of them. The uncomfortable position in

which they had put him and turned him over again confused his thoughts,

and when he came to himself a third time it was in the complete

stillness of the night. Everybody near him was sleeping. A cricket

chirped from across the passage; someone was shouting and singing in the

street; cockroaches rustled on the table, on the icons, and on the

walls, and a big fly flopped at the head of the bed and around the

candle beside him, the wick of which was charred and had shaped itself

like a mushroom.

His mind was not in a normal state. A healthy man usually thinks of,

feels, and remembers innumerable things simultaneously, but has the

power and will to select one sequence of thoughts or events on which to

fix his whole attention. A healthy man can tear himself away from the

deepest reflections to say a civil word to someone who comes in and can

then return again to his own thoughts. But Prince Andrew's mind was not

in a normal state in that respect. All the powers of his mind were more

active and clearer than ever, but they acted apart from his will. Most

diverse thoughts and images occupied him simultaneously. At times his

brain suddenly began to work with a vigor, clearness, and depth it had

never reached when he was in health, but suddenly in the midst of its

work it would turn to some unexpected idea and he had not the strength

to turn it back again.

"Yes, a new happiness was revealed to me of which man cannot be

deprived," he thought as he lay in the semidarkness of the quiet hut,

gazing fixedly before him with feverish wide open eyes. "A happiness

lying beyond material forces, outside the material influences that act

on man--a happiness of the soul alone, the happiness of loving. Every

man can understand it, but to conceive it and enjoin it was possible

only for God. But how did God enjoin that law? And why was the Son...?"

And suddenly the sequence of these thoughts broke off, and Prince Andrew

heard (without knowing whether it was a delusion or reality) a soft

whispering voice incessantly and rhythmically repeating "piti-piti-

piti," and then "titi," and then again "piti-piti-piti," and "ti-ti"

once more. At the same time he felt that above his face, above the very

middle of it, some strange airy structure was being erected out of

slender needles or splinters, to the sound of this whispered music. He

felt that he had to balance carefully (though it was difficult) so that

this airy structure should not collapse; but nevertheless it kept

collapsing and again slowly rising to the sound of whispered rhythmic

music--"it stretches, stretches, spreading out and stretching," said

Prince Andrew to himself. While listening to this whispering and feeling

the sensation of this drawing out and the construction of this edifice

of needles, he also saw by glimpses a red halo round the candle, and

heard the rustle of the cockroaches and the buzzing of the fly that

flopped against his pillow and his face. Each time the fly touched his

face it gave him a burning sensation and yet to his surprise it did not

destroy the structure, though it knocked against the very region of his

face where it was rising. But besides this there was something else of

importance. It was something white by the door--the statue of a sphinx,

which also oppressed him.

"But perhaps that's my shirt on the table," he thought, "and that's my

legs, and that is the door, but why is it always stretching and drawing

itself out, and 'piti-piti-piti' and 'ti-ti' and 'piti-piti-piti'...?

That's enough, please leave off!" Prince Andrew painfully entreated

someone. And suddenly thoughts and feelings again swam to the surface of

his mind with peculiar clearness and force.

"Yes--love," he thought again quite clearly. "But not love which loves

for something, for some quality, for some purpose, or for some reason,

but the love which I--while dying--first experienced when I saw my enemy

and yet loved him. I experienced that feeling of love which is the very

essence of the soul and does not require an object. Now again I feel

that bliss. To love one's neighbors, to love one's enemies, to love

everything, to love God in all His manifestations. It is possible to

love someone dear to you with human love, but an enemy can only be loved

by divine love. That is why I experienced such joy when I felt that I

loved that man. What has become of him? Is he alive?...

"When loving with human love one may pass from love to hatred, but

divine love cannot change. No, neither death nor anything else can

destroy it. It is the very essence of the soul. Yet how many people have

I hated in my life? And of them all, I loved and hated none as I did

her." And he vividly pictured to himself Natasha, not as he had done in

the past with nothing but her charms which gave him delight, but for the

first time picturing to himself her soul. And he understood her

feelings, her sufferings, shame, and remorse. He now understood for the

first time all the cruelty of his rejection of her, the cruelty of his

rupture with her. "If only it were possible for me to see her once more!

Just once, looking into those eyes to say..."

"Piti-piti-piti and ti-ti and piti-piti-piti boom!" flopped the fly...

And his attention was suddenly carried into another world, a world of

reality and delirium in which something particular was happening. In

that world some structure was still being erected and did not fall,

something was still stretching out, and the candle with its red halo was

still burning, and the same shirtlike sphinx lay near the door; but

besides all this something creaked, there was a whiff of fresh air, and

a new white sphinx appeared, standing at the door. And that sphinx had

the pale face and shining eyes of the very Natasha of whom he had just

been thinking.

"Oh, how oppressive this continual delirium is," thought Prince Andrew,

trying to drive that face from his imagination. But the face remained

before him with the force of reality and drew nearer. Prince Andrew

wished to return to that former world of pure thought, but he could not,

and delirium drew him back into its domain. The soft whispering voice

continued its rhythmic murmur, something oppressed him and stretched

out, and the strange face was before him. Prince Andrew collected all

his strength in an effort to recover his senses, he moved a little, and

suddenly there was a ringing in his ears, a dimness in his eyes, and

like a man plunged into water he lost consciousness. When he came to

himself, Natasha, that same living Natasha whom of all people he most

longed to love with this new pure divine love that had been revealed to

him, was kneeling before him. He realized that it was the real living

Natasha, and he was not surprised but quietly happy. Natasha, motionless

on her knees (she was unable to stir), with frightened eyes riveted on

him, was restraining her sobs. Her face was pale and rigid. Only in the

lower part of it something quivered.

Prince Andrew sighed with relief, smiled, and held out his hand.

"You?" he said. "How fortunate!"

With a rapid but careful movement Natasha drew nearer to him on her

knees and, taking his hand carefully, bent her face over it and began

kissing it, just touching it lightly with her lips.

"Forgive me!" she whispered, raising her head and glancing at him.

"Forgive me!"

"I love you," said Prince Andrew.

"Forgive...!"

"Forgive what?" he asked.

"Forgive me for what I ha-ve do-ne!" faltered Natasha in a scarcely

audible, broken whisper, and began kissing his hand more rapidly, just

touching it with her lips.

"I love you more, better than before," said Prince Andrew, lifting her

face with his hand so as to look into her eyes.

Those eyes, filled with happy tears, gazed at him timidly,

compassionately, and with joyous love. Natasha's thin pale face, with

its swollen lips, was more than plain--it was dreadful. But Prince

Andrew did not see that, he saw her shining eyes which were beautiful.

They heard the sound of voices behind them.

Peter the valet, who was now wide awake, had roused the doctor.

Timokhin, who had not slept at all because of the pain in his leg, had

long been watching all that was going on, carefully covering his bare

body with the sheet as he huddled up on his bench.

"What's this?" said the doctor, rising from his bed. "Please go away,

madam!"

At that moment a maid sent by the countess, who had noticed her

daughter's absence, knocked at the door.

Like a somnambulist aroused from her sleep Natasha went out of the room

and, returning to her hut, fell sobbing on her bed.

From that time, during all the rest of the Rostovs' journey, at every

halting place and wherever they spent a night, Natasha never left the

wounded Bolkonski, and the doctor had to admit that he had not expected

from a young girl either such firmness or such skill in nursing a

wounded man.

Dreadful as the countess imagined it would be should Prince Andrew die

in her daughter's arms during the journey--as, judging by what the

doctor said, it seemed might easily happen--she could not oppose

Natasha. Though with the intimacy now established between the wounded

man and Natasha the thought occurred that should he recover their former

engagement would be renewed, no one--least of all Natasha and Prince

Andrew--spoke of this: the unsettled question of life and death, which

hung not only over Bolkonski but over all Russia, shut out all other

considerations.

CHAPTER XXXIII

On the third of September Pierre awoke late. His head was aching, the

clothes in which he had slept without undressing felt uncomfortable on

his body, and his mind had a dim consciousness of something shameful he

had done the day before. That something shameful was his yesterday's

conversation with Captain Ramballe.

It was eleven by the clock, but it seemed peculiarly dark out of doors.

Pierre rose, rubbed his eyes, and seeing the pistol with an engraved

stock which Gerasim had replaced on the writing table, he remembered

where he was and what lay before him that very day.

"Am I not too late?" he thought. "No, probably he won't make his entry

into Moscow before noon."

Pierre did not allow himself to reflect on what lay before him, but

hastened to act.

After arranging his clothes, he took the pistol and was about to go out.

But it then occurred to him for the first time that he certainly could

not carry the weapon in his hand through the streets. It was difficult

to hide such a big pistol even under his wide coat. He could not carry

it unnoticed in his belt or under his arm. Besides, it had been

discharged, and he had not had time to reload it. "No matter, dagger

will do," he said to himself, though when planning his design he had

more than once come to the conclusion that the chief mistake made by the

student in 1809 had been to try to kill Napoleon with a dagger. But as

his chief aim consisted not in carrying out his design, but in proving

to himself that he would not abandon his intention and was doing all he

could to achieve it, Pierre hastily took the blunt jagged dagger in a

green sheath which he had bought at the Sukharev market with the pistol,

and hid it under his waistcoat.

Having tied a girdle over his coat and pulled his cap low on his head,

Pierre went down the corridor, trying to avoid making a noise or meeting

the captain, and passed out into the street.

The conflagration, at which he had looked with so much indifference the

evening before, had greatly increased during the night. Moscow was on

fire in several places. The buildings in Carriage Row, across the river,

in the Bazaar and the Povarskoy, as well as the barges on the Moskva

River and the timber yards by the Dorogomilov Bridge, were all ablaze.

Pierre's way led through side streets to the Povarskoy and from there to

the church of St. Nicholas on the Arbat, where he had long before

decided that the deed should be done. The gates of most of the houses

were locked and the shutters up. The streets and lanes were deserted.

The air was full of smoke and the smell of burning. Now and then he met

Russians with anxious and timid faces, and Frenchmen with an air not of

the city but of the camp, walking in the middle of the streets. Both the

Russians and the French looked at Pierre with surprise. Besides his

height and stoutness, and the strange morose look of suffering in his

face and whole figure, the Russians stared at Pierre because they could

not make out to what class he could belong. The French followed him with

astonishment in their eyes chiefly because Pierre, unlike all the other

Russians who gazed at the French with fear and curiosity, paid no

attention to them. At the gate of one house three Frenchmen, who were

explaining something to some Russians who did not understand them,

stopped Pierre asking if he did not know French.

Pierre shook his head and went on. In another side street a sentinel

standing beside a green caisson shouted at him, but only when the shout

was threateningly repeated and he heard the click of the man's musket as

he raised it did Pierre understand that he had to pass on the other side

of the street. He heard nothing and saw nothing of what went on around

him. He carried his resolution within himself in terror and haste, like

something dreadful and alien to him, for, after the previous night's

experience, he was afraid of losing it. But he was not destined to bring

his mood safely to his destination. And even had he not been hindered by

anything on the way, his intention could not now have been carried out,

for Napoleon had passed the Arbat more than four hours previously on his

way from the Dorogomilov suburb to the Kremlin, and was now sitting in a

very gloomy frame of mind in a royal study in the Kremlin, giving

detailed and exact orders as to measures to be taken immediately to

extinguish the fire, to prevent looting, and to reassure the

inhabitants. But Pierre did not know this; he was entirely absorbed in

what lay before him, and was tortured--as those are who obstinately

undertake a task that is impossible for them not because of its

difficulty but because of its incompatibility with their natures--by the

fear of weakening at the decisive moment and so losing his self-esteem.

Though he heard and saw nothing around him he found his way by instinct

and did not go wrong in the side streets that led to the Povarskoy.

As Pierre approached that street the smoke became denser and denser--he

even felt the heat of the fire. Occasionally curly tongues of flame rose

from under the roofs of the houses. He met more people in the streets

and they were more excited. But Pierre, though he felt that something

unusual was happening around him, did not realize that he was

approaching the fire. As he was going along a foot path across a wide-

open space adjoining the Povarskoy on one side and the gardens of Prince

Gruzinski's house on the other, Pierre suddenly heard the desperate

weeping of a woman close to him. He stopped as if awakening from a dream

and lifted his head.

By the side of the path, on the dusty dry grass, all sorts of household

goods lay in a heap: featherbeds, a samovar, icons, and trunks. On the

ground, beside the trunks, sat a thin woman no longer young, with long,

prominent upper teeth, and wearing a black cloak and cap. This woman,

swaying to and fro and muttering something, was choking with sobs. Two

girls of about ten and twelve, dressed in dirty short frocks and cloaks,

were staring at their mother with a look of stupefaction on their pale

frightened faces. The youngest child, a boy of about seven, who wore an

overcoat and an immense cap evidently not his own, was crying in his old

nurse's arms. A dirty, barefooted maid was sitting on a trunk, and,

having undone her pale-colored plait, was pulling it straight and

sniffing at her singed hair. The woman's husband, a short, round-

shouldered man in the undress uniform of a civilian official, with

sausage-shaped whiskers and showing under his square-set cap the hair

smoothly brushed forward over his temples, with expressionless face was

moving the trunks, which were placed one on another, and was dragging

some garments from under them.

As soon as she saw Pierre, the woman almost threw herself at his feet.

"Dear people, good Christians, save me, help me, dear friends... help

us, somebody," she muttered between her sobs. "My girl... My daughter!

My youngest daughter is left behind. She's burned! Ooh! Was it for this

I nursed you.... Ooh!"

"Don't, Mary Nikolievna!" said her husband to her in a low voice,

evidently only to justify himself before the stranger. "Sister must have

taken her, or else where can she be?" he added.

"Monster! Villain!" shouted the woman angrily, suddenly ceasing to weep.

"You have no heart, you don't feel for your own child! Another man would

have rescued her from the fire. But this is a monster and neither a man

nor a father! You, honored sir, are a noble man," she went on,

addressing Pierre rapidly between her sobs. "The fire broke out

alongside, and blew our way, the maid called out 'Fire!' and we rushed

to collect our things. We ran out just as we were.... This is what we

have brought away.... The icons, and my dowry bed, all the rest is lost.

We seized the children. But not Katie! Ooh! O Lord!..." and again she

began to sob. "My child, my dear one! Burned, burned!"

"But where was she left?" asked Pierre.

From the expression of his animated face the woman saw that this man

might help her.

"Oh, dear sir!" she cried, seizing him by the legs. "My benefactor, set

my heart at ease.... Aniska, go, you horrid girl, show him the way!" she

cried to the maid, angrily opening her mouth and still farther exposing

her long teeth.

"Show me the way, show me, I... I'll do it," gasped Pierre rapidly.

The dirty maidservant stepped from behind the trunk, put up her plait,

sighed, and went on her short, bare feet along the path. Pierre felt as

if he had come back to life after a heavy swoon. He held his head

higher, his eyes shone with the light of life, and with swift steps he

followed the maid, overtook her, and came out on the Povarskoy. The

whole street was full of clouds of black smoke. Tongues of flame here

and there broke through that cloud. A great number of people crowded in

front of the conflagration. In the middle of the street stood a French

general saying something to those around him. Pierre, accompanied by the

maid, was advancing to the spot where the general stood, but the French

soldiers stopped him.

"On ne passe pas!" \* cried a voice.

\* "You can't pass!"

"This way, uncle," cried the girl. "We'll pass through the side street,

by the Nikulins'!"

Pierre turned back, giving a spring now and then to keep up with her.

She ran across the street, turned down a side street to the left, and,

passing three houses, turned into a yard on the right.

"It's here, close by," said she and, running across the yard, opened a

gate in a wooden fence and, stopping, pointed out to him a small wooden

wing of the house, which was burning brightly and fiercely. One of its

sides had fallen in, another was on fire, and bright flames issued from

the openings of the windows and from under the roof.

As Pierre passed through the fence gate, he was enveloped by hot air and

involuntarily stopped.

"Which is it? Which is your house?" he asked.

"Ooh!" wailed the girl, pointing to the wing. "That's it, that was our

lodging. You've burned to death, our treasure, Katie, my precious little

missy! Ooh!" lamented Aniska, who at the sight of the fire felt that she

too must give expression to her feelings.

Pierre rushed to the wing, but the heat was so great that he

involuntarily passed round in a curve and came upon the large house that

was as yet burning only at one end, just below the roof, and around

which swarmed a crowd of Frenchmen. At first Pierre did not realize what

these men, who were dragging something out, were about; but seeing

before him a Frenchman hitting a peasant with a blunt saber and trying

to take from him a fox-fur coat, he vaguely understood that looting was

going on there, but he had no time to dwell on that idea.

The sounds of crackling and the din of falling walls and ceilings, the

whistle and hiss of the flames, the excited shouts of the people, and

the sight of the swaying smoke, now gathering into thick black clouds

and now soaring up with glittering sparks, with here and there dense

sheaves of flame (now red and now like golden fish scales creeping along

the walls), and the heat and smoke and rapidity of motion, produced on

Pierre the usual animating effects of a conflagration. It had a

peculiarly strong effect on him because at the sight of the fire he felt

himself suddenly freed from the ideas that had weighed him down. He felt

young, bright, adroit, and resolute. He ran round to the other side of

the lodge and was about to dash into that part of it which was still

standing, when just above his head he heard several voices shouting and

then a cracking sound and the ring of something heavy falling close

beside him.

Pierre looked up and saw at a window of the large house some Frenchmen

who had just thrown out the drawer of a chest, filled with metal

articles. Other French soldiers standing below went up to the drawer.

"What does this fellow want?" shouted one of them referring to Pierre.

"There's a child in that house. Haven't you seen a child?" cried Pierre.

"What's he talking about? Get along!" said several voices, and one of

the soldiers, evidently afraid that Pierre might want to take from them

some of the plate and bronzes that were in the drawer, moved

threateningly toward him.

"A child?" shouted a Frenchman from above. "I did hear something

squealing in the garden. Perhaps it's his brat that the fellow is

looking for. After all, one must be human, you know...."

"Where is it? Where?" said Pierre.

"There! There!" shouted the Frenchman at the window, pointing to the

garden at the back of the house. "Wait a bit--I'm coming down."

And a minute or two later the Frenchman, a black-eyed fellow with a spot

on his cheek, in shirt sleeves, really did jump out of a window on the

ground floor, and clapping Pierre on the shoulder ran with him into the

garden.

"Hurry up, you others!" he called out to his comrades. "It's getting

hot."

When they reached a gravel path behind the house the Frenchman pulled

Pierre by the arm and pointed to a round, graveled space where a three-

year-old girl in a pink dress was lying under a seat.

"There is your child! Oh, a girl, so much the better!" said the

Frenchman. "Good-bye, Fatty. We must be human, we are all mortal you

know!" and the Frenchman with the spot on his cheek ran back to his

comrades.

Breathless with joy, Pierre ran to the little girl and was going to take

her in his arms. But seeing a stranger the sickly, scrofulous-looking

child, unattractively like her mother, began to yell and run away.

Pierre, however, seized her and lifted her in his arms. She screamed

desperately and angrily and tried with her little hands to pull Pierre's

hands away and to bite them with her slobbering mouth. Pierre was seized

by a sense of horror and repulsion such as he had experienced when

touching some nasty little animal. But he made an effort not to throw

the child down and ran with her to the large house. It was now, however,

impossible to get back the way he had come; the maid, Aniska, was no

longer there, and Pierre with a feeling of pity and disgust pressed the

wet, painfully sobbing child to himself as tenderly as he could and ran

with her through the garden seeking another way out.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Having run through different yards and side streets, Pierre got back

with his little burden to the Gruzinski garden at the corner of the

Povarskoy. He did not at first recognize the place from which he had set

out to look for the child, so crowded was it now with people and goods

that had been dragged out of the houses. Besides Russian families who

had taken refuge here from the fire with their belongings, there were

several French soldiers in a variety of clothing. Pierre took no notice

of them. He hurried to find the family of that civil servant in order to

restore the daughter to her mother and go to save someone else. Pierre

felt that he had still much to do and to do quickly. Glowing with the

heat and from running, he felt at that moment more strongly than ever

the sense of youth, animation, and determination that had come on him

when he ran to save the child. She had now become quiet and, clinging

with her little hands to Pierre's coat, sat on his arm gazing about her

like some little wild animal. He glanced at her occasionally with a

slight smile. He fancied he saw something pathetically innocent in that

frightened, sickly little face.

He did not find the civil servant or his wife where he had left them. He

walked among the crowd with rapid steps, scanning the various faces he

met. Involuntarily he noticed a Georgian or Armenian family consisting

of a very handsome old man of Oriental type, wearing a new, cloth-

covered, sheepskin coat and new boots, an old woman of similar type, and

a young woman. That very young woman seemed to Pierre the perfection of

Oriental beauty, with her sharply outlined, arched, black eyebrows and

the extraordinarily soft, bright color of her long, beautiful,

expressionless face. Amid the scattered property and the crowd on the

open space, she, in her rich satin cloak with a bright lilac shawl on

her head, suggested a delicate exotic plant thrown out onto the snow.

She was sitting on some bundles a little behind the old woman, and

looked from under her long lashes with motionless, large, almond-shaped

eyes at the ground before her. Evidently she was aware of her beauty and

fearful because of it. Her face struck Pierre and, hurrying along by the

fence, he turned several times to look at her. When he had reached the

fence, still without finding those he sought, he stopped and looked

about him.

With the child in his arms his figure was now more conspicuous than

before, and a group of Russians, both men and women, gathered about him.

"Have you lost anyone, my dear fellow? You're of the gentry yourself,

aren't you? Whose child is it?" they asked him.

Pierre replied that the child belonged to a woman in a black coat who

had been sitting there with her other children, and he asked whether

anyone knew where she had gone.

"Why, that must be the Anferovs," said an old deacon, addressing a

pockmarked peasant woman. "Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy!" he added

in his customary bass.

"The Anferovs? No," said the woman. "They left in the morning. That must

be either Mary Nikolievna's or the Ivanovs'!"

"He says 'a woman,' and Mary Nikolievna is a lady," remarked a house

serf.

"Do you know her? She's thin, with long teeth," said Pierre.

"That's Mary Nikolievna! They went inside the garden when these wolves

swooped down," said the woman, pointing to the French soldiers.

"O Lord, have mercy!" added the deacon.

"Go over that way, they're there. It's she! She kept on lamenting and

crying," continued the woman. "It's she. Here, this way!"

But Pierre was not listening to the woman. He had for some seconds been

intently watching what was going on a few steps away. He was looking at

the Armenian family and at two French soldiers who had gone up to them.

One of these, a nimble little man, was wearing a blue coat tied round

the waist with a rope. He had a nightcap on his head and his feet were

bare. The other, whose appearance particularly struck Pierre, was a

long, lank, round-shouldered, fair-haired man, slow in his movements and

with an idiotic expression of face. He wore a woman's loose gown of

frieze, blue trousers, and large torn Hessian boots. The little

barefooted Frenchman in the blue coat went up to the Armenians and,

saying something, immediately seized the old man by his legs and the old

man at once began pulling off his boots. The other in the frieze gown

stopped in front of the beautiful Armenian girl and with his hands in

his pockets stood staring at her, motionless and silent.

"Here, take the child!" said Pierre peremptorily and hurriedly to the

woman, handing the little girl to her. "Give her back to them, give her

back!" he almost shouted, putting the child, who began screaming, on the

ground, and again looking at the Frenchman and the Armenian family.

The old man was already sitting barefoot. The little Frenchman had

secured his second boot and was slapping one boot against the other. The

old man was saying something in a voice broken by sobs, but Pierre

caught but a glimpse of this, his whole attention was directed to the

Frenchman in the frieze gown who meanwhile, swaying slowly from side to

side, had drawn nearer to the young woman and taking his hands from his

pockets had seized her by the neck.

The beautiful Armenian still sat motionless and in the same attitude,

with her long lashes drooping as if she did not see or feel what the

soldier was doing to her.

While Pierre was running the few steps that separated him from the

Frenchman, the tall marauder in the frieze gown was already tearing from

her neck the necklace the young Armenian was wearing, and the young

woman, clutching at her neck, screamed piercingly.

"Let that woman alone!" exclaimed Pierre hoarsely in a furious voice,

seizing the soldier by his round shoulders and throwing him aside.

The soldier fell, got up, and ran away. But his comrade, throwing down

the boots and drawing his sword, moved threateningly toward Pierre.

"Voyons, Pas de betises!" \* he cried.

\* "Look here, no nonsense!"

Pierre was in such a transport of rage that he remembered nothing and

his strength increased tenfold. He rushed at the barefooted Frenchman

and, before the latter had time to draw his sword, knocked him off his

feet and hammered him with his fists. Shouts of approval were heard from

the crowd around, and at the same moment a mounted patrol of French

uhlans appeared from round the corner. The uhlans came up at a trot to

Pierre and the Frenchman and surrounded them. Pierre remembered nothing

of what happened after that. He only remembered beating someone and

being beaten and finally feeling that his hands were bound and that a

crowd of French soldiers stood around him and were searching him.

"Lieutenant, he has a dagger," were the first words Pierre understood.

"Ah, a weapon?" said the officer and turned to the barefooted soldier

who had been arrested with Pierre. "All right, you can tell all about it

at the court-martial." Then he turned to Pierre. "Do you speak French?"

Pierre looked around him with bloodshot eyes and did not reply. His face

probably looked very terrible, for the officer said something in a

whisper and four more uhlans left the ranks and placed themselves on

both sides of Pierre.

"Do you speak French?" the officer asked again, keeping at a distance

from Pierre. "Call the interpreter."

A little man in Russian civilian clothes rode out from the ranks, and by

his clothes and manner of speaking Pierre at once knew him to be a

French salesman from one of the Moscow shops.

"He does not look like a common man," said the interpreter, after a

searching look at Pierre.

"Ah, he looks very much like an incendiary," remarked the officer. "And

ask him who he is," he added.

"Who are you?" asked the interpreter in poor Russian. "You must answer

the chief."

"I will not tell you who I am. I am your prisoner--take me!" Pierre

suddenly replied in French.

"Ah, ah!" muttered the officer with a frown. "Well then, march!"

A crowd had collected round the uhlans. Nearest to Pierre stood the

pockmarked peasant woman with the little girl, and when the patrol

started she moved forward.

"Where are they taking you to, you poor dear?" said she. "And the little

girl, the little girl, what am I to do with her if she's not theirs?"

said the woman.

"What does that woman want?" asked the officer.

Pierre was as if intoxicated. His elation increased at the sight of the

little girl he had saved.

"What does she want?" he murmured. "She is bringing me my daughter whom

I have just saved from the flames," said he. "Good-bye!" And without

knowing how this aimless lie had escaped him, he went along with

resolute and triumphant steps between the French soldiers.

The French patrol was one of those sent out through the various streets

of Moscow by Durosnel's order to put a stop to the pillage, and

especially to catch the incendiaries who, according to the general

opinion which had that day originated among the higher French officers,

were the cause of the conflagrations. After marching through a number of

streets the patrol arrested five more Russian suspects: a small

shopkeeper, two seminary students, a peasant, and a house serf, besides

several looters. But of all these various suspected characters, Pierre

was considered to be the most suspicious of all. When they had all been

brought for the night to a large house on the Zubov Rampart that was

being used as a guardhouse, Pierre was placed apart under strict guard.

BOOK TWELVE: 1812

CHAPTER I

In Petersburg at that time a complicated struggle was being carried on

with greater heat than ever in the highest circles, between the parties

of Rumyantsev, the French, Marya Fedorovna, the Tsarevich, and others,

drowned as usual by the buzzing of the court drones. But the calm,

luxurious life of Petersburg, concerned only about phantoms and

reflections of real life, went on in its old way and made it hard,

except by a great effort, to realize the danger and the difficult

position of the Russian people. There were the same receptions and

balls, the same French theater, the same court interests and service

interests and intrigues as usual. Only in the very highest circles were

attempts made to keep in mind the difficulties of the actual position.

Stories were whispered of how differently the two Empresses behaved in

these difficult circumstances. The Empress Marya, concerned for the

welfare of the charitable and educational institutions under her

patronage, had given directions that they should all be removed to

Kazan, and the things belonging to these institutions had already been

packed up. The Empress Elisabeth, however, when asked what instructions

she would be pleased to give--with her characteristic Russian patriotism

had replied that she could give no directions about state institutions

for that was the affair of the sovereign, but as far as she personally

was concerned she would be the last to quit Petersburg.

At Anna Pavlovna's on the twenty-sixth of August, the very day of the

battle of Borodino, there was a soiree, the chief feature of which was

to be the reading of a letter from His Lordship the Bishop when sending

the Emperor an icon of the Venerable Sergius. It was regarded as a model

of ecclesiastical, patriotic eloquence. Prince Vasili himself, famed for

his elocution, was to read it. (He used to read at the Empress'.) The

art of his reading was supposed to lie in rolling out the words, quite

independently of their meaning, in a loud and singsong voice alternating

between a despairing wail and a tender murmur, so that the wail fell

quite at random on one word and the murmur on another. This reading, as

was always the case at Anna Pavlovna's soirees, had a political

significance. That evening she expected several important personages who

had to be made ashamed of their visits to the French theater and aroused

to a patriotic temper. A good many people had already arrived, but Anna

Pavlovna, not yet seeing all those whom she wanted in her drawing room,

did not let the reading begin but wound up the springs of a general

conversation.

The news of the day in Petersburg was the illness of Countess Bezukhova.

She had fallen ill unexpectedly a few days previously, had missed

several gatherings of which she was usually ornament, and was said to be

receiving no one, and instead of the celebrated Petersburg doctors who

usually attended her had entrusted herself to some Italian doctor who

was treating her in some new and unusual way.

They all knew very well that the enchanting countess' illness arose from

an inconvenience resulting from marrying two husbands at the same time,

and that the Italian's cure consisted in removing such inconvenience;

but in Anna Pavlovna's presence no one dared to think of this or even

appear to know it.

"They say the poor countess is very ill. The doctor says it is angina

pectoris."

"Angina? Oh, that's a terrible illness!"

"They say that the rivals are reconciled, thanks to the angina..." and

the word angina was repeated with great satisfaction.

"The count is pathetic, they say. He cried like a child when the doctor

told him the case was dangerous."

"Oh, it would be a terrible loss, she is an enchanting woman."

"You are speaking of the poor countess?" said Anna Pavlovna, coming up

just then. "I sent to ask for news, and hear that she is a little

better. Oh, she is certainly the most charming woman in the world," she

went on, with a smile at her own enthusiasm. "We belong to different

camps, but that does not prevent my esteeming her as she deserves. She

is very unfortunate!" added Anna Pavlovna.

Supposing that by these words Anna Pavlovna was somewhat lifting the

veil from the secret of the countess' malady, an unwary young man

ventured to express surprise that well known doctors had not been called

in and that the countess was being attended by a charlatan who might

employ dangerous remedies.

"Your information may be better than mine," Anna Pavlovna suddenly and

venomously retorted on the inexperienced young man, "but I know on good

authority that this doctor is a very learned and able man. He is private

physician to the Queen of Spain."

And having thus demolished the young man, Anna Pavlovna turned to

another group where Bilibin was talking about the Austrians: having

wrinkled up his face he was evidently preparing to smooth it out again

and utter one of his mots.

"I think it is delightful," he said, referring to a diplomatic note that

had been sent to Vienna with some Austrian banners captured from the

French by Wittgenstein, "the hero of Petropol" as he was then called in

Petersburg.

"What? What's that?" asked Anna Pavlovna, securing silence for the mot,

which she had heard before.

And Bilibin repeated the actual words of the diplomatic dispatch, which

he had himself composed.

"The Emperor returns these Austrian banners," said Bilibin, "friendly

banners gone astray and found on a wrong path," and his brow became

smooth again.

"Charming, charming!" observed Prince Vasili.

"The path to Warsaw, perhaps," Prince Hippolyte remarked loudly and

unexpectedly. Everybody looked at him, understanding what he meant.

Prince Hippolyte himself glanced around with amused surprise. He knew no

more than the others what his words meant. During his diplomatic career

he had more than once noticed that such utterances were received as very

witty, and at every opportunity he uttered in that way the first words

that entered his head. "It may turn out very well," he thought, "but if

not, they'll know how to arrange matters." And really, during the

awkward silence that ensued, that insufficiently patriotic person

entered whom Anna Pavlovna had been waiting for and wished to convert,

and she, smiling and shaking a finger at Hippolyte, invited Prince

Vasili to the table and bringing him two candles and the manuscript

begged him to begin. Everyone became silent.

"Most Gracious Sovereign and Emperor!" Prince Vasili sternly declaimed,

looking round at his audience as if to inquire whether anyone had

anything to say to the contrary. But no one said anything. "Moscow, our

ancient capital, the New Jerusalem, receives her Christ"--he placed a

sudden emphasis on the word her--"as a mother receives her zealous sons

into her arms, and through the gathering mists, foreseeing the brilliant

glory of thy rule, sings in exultation, 'Hosanna, blessed is he that

cometh!'"

Prince Vasili pronounced these last words in a tearful voice.

Bilibin attentively examined his nails, and many of those present

appeared intimidated, as if asking in what they were to blame. Anna

Pavlovna whispered the next words in advance, like an old woman

muttering the prayer at Communion: "Let the bold and insolent

Goliath..." she whispered.

Prince Vasili continued.

"Let the bold and insolent Goliath from the borders of France encompass

the realms of Russia with death-bearing terrors; humble Faith, the sling

of the Russian David, shall suddenly smite his head in his bloodthirsty

pride. This icon of the Venerable Sergius, the servant of God and

zealous champion of old of our country's weal, is offered to Your

Imperial Majesty. I grieve that my waning strength prevents rejoicing in

the sight of your most gracious presence. I raise fervent prayers to

Heaven that the Almighty may exalt the race of the just, and mercifully

fulfill the desires of Your Majesty."

"What force! What a style!" was uttered in approval both of reader and

of author.

Animated by that address Anna Pavlovna's guests talked for a long time

of the state of the fatherland and offered various conjectures as to the

result of the battle to be fought in a few days.

"You will see," said Anna Pavlovna, "that tomorrow, on the Emperor's

birthday, we shall receive news. I have a favorable presentiment!"

CHAPTER II

Anna Pavlovna's presentiment was in fact fulfilled. Next day during the

service at the palace church in honor of the Emperor's birthday, Prince

Volkonski was called out of the church and received a dispatch from

Prince Kutuzov. It was Kutuzov's report, written from Tatarinova on the

day of the battle. Kutuzov wrote that the Russians had not retreated a

step, that the French losses were much heavier than ours, and that he

was writing in haste from the field of battle before collecting full

information. It followed that there must have been a victory. And at

once, without leaving the church, thanks were rendered to the Creator

for His help and for the victory.

Anna Pavlovna's presentiment was justified, and all that morning a

joyously festive mood reigned in the city. Everyone believed the victory

to have been complete, and some even spoke of Napoleon's having been

captured, of his deposition, and of the choice of a new ruler for

France.

It is very difficult for events to be reflected in their real strength

and completeness amid the conditions of court life and far from the

scene of action. General events involuntarily group themselves around

some particular incident. So now the courtiers' pleasure was based as

much on the fact that the news had arrived on the Emperor's birthday as

on the fact of the victory itself. It was like a successfully arranged

surprise. Mention was made in Kutuzov's report of the Russian losses,

among which figured the names of Tuchkov, Bagration, and Kutaysov. In

the Petersburg world this sad side of the affair again involuntarily

centered round a single incident: Kutaysov's death. Everybody knew him,

the Emperor liked him, and he was young and interesting. That day

everyone met with the words:

"What a wonderful coincidence! Just during the service. But what a loss

Kutaysov is! How sorry I am!"

"What did I tell about Kutuzov?" Prince Vasili now said with a prophet's

pride. "I always said he was the only man capable of defeating

Napoleon."

But next day no news arrived from the army and the public mood grew

anxious. The courtiers suffered because of the suffering the suspense

occasioned the Emperor.

"Fancy the Emperor's position!" said they, and instead of extolling

Kutuzov as they had done the day before, they condemned him as the cause

of the Emperor's anxiety. That day Prince Vasili no longer boasted of

his protege Kutuzov, but remained silent when the commander-in-chief was

mentioned. Moreover, toward evening, as if everything conspired to make

Petersburg society anxious and uneasy, a terrible piece of news was

added. Countess Helene Bezukhova had suddenly died of that terrible

malady it had been so agreeable to mention. Officially, at large

gatherings, everyone said that Countess Bezukhova had died of a terrible

attack of angina pectoris, but in intimate circles details were

mentioned of how the private physician of the Queen of Spain had

prescribed small doses of a certain drug to produce a certain effect;

but Helene, tortured by the fact that the old count suspected her and

that her husband to whom she had written (that wretched, profligate

Pierre) had not replied, had suddenly taken a very large dose of the

drug, and had died in agony before assistance could be rendered her. It

was said that Prince Vasili and the old count had turned upon the

Italian, but the latter had produced such letters from the unfortunate

deceased that they had immediately let the matter drop.

Talk in general centered round three melancholy facts: the Emperor's

lack of news, the loss of Kutaysov, and the death of Helene.

On the third day after Kutuzov's report a country gentleman arrived from

Moscow, and news of the surrender of Moscow to the French spread through

the whole town. This was terrible! What a position for the Emperor to be

in! Kutuzov was a traitor, and Prince Vasili during the visits of

condolence paid to him on the occasion of his daughter's death said of

Kutuzov, whom he had formerly praised (it was excusable for him in his

grief to forget what he had said), that it was impossible to expect

anything else from a blind and depraved old man.

"I only wonder that the fate of Russia could have been entrusted to such

a man."

As long as this news remained unofficial it was possible to doubt it,

but the next day the following communication was received from Count

Rostopchin:

Prince Kutuzov's adjutant has brought me a letter in which he demands

police officers to guide the army to the Ryazan road. He writes that he

is regretfully abandoning Moscow. Sire! Kutuzov's action decides the

fate of the capital and of your empire! Russia will shudder to learn of

the abandonment of the city in which her greatness is centered and in

which lie the ashes of your ancestors! I shall follow the army. I have

had everything removed, and it only remains for me to weep over the fate

of my fatherland.

On receiving this dispatch the Emperor sent Prince Volkonski to Kutuzov

with the following rescript:

Prince Michael Ilarionovich! Since the twenty-ninth of August I have

received no communication from you, yet on the first of September I

received from the commander-in-chief of Moscow, via Yaroslavl, the sad

news that you, with the army, have decided to abandon Moscow. You can

yourself imagine the effect this news has had on me, and your silence

increases my astonishment. I am sending this by Adjutant-General Prince

Volkonski, to hear from you the situation of the army and the reasons

that have induced you to take this melancholy decision.

CHAPTER III

Nine days after the abandonment of Moscow, a messenger from Kutuzov

reached Petersburg with the official announcement of that event. This

messenger was Michaud, a Frenchman who did not know Russian, but who was

quoique etranger, russe de coeur et d'ame, \* as he said of himself.

\* Though a foreigner, Russian in heart and soul.

The Emperor at once received this messenger in his study at the palace

on Stone Island. Michaud, who had never seen Moscow before the campaign

and who did not know Russian, yet felt deeply moved (as he wrote) when

he appeared before notre tres gracieux souverain \* with the news of the

burning of Moscow, dont les flammes eclairaient sa route. \*(2)

\* Our most gracious sovereign.

\* (2) Whose flames illumined his route.

Though the source of M. Michaud's chagrin must have been different from

that which caused Russians to grieve, he had such a sad face when shown

into the Emperor's study that the latter at once asked:

"Have you brought me sad news, Colonel?"

"Very sad, sire," replied Michaud, lowering his eyes with a sigh. "The

abandonment of Moscow."

"Have they surrendered my ancient capital without a battle?" asked the

Emperor quickly, his face suddenly flushing.

Michaud respectfully delivered the message Kutuzov had entrusted to him,

which was that it had been impossible to fight before Moscow, and that

as the only remaining choice was between losing the army as well as

Moscow, or losing Moscow alone, the field marshal had to choose the

latter.

The Emperor listened in silence, not looking at Michaud.

"Has the enemy entered the city?" he asked.

"Yes, sire, and Moscow is now in ashes. I left it all in flames,"

replied Michaud in a decided tone, but glancing at the Emperor he was

frightened by what he had done.

The Emperor began to breathe heavily and rapidly, his lower lip

trembled, and tears instantly appeared in his fine blue eyes.

But this lasted only a moment. He suddenly frowned, as if blaming

himself for his weakness, and raising his head addressed Michaud in a

firm voice:

"I see, Colonel, from all that is happening, that Providence requires

great sacrifices of us... I am ready to submit myself in all things to

His will; but tell me, Michaud, how did you leave the army when it saw

my ancient capital abandoned without a battle? Did you not notice

discouragement?..."

Seeing that his most gracious ruler was calm once more, Michaud also

grew calm, but was not immediately ready to reply to the Emperor's

direct and relevant question which required a direct answer.

"Sire, will you allow me to speak frankly as befits a loyal soldier?" he

asked to gain time.

"Colonel, I always require it," replied the Emperor. "Conceal nothing

from me, I wish to know absolutely how things are."

"Sire!" said Michaud with a subtle, scarcely perceptible smile on his

lips, having now prepared a well-phrased reply, "sire, I left the whole

army, from its chiefs to the lowest soldier, without exception in

desperate and agonized terror..."

"How is that?" the Emperor interrupted him, frowning sternly. "Would

misfortune make my Russians lose heart?... Never!"

Michaud had only waited for this to bring out the phrase he had

prepared.

"Sire," he said, with respectful playfulness, "they are only afraid lest

Your Majesty, in the goodness of your heart, should allow yourself to be

persuaded to make peace. They are burning for the combat," declared this

representative of the Russian nation, "and to prove to Your Majesty by

the sacrifice of their lives how devoted they are...."

"Ah!" said the Emperor reassured, and with a kindly gleam in his eyes,

he patted Michaud on the shoulder. "You set me at ease, Colonel."

He bent his head and was silent for some time.

"Well, then, go back to the army," he said, drawing himself up to his

full height and addressing Michaud with a gracious and majestic gesture,

"and tell our brave men and all my good subjects wherever you go that

when I have not a soldier left I shall put myself at the head of my

beloved nobility and my good peasants and so use the last resources of

my empire. It still offers me more than my enemies suppose," said the

Emperor growing more and more animated; "but should it ever be ordained

by Divine Providence," he continued, raising to heaven his fine eyes

shining with emotion, "that my dynasty should cease to reign on the

throne of my ancestors, then after exhausting all the means at my

command, I shall let my beard grow to here" (he pointed halfway down his

chest) "and go and eat potatoes with the meanest of my peasants, rather

than sign the disgrace of my country and of my beloved people whose

sacrifices I know how to appreciate."

Having uttered these words in an agitated voice the Emperor suddenly

turned away as if to hide from Michaud the tears that rose to his eyes,

and went to the further end of his study. Having stood there a few

moments, he strode back to Michaud and pressed his arm below the elbow

with a vigorous movement. The Emperor's mild and handsome face was

flushed and his eyes gleamed with resolution and anger.

"Colonel Michaud, do not forget what I say to you here, perhaps we may

recall it with pleasure someday... Napoleon or I," said the Emperor,

touching his breast. "We can no longer both reign together. I have

learned to know him, and he will not deceive me any more...."

And the Emperor paused, with a frown.

When he heard these words and saw the expression of firm resolution in

the Emperor's eyes, Michaud--quoique etranger, russe de coeur et d'ame--

at that solemn moment felt himself enraptured by all that he had heard

(as he used afterwards to say), and gave expression to his own feelings

and those of the Russian people whose representative he considered

himself to be, in the following words:

"Sire!" said he, "Your Majesty is at this moment signing the glory of

the nation and the salvation of Europe!"

With an inclination of the head the Emperor dismissed him.

CHAPTER IV

It is natural for us who were not living in those days to imagine that

when half Russia had been conquered and the inhabitants were fleeing to

distant provinces, and one levy after another was being raised for the

defense of the fatherland, all Russians from the greatest to the least

were solely engaged in sacrificing themselves, saving their fatherland,

or weeping over its downfall. The tales and descriptions of that time

without exception speak only of the self-sacrifice, patriotic devotion,

despair, grief, and the heroism of the Russians. But it was not really

so. It appears so to us because we see only the general historic

interest of that time and do not see all the personal human interests

that people had. Yet in reality those personal interests of the moment

so much transcend the general interests that they always prevent the

public interest from being felt or even noticed. Most of the people at

that time paid no attention to the general progress of events but were

guided only by their private interests, and they were the very people

whose activities at that period were most useful.

Those who tried to understand the general course of events and to take

part in it by self-sacrifice and heroism were the most useless members

of society, they saw everything upside down, and all they did for the

common good turned out to be useless and foolish--like Pierre's and

Mamonov's regiments which looted Russian villages, and the lint the

young ladies prepared and that never reached the wounded, and so on.

Even those, fond of intellectual talk and of expressing their feelings,

who discussed Russia's position at the time involuntarily introduced

into their conversation either a shade of pretense and falsehood or

useless condemnation and anger directed against people accused of

actions no one could possibly be guilty of. In historic events the rule

forbidding us to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge is specially

applicable. Only unconscious action bears fruit, and he who plays a part

in an historic event never understands its significance. If he tries to

realize it his efforts are fruitless.

The more closely a man was engaged in the events then taking place in

Russia the less did he realize their significance. In Petersburg and in

the provinces at a distance from Moscow, ladies, and gentlemen in

militia uniforms, wept for Russia and its ancient capital and talked of

self-sacrifice and so on; but in the army which retired beyond Moscow

there was little talk or thought of Moscow, and when they caught sight

of its burned ruins no one swore to be avenged on the French, but they

thought about their next pay, their next quarters, of Matreshka the

vivandiere, and like matters.

As the war had caught him in the service, Nicholas Rostov took a close

and prolonged part in the defense of his country, but did so casually,

without any aim at self-sacrifice, and he therefore looked at what was

going on in Russia without despair and without dismally racking his

brains over it. Had he been asked what he thought of the state of

Russia, he would have said that it was not his business to think about

it, that Kutuzov and others were there for that purpose, but that he had

heard that the regiments were to be made up to their full strength, that

fighting would probably go on for a long time yet, and that things being

so it was quite likely he might be in command of a regiment in a couple

of years' time.

As he looked at the matter in this way, he learned that he was being

sent to Voronezh to buy remounts for his division, not only without

regret at being prevented from taking part in the coming battle, but

with the greatest pleasure--which he did not conceal and which his

comrades fully understood.

A few days before the battle of Borodino, Nicholas received the

necessary money and warrants, and having sent some hussars on in

advance, he set out with post horses for Voronezh.

Only a man who has experienced it--that is, has passed some months

continuously in an atmosphere of campaigning and war--can understand the

delight Nicholas felt when he escaped from the region covered by the

army's foraging operations, provision trains, and hospitals. When--free

from soldiers, wagons, and the filthy traces of a camp--he saw villages

with peasants and peasant women, gentlemen's country houses, fields

where cattle were grazing, posthouses with stationmasters asleep in

them, he rejoiced as though seeing all this for the first time. What for

a long while specially surprised and delighted him were the women, young

and healthy, without a dozen officers making up to each of them; women,

too, who were pleased and flattered that a passing officer should joke

with them.

In the highest spirits Nicholas arrived at night at a hotel in Voronezh,

ordered things he had long been deprived of in camp, and next day, very

clean-shaven and in a full-dress uniform he had not worn for a long

time, went to present himself to the authorities.

The commander of the militia was a civilian general, an old man who was

evidently pleased with his military designation and rank. He received

Nicholas brusquely (imagining this to be characteristically military)

and questioned him with an important air, as if considering the general

progress of affairs and approving and disapproving with full right to do

so. Nicholas was in such good spirits that this merely amused him.

From the commander of the militia he drove to the governor. The governor

was a brisk little man, very simple and affable. He indicated the stud

farms at which Nicholas might procure horses, recommended to him a horse

dealer in the town and a landowner fourteen miles out of town who had

the best horses, and promised to assist him in every way.

"You are Count Ilya Rostov's son? My wife was a great friend of your

mother's. We are at home on Thursdays--today is Thursday, so please come

and see us quite informally," said the governor, taking leave of him.

Immediately on leaving the governor's, Nicholas hired post horses and,

taking his squadron quartermaster with him, drove at a gallop to the

landowner, fourteen miles away, who had the stud. Everything seemed to

him pleasant and easy during that first part of his stay in Voronezh

and, as usually happens when a man is in a pleasant state of mind,

everything went well and easily.

The landowner to whom Nicholas went was a bachelor, an old cavalryman, a

horse fancier, a sportsman, the possessor of some century-old brandy and

some old Hungarian wine, who had a snuggery where he smoked, and who

owned some splendid horses.

In very few words Nicholas bought seventeen picked stallions for six

thousand rubles--to serve, as he said, as samples of his remounts. After

dining and taking rather too much of the Hungarian wine, Nicholas--

having exchanged kisses with the landowner, with whom he was already on

the friendliest terms--galloped back over abominable roads, in the

brightest frame of mind, continually urging on the driver so as to be in

time for the governor's party.

When he had changed, poured water over his head, and scented himself,

Nicholas arrived at the governor's rather late, but with the phrase

"better late than never" on his lips.

It was not a ball, nor had dancing been announced, but everyone knew

that Catherine Petrovna would play valses and the ecossaise on the

clavichord and that there would be dancing, and so everyone had come as

to a ball.

Provincial life in 1812 went on very much as usual, but with this

difference, that it was livelier in the towns in consequence of the

arrival of many wealthy families from Moscow, and as in everything that

went on in Russia at that time a special recklessness was noticeable, an

"in for a penny, in for a pound--who cares?" spirit, and the inevitable

small talk, instead of turning on the weather and mutual acquaintances,

now turned on Moscow, the army, and Napoleon.

The society gathered together at the governor's was the best in

Voronezh.

There were a great many ladies and some of Nicholas' Moscow

acquaintances, but there were no men who could at all vie with the

cavalier of St. George, the hussar remount officer, the good-natured and

well-bred Count Rostov. Among the men was an Italian prisoner, an

officer of the French army; and Nicholas felt that the presence of that

prisoner enhanced his own importance as a Russian hero. The Italian was,

as it were, a war trophy. Nicholas felt this, it seemed to him that

everyone regarded the Italian in the same light, and he treated him

cordially though with dignity and restraint.

As soon as Nicholas entered in his hussar uniform, diffusing around him

a fragrance of perfume and wine, and had uttered the words "better late

than never" and heard them repeated several times by others, people

clustered around him; all eyes turned on him, and he felt at once that

he had entered into his proper position in the province--that of a

universal favorite: a very pleasant position, and intoxicatingly so

after his long privations. At posting stations, at inns, and in the

landowner's snuggery, maidservants had been flattered by his notice, and

here too at the governor's party there were (as it seemed to Nicholas)

an inexhaustible number of pretty young women, married and unmarried,

impatiently awaiting his notice. The women and girls flirted with him

and, from the first day, the people concerned themselves to get this

fine young daredevil of an hussar married and settled down. Among these

was the governor's wife herself, who welcomed Rostov as a near relative

and called him "Nicholas."

Catherine Petrovna did actually play valses and the ecossaise, and

dancing began in which Nicholas still further captivated the provincial

society by his agility. His particularly free manner of dancing even

surprised them all. Nicholas was himself rather surprised at the way he

danced that evening. He had never danced like that in Moscow and would

even have considered such a very free and easy manner improper and in

bad form, but here he felt it incumbent on him to astonish them all by

something unusual, something they would have to accept as the regular

thing in the capital though new to them in the provinces.

All the evening Nicholas paid attention to a blue-eyed, plump and

pleasing little blonde, the wife of one of the provincial officials.

With the naive conviction of young men in a merry mood that other men's

wives were created for them, Rostov did not leave the lady's side and

treated her husband in a friendly and conspiratorial style, as if,

without speaking of it, they knew how capitally Nicholas and the lady

would get on together. The husband, however, did not seem to share that

conviction and tried to behave morosely with Rostov. But the latter's

good-natured naivete was so boundless that sometimes even he

involuntarily yielded to Nicholas' good humor. Toward the end of the

evening, however, as the wife's face grew more flushed and animated, the

husband's became more and more melancholy and solemn, as though there

were but a given amount of animation between them and as the wife's

share increased the husband's diminished.

CHAPTER V

Nicholas sat leaning slightly forward in an armchair, bending closely

over the blonde lady and paying her mythological compliments with a

smile that never left his face. Jauntily shifting the position of his

legs in their tight riding breeches, diffusing an odor of perfume, and

admiring his partner, himself, and the fine outlines of his legs in

their well-fitting Hessian boots, Nicholas told the blonde lady that he

wished to run away with a certain lady here in Voronezh.

"Which lady?"

"A charming lady, a divine one. Her eyes" (Nicholas looked at his

partner) "are blue, her mouth coral and ivory; her figure" (he glanced

at her shoulders) "like Diana's...."

The husband came up and sullenly asked his wife what she was talking

about.

"Ah, Nikita Ivanych!" cried Nicholas, rising politely, and as if wishing

Nikita Ivanych to share his joke, he began to tell him of his intention

to elope with a blonde lady.

The husband smiled gloomily, the wife gaily. The governor's good-natured

wife came up with a look of disapproval.

"Anna Ignatyevna wants to see you, Nicholas," said she, pronouncing the

name so that Nicholas at once understood that Anna Ignatyevna was a very

important person. "Come, Nicholas! You know you let me call you so?"

"Oh, yes, Aunt. Who is she?"

"Anna Ignatyevna Malvintseva. She has heard from her niece how you

rescued her... Can you guess?"

"I rescued such a lot of them!" said Nicholas.

"Her niece, Princess Bolkonskaya. She is here in Voronezh with her aunt.

Oho! How you blush. Why, are...?"

"Not a bit! Please don't, Aunt!"

"Very well, very well!... Oh, what a fellow you are!"

The governor's wife led him up to a tall and very stout old lady with a

blue headdress, who had just finished her game of cards with the most

important personages of the town. This was Malvintseva, Princess Mary's

aunt on her mother's side, a rich, childless widow who always lived in

Voronezh. When Rostov approached her she was standing settling up for

the game. She looked at him and, screwing up her eyes sternly, continued

to upbraid the general who had won from her.

"Very pleased, mon cher," she then said, holding out her hand to

Nicholas. "Pray come and see me."

After a few words about Princess Mary and her late father, whom

Malvintseva had evidently not liked, and having asked what Nicholas knew

of Prince Andrew, who also was evidently no favorite of hers, the

important old lady dismissed Nicholas after repeating her invitation to

come to see her.

Nicholas promised to come and blushed again as he bowed. At the mention

of Princess Mary he experienced a feeling of shyness and even of fear,

which he himself did not understand.

When he had parted from Malvintseva Nicholas wished to return to the

dancing, but the governor's little wife placed her plump hand on his

sleeve and, saying that she wanted to have a talk with him, led him to

her sitting room, from which those who were there immediately withdrew

so as not to be in her way.

"Do you know, dear boy," began the governor's wife with a serious

expression on her kind little face, "that really would be the match for

you: would you like me to arrange it?"

"Whom do you mean, Aunt?" asked Nicholas.

"I will make a match for you with the princess. Catherine Petrovna

speaks of Lily, but I say, no--the princess! Do you want me to do it? I

am sure your mother will be grateful to me. What a charming girl she is,

really! And she is not at all so plain, either."

"Not at all," replied Nicholas as if offended at the idea. "As befits a

soldier, Aunt, I don't force myself on anyone or refuse anything," he

said before he had time to consider what he was saying.

"Well then, remember, this is not a joke!"

"Of course not!"

"Yes, yes," the governor's wife said as if talking to herself. "But, my

dear boy, among other things you are too attentive to the other, the

blonde. One is sorry for the husband, really...."

"Oh no, we are good friends with him," said Nicholas in the simplicity

of his heart; it did not enter his head that a pastime so pleasant to

himself might not be pleasant to someone else.

"But what nonsense I have been saying to the governor's wife!" thought

Nicholas suddenly at supper. "She will really begin to arrange a

match... and Sonya...?" And on taking leave of the governor's wife, when

she again smilingly said to him, "Well then, remember!" he drew her

aside.

"But see here, to tell the truth, Aunt..."

"What is it, my dear? Come, let's sit down here," said she.

Nicholas suddenly felt a desire and need to tell his most intimate

thoughts (which he would not have told to his mother, his sister, or his

friend) to this woman who was almost a stranger. When he afterwards

recalled that impulse to unsolicited and inexplicable frankness which

had very important results for him, it seemed to him--as it seems to

everyone in such cases--that it was merely some silly whim that seized

him: yet that burst of frankness, together with other trifling events,

had immense consequences for him and for all his family.

"You see, Aunt, Mamma has long wanted me to marry an heiress, but the

very idea of marrying for money is repugnant to me."

"Oh yes, I understand," said the governor's wife.

"But Princess Bolkonskaya--that's another matter. I will tell you the

truth. In the first place I like her very much, I feel drawn to her; and

then, after I met her under such circumstances--so strangely, the idea

often occurred to me: 'This is fate.' Especially if you remember that

Mamma had long been thinking of it; but I had never happened to meet her

before, somehow it had always happened that we did not meet. And as long

as my sister Natasha was engaged to her brother it was of course out of

the question for me to think of marrying her. And it must needs happen

that I should meet her just when Natasha's engagement had been broken

off... and then everything... So you see... I never told this to anyone

and never will, only to you."

The governor's wife pressed his elbow gratefully.

"You know Sonya, my cousin? I love her, and promised to marry her, and

will do so.... So you see there can be no question about-" said Nicholas

incoherently and blushing.

"My dear boy, what a way to look at it! You know Sonya has nothing and

you yourself say your Papa's affairs are in a very bad way. And what

about your mother? It would kill her, that's one thing. And what sort of

life would it be for Sonya--if she's a girl with a heart? Your mother in

despair, and you all ruined.... No, my dear, you and Sonya ought to

understand that."

Nicholas remained silent. It comforted him to hear these arguments.

"All the same, Aunt, it is impossible," he rejoined with a sigh, after a

short pause. "Besides, would the princess have me? And besides, she is

now in mourning. How can one think of it!"

"But you don't suppose I'm going to get you married at once? There is

always a right way of doing things," replied the governor's wife.

"What a matchmaker you are, Aunt..." said Nicholas, kissing her plump

little hand.

CHAPTER VI

On reaching Moscow after her meeting with Rostov, Princess Mary had

found her nephew there with his tutor, and a letter from Prince Andrew

giving her instructions how to get to her Aunt Malvintseva at Voronezh.

That feeling akin to temptation which had tormented her during her

father's illness, since his death, and especially since her meeting with

Rostov was smothered by arrangements for the journey, anxiety about her

brother, settling in a new house, meeting new people, and attending to

her nephew's education. She was sad. Now, after a month passed in quiet

surroundings, she felt more and more deeply the loss of her father which

was associated in her mind with the ruin of Russia. She was agitated and

incessantly tortured by the thought of the dangers to which her brother,

the only intimate person now remaining to her, was exposed. She was

worried too about her nephew's education for which she had always felt

herself incompetent, but in the depths of her soul she felt at peace--a

peace arising from consciousness of having stifled those personal dreams

and hopes that had been on the point of awakening within her and were

related to her meeting with Rostov.

The day after her party the governor's wife came to see Malvintseva and,

after discussing her plan with the aunt, remarked that though under

present circumstances a formal betrothal was, of course, not to be

thought of, all the same the young people might be brought together and

could get to know one another. Malvintseva expressed approval, and the

governor's wife began to speak of Rostov in Mary's presence, praising

him and telling how he had blushed when Princess Mary's name was

mentioned. But Princess Mary experienced a painful rather than a joyful

feeling--her mental tranquillity was destroyed, and desires, doubts,

self-reproach, and hopes reawoke.

During the two days that elapsed before Rostov called, Princess Mary

continually thought of how she ought to behave to him. First she decided

not to come to the drawing room when he called to see her aunt--that it

would not be proper for her, in her deep mourning, to receive visitors;

then she thought this would be rude after what he had done for her; then

it occurred to her that her aunt and the governor's wife had intentions

concerning herself and Rostov--their looks and words at times seemed to

confirm this supposition--then she told herself that only she, with her

sinful nature, could think this of them: they could not forget that

situated as she was, while still wearing deep mourning, such matchmaking

would be an insult to her and to her father's memory. Assuming that she

did go down to see him, Princess Mary imagined the words he would say to

her and what she would say to him, and these words sometimes seemed

undeservedly cold and then to mean too much. More than anything she

feared lest the confusion she felt might overwhelm her and betray her as

soon as she saw him.

But when on Sunday after church the footman announced in the drawing

room that Count Rostov had called, the princess showed no confusion,

only a slight blush suffused her cheeks and her eyes lit up with a new

and radiant light.

"You have met him, Aunt?" said she in a calm voice, unable herself to

understand that she could be outwardly so calm and natural.

When Rostov entered the room, the princess dropped her eyes for an

instant, as if to give the visitor time to greet her aunt, and then just

as Nicholas turned to her she raised her head and met his look with

shining eyes. With a movement full of dignity and grace she half rose

with a smile of pleasure, held out her slender, delicate hand to him,

and began to speak in a voice in which for the first time new deep

womanly notes vibrated. Mademoiselle Bourienne, who was in the drawing

room, looked at Princess Mary in bewildered surprise. Herself a

consummate coquette, she could not have maneuvered better on meeting a

man she wished to attract.

"Either black is particularly becoming to her or she really has greatly

improved without my having noticed it. And above all, what tact and

grace!" thought Mademoiselle Bourienne.

Had Princess Mary been capable of reflection at that moment, she would

have been more surprised than Mademoiselle Bourienne at the change that

had taken place in herself. From the moment she recognized that dear,

loved face, a new life force took possession of her and compelled her to

speak and act apart from her own will. From the time Rostov entered, her

face became suddenly transformed. It was as if a light had been kindled

in a carved and painted lantern and the intricate, skillful, artistic

work on its sides, that previously seemed dark, coarse, and meaningless,

was suddenly shown up in unexpected and striking beauty. For the first

time all that pure, spiritual, inward travail through which she had

lived appeared on the surface. All her inward labor, her dissatisfaction

with herself, her sufferings, her strivings after goodness, her

meekness, love, and self-sacrifice--all this now shone in those radiant

eyes, in her delicate smile, and in every trait of her gentle face.

Rostov saw all this as clearly as if he had known her whole life. He

felt that the being before him was quite different from, and better

than, anyone he had met before, and above all better than himself.

Their conversation was very simple and unimportant. They spoke of the

war, and like everyone else unconsciously exaggerated their sorrow about

it; they spoke of their last meeting--Nicholas trying to change the

subject--they talked of the governor's kind wife, of Nicholas'

relations, and of Princess Mary's.

She did not talk about her brother, diverting the conversation as soon

as her aunt mentioned Andrew. Evidently she could speak of Russia's

misfortunes with a certain artificiality, but her brother was too near

her heart and she neither could nor would speak lightly of him. Nicholas

noticed this, as he noticed every shade of Princess Mary's character

with an observation unusual to him, and everything confirmed his

conviction that she was a quite unusual and extraordinary being.

Nicholas blushed and was confused when people spoke to him about the

princess (as she did when he was mentioned) and even when he thought of

her, but in her presence he felt quite at ease, and said not at all what

he had prepared, but what, quite appropriately, occurred to him at the

moment.

When a pause occurred during his short visit, Nicholas, as is usual when

there are children, turned to Prince Andrew's little son, caressing him

and asking whether he would like to be an hussar. He took the boy on his

knee, played with him, and looked round at Princess Mary. With a

softened, happy, timid look she watched the boy she loved in the arms of

the man she loved. Nicholas also noticed that look and, as if

understanding it, flushed with pleasure and began to kiss the boy with

good natured playfulness.

As she was in mourning Princess Mary did not go out into society, and

Nicholas did not think it the proper thing to visit her again; but all

the same the governor's wife went on with her matchmaking, passing on to

Nicholas the flattering things Princess Mary said of him and vice versa,

and insisting on his declaring himself to Princess Mary. For this

purpose she arranged a meeting between the young people at the bishop's

house before Mass.

Though Rostov told the governor's wife that he would not make any

declaration to Princess Mary, he promised to go.

As at Tilsit Rostov had not allowed himself to doubt that what everybody

considered right was right, so now, after a short but sincere struggle

between his effort to arrange his life by his own sense of justice, and

in obedient submission to circumstances, he chose the latter and yielded

to the power he felt irresistibly carrying him he knew not where. He

knew that after his promise to Sonya it would be what he deemed base to

declare his feelings to Princess Mary. And he knew that he would never

act basely. But he also knew (or rather felt at the bottom of his heart)

that by resigning himself now to the force of circumstances and to those

who were guiding him, he was not only doing nothing wrong, but was doing

something very important--more important than anything he had ever done

in his life.

After meeting Princess Mary, though the course of his life went on

externally as before, all his former amusements lost their charm for him

and he often thought about her. But he never thought about her as he had

thought of all the young ladies without exception whom he had met in

society, nor as he had for a long time, and at one time rapturously,

thought about Sonya. He had pictured each of those young ladies as

almost all honest-hearted young men do, that is, as a possible wife,

adapting her in his imagination to all the conditions of married life: a

white dressing gown, his wife at the tea table, his wife's carriage,

little ones, Mamma and Papa, their relations to her, and so on--and

these pictures of the future had given him pleasure. But with Princess

Mary, to whom they were trying to get him engaged, he could never

picture anything of future married life. If he tried, his pictures

seemed incongruous and false. It made him afraid.

CHAPTER VII

The dreadful news of the battle of Borodino, of our losses in killed and

wounded, and the still more terrible news of the loss of Moscow reached

Voronezh in the middle of September. Princess Mary, having learned of

her brother's wound only from the Gazette and having no definite news of

him, prepared (so Nicholas heard, he had not seen her again himself) to

set off in search of Prince Andrew.

When he received the news of the battle of Borodino and the abandonment

of Moscow, Rostov was not seized with despair, anger, the desire for

vengeance, or any feeling of that kind, but everything in Voronezh

suddenly seemed to him dull and tiresome, and he experienced an

indefinite feeling of shame and awkwardness. The conversations he heard

seemed to him insincere; he did not know how to judge all these affairs

and felt that only in the regiment would everything again become clear

to him. He made haste to finish buying the horses, and often became

unreasonably angry with his servant and squadron quartermaster.

A few days before his departure a special thanksgiving, at which

Nicholas was present, was held in the cathedral for the Russian victory.

He stood a little behind the governor and held himself with military

decorum through the service, meditating on a great variety of subjects.

When the service was over the governor's wife beckoned him to her.

"Have you seen the princess?" she asked, indicating with a movement of

her head a lady standing on the opposite side, beyond the choir.

Nicholas immediately recognized Princess Mary not so much by the profile

he saw under her bonnet as by the feeling of solicitude, timidity, and

pity that immediately overcame him. Princess Mary, evidently engrossed

by her thoughts, was crossing herself for the last time before leaving

the church.

Nicholas looked at her face with surprise. It was the same face he had

seen before, there was the same general expression of refined, inner,

spiritual labor, but now it was quite differently lit up. There was a

pathetic expression of sorrow, prayer, and hope in it. As had occurred

before when she was present, Nicholas went up to her without waiting to

be prompted by the governor's wife and not asking himself whether or not

it was right and proper to address her here in church, and told her he

had heard of her trouble and sympathized with his whole soul. As soon as

she heard his voice a vivid glow kindled in her face, lighting up both

her sorrow and her joy.

"There is one thing I wanted to tell you, Princess," said Rostov. "It is

that if your brother, Prince Andrew Nikolievich, were not living, it

would have been at once announced in the Gazette, as he is a colonel."

The princess looked at him, not grasping what he was saying, but cheered

by the expression of regretful sympathy on his face.

"And I have known so many cases of a splinter wound" (the Gazette said

it was a shell) "either proving fatal at once or being very slight,"

continued Nicholas. "We must hope for the best, and I am sure..."

Princess Mary interrupted him.

"Oh, that would be so dread..." she began and, prevented by agitation

from finishing, she bent her head with a movement as graceful as

everything she did in his presence and, looking up at him gratefully,

went out, following her aunt.

That evening Nicholas did not go out, but stayed at home to settle some

accounts with the horse dealers. When he had finished that business it

was already too late to go anywhere but still too early to go to bed,

and for a long time he paced up and down the room, reflecting on his

life, a thing he rarely did.

Princess Mary had made an agreeable impression on him when he had met

her in Smolensk province. His having encountered her in such exceptional

circumstances, and his mother having at one time mentioned her to him as

a good match, had drawn his particular attention to her. When he met her

again in Voronezh the impression she made on him was not merely pleasing

but powerful. Nicholas had been struck by the peculiar moral beauty he

observed in her at this time. He was, however, preparing to go away and

it had not entered his head to regret that he was thus depriving himself

of chances of meeting her. But that day's encounter in church had, he

felt, sunk deeper than was desirable for his peace of mind. That pale,

sad, refined face, that radiant look, those gentle graceful gestures,

and especially the deep and tender sorrow expressed in all her features

agitated him and evoked his sympathy. In men Rostov could not bear to

see the expression of a higher spiritual life (that was why he did not

like Prince Andrew) and he referred to it contemptuously as philosophy

and dreaminess, but in Princess Mary that very sorrow which revealed the

depth of a whole spiritual world foreign to him was an irresistible

attraction.

"She must be a wonderful woman. A real angel!" he said to himself. "Why

am I not free? Why was I in such a hurry with Sonya?" And he

involuntarily compared the two: the lack of spirituality in the one and

the abundance of it in the other--a spirituality he himself lacked and

therefore valued most highly. He tried to picture what would happen were

he free. How he would propose to her and how she would become his wife.

But no, he could not imagine that. He felt awed, and no clear picture

presented itself to his mind. He had long ago pictured to himself a

future with Sonya, and that was all clear and simple just because it had

all been thought out and he knew all there was in Sonya, but it was

impossible to picture a future with Princess Mary, because he did not

understand her but simply loved her.

Reveries about Sonya had had something merry and playful in them, but to

dream of Princess Mary was always difficult and a little frightening.

"How she prayed!" he thought. "It was plain that her whole soul was in

her prayer. Yes, that was the prayer that moves mountains, and I am sure

her prayer will be answered. Why don't I pray for what I want?" he

suddenly thought. "What do I want? To be free, released from Sonya...

She was right," he thought, remembering what the governor's wife had

said: "Nothing but misfortune can come of marrying Sonya. Muddles, grief

for Mamma... business difficulties... muddles, terrible muddles!

Besides, I don't love her--not as I should. O, God! release me from this

dreadful, inextricable position!" he suddenly began to pray. "Yes,

prayer can move mountains, but one must have faith and not pray as

Natasha and I used to as children, that the snow might turn into sugar--

and then run out into the yard to see whether it had done so. No, but I

am not praying for trifles now," he thought as he put his pipe down in a

corner, and folding his hands placed himself before the icon. Softened

by memories of Princess Mary he began to pray as he had not done for a

long time. Tears were in his eyes and in his throat when the door opened

and Lavrushka came in with some papers.

"Blockhead! Why do you come in without being called?" cried Nicholas,

quickly changing his attitude.

"From the governor," said Lavrushka in a sleepy voice. "A courier has

arrived and there's a letter for you."

"Well, all right, thanks. You can go!"

Nicholas took the two letters, one of which was from his mother and the

other from Sonya. He recognized them by the handwriting and opened

Sonya's first. He had read only a few lines when he turned pale and his

eyes opened wide with fear and joy.

"No, it's not possible!" he cried aloud.

Unable to sit still he paced up and down the room holding the letter and

reading it. He glanced through it, then read it again, and then again,

and standing still in the middle of the room he raised his shoulders,

stretching out his hands, with his mouth wide open and his eyes fixed.

What he had just been praying for with confidence that God would hear

him had come to pass; but Nicholas was as much astonished as if it were

something extraordinary and unexpected, and as if the very fact that it

had happened so quickly proved that it had not come from God to whom he

had prayed, but by some ordinary coincidence.

This unexpected and, as it seemed to Nicholas, quite voluntary letter

from Sonya freed him from the knot that fettered him and from which

there had seemed no escape. She wrote that the last unfortunate events--

the loss of almost the whole of the Rostovs' Moscow property--and the

countess' repeatedly expressed wish that Nicholas should marry Princess

Bolkonskaya, together with his silence and coldness of late, had all

combined to make her decide to release him from his promise and set him

completely free.

It would be too painful to me to think that I might be a cause of sorrow

or discord in the family that has been so good to me (she wrote), and my

love has no aim but the happiness of those I love; so, Nicholas, I beg

you to consider yourself free, and to be assured that, in spite of

everything, no one can love you more than does

Your Sonya

Both letters were written from Troitsa. The other, from the countess,

described their last days in Moscow, their departure, the fire, and the

destruction of all their property. In this letter the countess also

mentioned that Prince Andrew was among the wounded traveling with them;

his state was very critical, but the doctor said there was now more

hope. Sonya and Natasha were nursing him.

Next day Nicholas took his mother's letter and went to see Princess

Mary. Neither he nor she said a word about what "Natasha nursing him"

might mean, but thanks to this letter Nicholas suddenly became almost as

intimate with the princess as if they were relations.

The following day he saw Princess Mary off on her journey to Yaroslavl,

and a few days later left to rejoin his regiment.

CHAPTER VIII

Sonya's letter written from Troitsa, which had come as an answer to

Nicholas' prayer, was prompted by this: the thought of getting Nicholas

married to an heiress occupied the old countess' mind more and more. She

knew that Sonya was the chief obstacle to this happening, and Sonya's

life in the countess' house had grown harder and harder, especially

after they had received a letter from Nicholas telling of his meeting

with Princess Mary in Bogucharovo. The countess let no occasion slip of

making humiliating or cruel allusions to Sonya.

But a few days before they left Moscow, moved and excited by all that

was going on, she called Sonya to her and, instead of reproaching and

making demands on her, tearfully implored her to sacrifice herself and

repay all that the family had done for her by breaking off her

engagement with Nicholas.

"I shall not be at peace till you promise me this."

Sonya burst into hysterical tears and replied through her sobs that she

would do anything and was prepared for anything, but gave no actual

promise and could not bring herself to decide to do what was demanded of

her. She must sacrifice herself for the family that had reared and

brought her up. To sacrifice herself for others was Sonya's habit. Her

position in the house was such that only by sacrifice could she show her

worth, and she was accustomed to this and loved doing it. But in all her

former acts of self-sacrifice she had been happily conscious that they

raised her in her own esteem and in that of others, and so made her more

worthy of Nicholas whom she loved more than anything in the world. But

now they wanted her to sacrifice the very thing that constituted the

whole reward for her self-sacrifice and the whole meaning of her life.

And for the first time she felt bitterness against those who had been

her benefactors only to torture her the more painfully; she felt jealous

of Natasha who had never experienced anything of this sort, had never

needed to sacrifice herself, but made others sacrifice themselves for

her and yet was beloved by everybody. And for the first time Sonya felt

that out of her pure, quiet love for Nicholas a passionate feeling was

beginning to grow up which was stronger than principle, virtue, or

religion. Under the influence of this feeling Sonya, whose life of

dependence had taught her involuntarily to be secretive, having answered

the countess in vague general terms, avoided talking with her and

resolved to wait till she should see Nicholas, not in order to set him

free but on the contrary at that meeting to bind him to her forever.

The bustle and terror of the Rostovs' last days in Moscow stifled the

gloomy thoughts that oppressed Sonya. She was glad to find escape from

them in practical activity. But when she heard of Prince Andrew's

presence in their house, despite her sincere pity for him and for

Natasha, she was seized by a joyful and superstitious feeling that God

did not intend her to be separated from Nicholas. She knew that Natasha

loved no one but Prince Andrew and had never ceased to love him. She

knew that being thrown together again under such terrible circumstances

they would again fall in love with one another, and that Nicholas would

then not be able to marry Princess Mary as they would be within the

prohibited degrees of affinity. Despite all the terror of what had

happened during those last days and during the first days of their

journey, this feeling that Providence was intervening in her personal

affairs cheered Sonya.

At the Troitsa monastery the Rostovs first broke their journey for a

whole day.

Three large rooms were assigned to them in the monastery hostelry, one

of which was occupied by Prince Andrew. The wounded man was much better

that day and Natasha was sitting with him. In the next room sat the

count and countess respectfully conversing with the prior, who was

calling on them as old acquaintances and benefactors of the monastery.

Sonya was there too, tormented by curiosity as to what Prince Andrew and

Natasha were talking about. She heard the sound of their voices through

the door. That door opened and Natasha came out, looking excited. Not

noticing the monk, who had risen to greet her and was drawing back the

wide sleeve on his right arm, she went up to Sonya and took her hand.

"Natasha, what are you about? Come here!" said the countess.

Natasha went up to the monk for his blessing, and he advised her to pray

for aid to God and His saint.

As soon as the prior withdrew, Natasha took her friend by the hand and

went with her into the unoccupied room.

"Sonya, will he live?" she asked. "Sonya, how happy I am, and how

unhappy!... Sonya, dovey, everything is as it used to be. If only he

lives! He cannot... because... because... of" and Natasha burst into

tears.

"Yes! I knew it! Thank God!" murmured Sonya. "He will live."

Sonya was not less agitated than her friend by the latter's fear and

grief and by her own personal feelings which she shared with no one.

Sobbing, she kissed and comforted Natasha. "If only he lives!" she

thought. Having wept, talked, and wiped away their tears, the two

friends went together to Prince Andrew's door. Natasha opened it

cautiously and glanced into the room, Sonya standing beside her at the

half-open door.

Prince Andrew was lying raised high on three pillows. His pale face was

calm, his eyes closed, and they could see his regular breathing.

"O, Natasha!" Sonya suddenly almost screamed, catching her companion's

arm and stepping back from the door.

"What? What is it?" asked Natasha.

"It's that, that..." said Sonya, with a white face and trembling lips.

Natasha softly closed the door and went with Sonya to the window, not

yet understanding what the latter was telling her.

"You remember," said Sonya with a solemn and frightened expression. "You

remember when I looked in the mirror for you... at Otradnoe at

Christmas? Do you remember what I saw?"

"Yes, yes!" cried Natasha opening her eyes wide, and vaguely recalling

that Sonya had told her something about Prince Andrew whom she had seen

lying down.

"You remember?" Sonya went on. "I saw it then and told everybody, you

and Dunyasha. I saw him lying on a bed," said she, making a gesture with

her hand and a lifted finger at each detail, "and that he had his eyes

closed and was covered just with a pink quilt, and that his hands were

folded," she concluded, convincing herself that the details she had just

seen were exactly what she had seen in the mirror.

She had in fact seen nothing then but had mentioned the first thing that

came into her head, but what she had invented then seemed to her now as

real as any other recollection. She not only remembered what she had

then said--that he turned to look at her and smiled and was covered with

something red--but was firmly convinced that she had then seen and said

that he was covered with a pink quilt and that his eyes were closed.

"Yes, yes, it really was pink!" cried Natasha, who now thought she too

remembered the word pink being used, and saw in this the most

extraordinary and mysterious part of the prediction.

"But what does it mean?" she added meditatively.

"Oh, I don't know, it is all so strange," replied Sonya, clutching at

her head.

A few minutes later Prince Andrew rang and Natasha went to him, but

Sonya, feeling unusually excited and touched, remained at the window

thinking about the strangeness of what had occurred.

They had an opportunity that day to send letters to the army, and the

countess was writing to her son.

"Sonya!" said the countess, raising her eyes from her letter as her

niece passed, "Sonya, won't you write to Nicholas?" She spoke in a soft,

tremulous voice, and in the weary eyes that looked over her spectacles

Sonya read all that the countess meant to convey with these words. Those

eyes expressed entreaty, shame at having to ask, fear of a refusal, and

readiness for relentless hatred in case of such refusal.

Sonya went up to the countess and, kneeling down, kissed her hand.

"Yes, Mamma, I will write," said she.

Sonya was softened, excited, and touched by all that had occurred that

day, especially by the mysterious fulfillment she had just seen of her

vision. Now that she knew that the renewal of Natasha's relations with

Prince Andrew would prevent Nicholas from marrying Princess Mary, she

was joyfully conscious of a return of that self-sacrificing spirit in

which she was accustomed to live and loved to live. So with a joyful

consciousness of performing a magnanimous deed--interrupted several

times by the tears that dimmed her velvety black eyes--she wrote that

touching letter the arrival of which had so amazed Nicholas.

CHAPTER IX

The officer and soldiers who had arrested Pierre treated him with

hostility but yet with respect, in the guardhouse to which he was taken.

In their attitude toward him could still be felt both uncertainty as to

who he might be--perhaps a very important person--and hostility as a

result of their recent personal conflict with him.

But when the guard was relieved next morning, Pierre felt that for the

new guard--both officers and men--he was not as interesting as he had

been to his captors; and in fact the guard of the second day did not

recognize in this big, stout man in a peasant coat the vigorous person

who had fought so desperately with the marauder and the convoy and had

uttered those solemn words about saving a child; they saw in him only

No. 17 of the captured Russians, arrested and detained for some reason

by order of the Higher Command. If they noticed anything remarkable

about Pierre, it was only his unabashed, meditative concentration and

thoughtfulness, and the way he spoke French, which struck them as

surprisingly good. In spite of this he was placed that day with the

other arrested suspects, as the separate room he had occupied was

required by an officer.

All the Russians confined with Pierre were men of the lowest class and,

recognizing him as a gentleman, they all avoided him, more especially as

he spoke French. Pierre felt sad at hearing them making fun of him.

That evening he learned that all these prisoners (he, probably, among

them) were to be tried for incendiarism. On the third day he was taken

with the others to a house where a French general with a white mustache

sat with two colonels and other Frenchmen with scarves on their arms.

With the precision and definiteness customary in addressing prisoners,

and which is supposed to preclude human frailty, Pierre like the others

was questioned as to who he was, where he had been, with what object,

and so on.

These questions, like questions put at trials generally, left the

essence of the matter aside, shut out the possibility of that essence's

being revealed, and were designed only to form a channel through which

the judges wished the answers of the accused to flow so as to lead to

the desired result, namely a conviction. As soon as Pierre began to say

anything that did not fit in with that aim, the channel was removed and

the water could flow to waste. Pierre felt, moreover, what the accused

always feel at their trial, perplexity as to why these questions were

put to him. He had a feeling that it was only out of condescension or a

kind of civility that this device of placing a channel was employed. He

knew he was in these men's power, that only by force had they brought

him there, that force alone gave them the right to demand answers to

their questions, and that the sole object of that assembly was to

inculpate him. And so, as they had the power and wish to inculpate him,

this expedient of an inquiry and trial seemed unnecessary. It was

evident that any answer would lead to conviction. When asked what he was

doing when he was arrested, Pierre replied in a rather tragic manner

that he was restoring to its parents a child he had saved from the

flames. Why had he fought the marauder? Pierre answered that he "was

protecting a woman," and that "to protect a woman who was being insulted

was the duty of every man; that..." They interrupted him, for this was

not to the point. Why was he in the yard of a burning house where

witnesses had seen him? He replied that he had gone out to see what was

happening in Moscow. Again they interrupted him: they had not asked

where he was going, but why he was found near the fire? Who was he? they

asked, repeating their first question, which he had declined to answer.

Again he replied that he could not answer it.

"Put that down, that's bad... very bad," sternly remarked the general

with the white mustache and red flushed face.

On the fourth day fires broke out on the Zubovski rampart.

Pierre and thirteen others were moved to the coach house of a merchant's

house near the Crimean bridge. On his way through the streets Pierre

felt stifled by the smoke which seemed to hang over the whole city.

Fires were visible on all sides. He did not then realize the

significance of the burning of Moscow, and looked at the fires with

horror.

He passed four days in the coach house near the Crimean bridge and

during that time learned, from the talk of the French soldiers, that all

those confined there were awaiting a decision which might come any day

from the marshal. What marshal this was, Pierre could not learn from the

soldiers. Evidently for them "the marshal" represented a very high and

rather mysterious power.

These first days, before the eighth of September when the prisoners were

had up for a second examination, were the hardest of all for Pierre.

CHAPTER X

On the eighth of September an officer--a very important one judging by

the respect the guards showed him--entered the coach house where the

prisoners were. This officer, probably someone on the staff, was holding

a paper in his hand, and called over all the Russians there, naming

Pierre as "the man who does not give his name." Glancing indolently and

indifferently at all the prisoners, he ordered the officer in charge to

have them decently dressed and tidied up before taking them to the

marshal. An hour later a squad of soldiers arrived and Pierre with

thirteen others was led to the Virgin's Field. It was a fine day, sunny

after rain, and the air was unusually pure. The smoke did not hang low

as on the day when Pierre had been taken from the guardhouse on the

Zubovski rampart, but rose through the pure air in columns. No flames

were seen, but columns of smoke rose on all sides, and all Moscow as far

as Pierre could see was one vast charred ruin. On all sides there were

waste spaces with only stoves and chimney stacks still standing, and

here and there the blackened walls of some brick houses. Pierre gazed at

the ruins and did not recognize districts he had known well. Here and

there he could see churches that had not been burned. The Kremlin, which

was not destroyed, gleamed white in the distance with its towers and the

belfry of Ivan the Great. The domes of the New Convent of the Virgin

glittered brightly and its bells were ringing particularly clearly.

These bells reminded Pierre that it was Sunday and the feast of the

Nativity of the Virgin. But there seemed to be no one to celebrate this

holiday: everywhere were blackened ruins, and the few Russians to be

seen were tattered and frightened people who tried to hide when they saw

the French.

It was plain that the Russian nest was ruined and destroyed, but in

place of the Russian order of life that had been destroyed, Pierre

unconsciously felt that a quite different, firm, French order had been

established over this ruined nest. He felt this in the looks of the

soldiers who, marching in regular ranks briskly and gaily, were

escorting him and the other criminals; he felt it in the looks of an

important French official in a carriage and pair driven by a soldier,

whom they met on the way. He felt it in the merry sounds of regimental

music he heard from the left side of the field, and felt and realized it

especially from the list of prisoners the French officer had read out

when he came that morning. Pierre had been taken by one set of soldiers

and led first to one and then to another place with dozens of other men,

and it seemed that they might have forgotten him, or confused him with

the others. But no: the answers he had given when questioned had come

back to him in his designation as "the man who does not give his name,"

and under that appellation, which to Pierre seemed terrible, they were

now leading him somewhere with unhesitating assurance on their faces

that he and all the other prisoners were exactly the ones they wanted

and that they were being taken to the proper place. Pierre felt himself

to be an insignificant chip fallen among the wheels of a machine whose

action he did not understand but which was working well.

He and the other prisoners were taken to the right side of the Virgin's

Field, to a large white house with an immense garden not far from the

convent. This was Prince Shcherbitov's house, where Pierre had often

been in other days, and which, as he learned from the talk of the

soldiers, was now occupied by the marshal, the Duke of Eckmuhl (Davout).

They were taken to the entrance and led into the house one by one.

Pierre was the sixth to enter. He was conducted through a glass gallery,

an anteroom, and a hall, which were familiar to him, into a long low

study at the door of which stood an adjutant.

Davout, spectacles on nose, sat bent over a table at the further end of

the room. Pierre went close up to him, but Davout, evidently consulting

a paper that lay before him, did not look up. Without raising his eyes,

he said in a low voice:

"Who are you?"

Pierre was silent because he was incapable of uttering a word. To him

Davout was not merely a French general, but a man notorious for his

cruelty. Looking at his cold face, as he sat like a stern schoolmaster

who was prepared to wait awhile for an answer, Pierre felt that every

instant of delay might cost him his life; but he did not know what to

say. He did not venture to repeat what he had said at his first

examination, yet to disclose his rank and position was dangerous and

embarrassing. So he was silent. But before he had decided what to do,

Davout raised his head, pushed his spectacles back on his forehead,

screwed up his eyes, and looked intently at him.

"I know that man," he said in a cold, measured tone, evidently

calculated to frighten Pierre.

The chill that had been running down Pierre's back now seized his head

as in a vise.

"You cannot know me, General, I have never seen you..."

"He is a Russian spy," Davout interrupted, addressing another general

who was present, but whom Pierre had not noticed.

Davout turned away. With an unexpected reverberation in his voice Pierre

rapidly began:

"No, monseigneur," he said, suddenly remembering that Davout was a duke.

"No, monseigneur, you cannot have known me. I am a militia officer and

have not quitted Moscow."

"Your name?" asked Davout.

"Bezukhov."

"What proof have I that you are not lying?"

"Monseigneur!" exclaimed Pierre, not in an offended but in a pleading

voice.

Davout looked up and gazed intently at him. For some seconds they looked

at one another, and that look saved Pierre. Apart from conditions of war

and law, that look established human relations between the two men. At

that moment an immense number of things passed dimly through both their

minds, and they realized that they were both children of humanity and

were brothers.

At the first glance, when Davout had only raised his head from the

papers where human affairs and lives were indicated by numbers, Pierre

was merely a circumstance, and Davout could have shot him without

burdening his conscience with an evil deed, but now he saw in him a

human being. He reflected for a moment.

"How can you show me that you are telling the truth?" said Davout

coldly.

Pierre remembered Ramballe, and named him and his regiment and the

street where the house was.

"You are not what you say," returned Davout.

In a trembling, faltering voice Pierre began adducing proofs of the

truth of his statements.

But at that moment an adjutant entered and reported something to Davout.

Davout brightened up at the news the adjutant brought, and began

buttoning up his uniform. It seemed that he had quite forgotten Pierre.

When the adjutant reminded him of the prisoner, he jerked his head in

Pierre's direction with a frown and ordered him to be led away. But

where they were to take him Pierre did not know: back to the coach house

or to the place of execution his companions had pointed out to him as

they crossed the Virgin's Field.

He turned his head and saw that the adjutant was putting another

question to Davout.

"Yes, of course!" replied Davout, but what this "yes" meant, Pierre did

not know.

Pierre could not afterwards remember how he went, whether it was far, or

in which direction. His faculties were quite numbed, he was stupefied,

and noticing nothing around him went on moving his legs as the others

did till they all stopped and he stopped too. The only thought in his

mind at that time was: who was it that had really sentenced him to

death? Not the men on the commission that had first examined him--not

one of them wished to or, evidently, could have done it. It was not

Davout, who had looked at him in so human a way. In another moment

Davout would have realized that he was doing wrong, but just then the

adjutant had come in and interrupted him. The adjutant, also, had

evidently had no evil intent though he might have refrained from coming

in. Then who was executing him, killing him, depriving him of life--him,

Pierre, with all his memories, aspirations, hopes, and thoughts? Who was

doing this? And Pierre felt that it was no one.

It was a system--a concurrence of circumstances.

A system of some sort was killing him--Pierre--depriving him of life, of

everything, annihilating him.

CHAPTER XI

From Prince Shcherbatov's house the prisoners were led straight down the

Virgin's Field, to the left of the nunnery, as far as a kitchen garden

in which a post had been set up. Beyond that post a fresh pit had been

dug in the ground, and near the post and the pit a large crowd stood in

a semicircle. The crowd consisted of a few Russians and many of

Napoleon's soldiers who were not on duty--Germans, Italians, and

Frenchmen, in a variety of uniforms. To the right and left of the post

stood rows of French troops in blue uniforms with red epaulets and high

boots and shakos.

The prisoners were placed in a certain order, according to the list

(Pierre was sixth), and were led to the post. Several drums suddenly

began to beat on both sides of them, and at that sound Pierre felt as if

part of his soul had been torn away. He lost the power of thinking or

understanding. He could only hear and see. And he had only one wish--

that the frightful thing that had to happen should happen quickly.

Pierre looked round at his fellow prisoners and scrutinized them.

The two first were convicts with shaven heads. One was tall and thin,

the other dark, shaggy, and sinewy, with a flat nose. The third was a

domestic serf, about forty-five years old, with grizzled hair and a

plump, well-nourished body. The fourth was a peasant, a very handsome

man with a broad, light-brown beard and black eyes. The fifth was a

factory hand, a thin, sallow-faced lad of eighteen in a loose coat.

Pierre heard the French consulting whether to shoot them separately or

two at a time. "In couples," replied the officer in command in a calm

voice. There was a stir in the ranks of the soldiers and it was evident

that they were all hurrying--not as men hurry to do something they

understand, but as people hurry to finish a necessary but unpleasant and

incomprehensible task.

A French official wearing a scarf came up to the right of the row of

prisoners and read out the sentence in Russian and in French.

Then two pairs of Frenchmen approached the criminals and at the

officer's command took the two convicts who stood first in the row. The

convicts stopped when they reached the post and, while sacks were being

brought, looked dumbly around as a wounded beast looks at an approaching

huntsman. One crossed himself continually, the other scratched his back

and made a movement of the lips resembling a smile. With hurried hands

the soldiers blindfolded them, drawing the sacks over their heads, and

bound them to the post.

Twelve sharpshooters with muskets stepped out of the ranks with a firm

regular tread and halted eight paces from the post. Pierre turned away

to avoid seeing what was going to happen. Suddenly a crackling, rolling

noise was heard which seemed to him louder than the most terrific

thunder, and he looked round. There was some smoke, and the Frenchmen

were doing something near the pit, with pale faces and trembling hands.

Two more prisoners were led up. In the same way and with similar looks,

these two glanced vainly at the onlookers with only a silent appeal for

protection in their eyes, evidently unable to understand or believe what

was going to happen to them. They could not believe it because they

alone knew what their life meant to them, and so they neither understood

nor believed that it could be taken from them.

Again Pierre did not wish to look and again turned away; but again the

sound as of a frightful explosion struck his ear, and at the same moment

he saw smoke, blood, and the pale, scared faces of the Frenchmen who

were again doing something by the post, their trembling hands impeding

one another. Pierre, breathing heavily, looked around as if asking what

it meant. The same question was expressed in all the looks that met his.

On the faces of all the Russians and of the French soldiers and officers

without exception, he read the same dismay, horror, and conflict that

were in his own heart. "But who, after all, is doing this? They are all

suffering as I am. Who then is it? Who?" flashed for an instant through

his mind.

"Sharpshooters of the 86th, forward!" shouted someone. The fifth

prisoner, the one next to Pierre, was led away--alone. Pierre did not

understand that he was saved, that he and the rest had been brought

there only to witness the execution. With ever-growing horror, and no

sense of joy or relief, he gazed at what was taking place. The fifth man

was the factory lad in the loose cloak. The moment they laid hands on

him he sprang aside in terror and clutched at Pierre. (Pierre shuddered

and shook himself free.) The lad was unable to walk. They dragged him

along, holding him up under the arms, and he screamed. When they got him

to the post he grew quiet, as if he suddenly understood something.

Whether he understood that screaming was useless or whether he thought

it incredible that men should kill him, at any rate he took his stand at

the post, waiting to be blindfolded like the others, and like a wounded

animal looked around him with glittering eyes.

Pierre was no longer able to turn away and close his eyes. His curiosity

and agitation, like that of the whole crowd, reached the highest pitch

at this fifth murder. Like the others this fifth man seemed calm; he

wrapped his loose cloak closer and rubbed one bare foot with the other.

When they began to blindfold him he himself adjusted the knot which hurt

the back of his head; then when they propped him against the

bloodstained post, he leaned back and, not being comfortable in that

position, straightened himself, adjusted his feet, and leaned back again

more comfortably. Pierre did not take his eyes from him and did not miss

his slightest movement.

Probably a word of command was given and was followed by the reports of

eight muskets; but try as he would Pierre could not afterwards remember

having heard the slightest sound of the shots. He only saw how the

workman suddenly sank down on the cords that held him, how blood showed

itself in two places, how the ropes slackened under the weight of the

hanging body, and how the workman sat down, his head hanging unnaturally

and one leg bent under him. Pierre ran up to the post. No one hindered

him. Pale, frightened people were doing something around the workman.

The lower jaw of an old Frenchman with a thick mustache trembled as he

untied the ropes. The body collapsed. The soldiers dragged it awkwardly

from the post and began pushing it into the pit.

They all plainly and certainly knew that they were criminals who must

hide the traces of their guilt as quickly as possible.

Pierre glanced into the pit and saw that the factory lad was lying with

his knees close up to his head and one shoulder higher than the other.

That shoulder rose and fell rhythmically and convulsively, but spadefuls

of earth were already being thrown over the whole body. One of the

soldiers, evidently suffering, shouted gruffly and angrily at Pierre to

go back. But Pierre did not understand him and remained near the post,

and no one drove him away.

When the pit had been filled up a command was given. Pierre was taken

back to his place, and the rows of troops on both sides of the post made

a half turn and went past it at a measured pace. The twenty-four

sharpshooters with discharged muskets, standing in the center of the

circle, ran back to their places as the companies passed by.

Pierre gazed now with dazed eyes at these sharpshooters who ran in

couples out of the circle. All but one rejoined their companies. This

one, a young soldier, his face deadly pale, his shako pushed back, and

his musket resting on the ground, still stood near the pit at the spot

from which he had fired. He swayed like a drunken man, taking some steps

forward and back to save himself from falling. An old, noncommissioned

officer ran out of the ranks and taking him by the elbow dragged him to

his company. The crowd of Russians and Frenchmen began to disperse. They

all went away silently and with drooping heads.

"That will teach them to start fires," said one of the Frenchmen.

Pierre glanced round at the speaker and saw that it was a soldier who

was trying to find some relief after what had been done, but was not

able to do so. Without finishing what he had begun to say he made a

hopeless movement with his arm and went away.

CHAPTER XII

After the execution Pierre was separated from the rest of the prisoners

and placed alone in a small, ruined, and befouled church.

Toward evening a noncommissioned officer entered with two soldiers and

told him that he had been pardoned and would now go to the barracks for

the prisoners of war. Without understanding what was said to him, Pierre

got up and went with the soldiers. They took him to the upper end of the

field, where there were some sheds built of charred planks, beams, and

battens, and led him into one of them. In the darkness some twenty

different men surrounded Pierre. He looked at them without understanding

who they were, why they were there, or what they wanted of him. He heard

what they said, but did not understand the meaning of the words and made

no kind of deduction from or application of them. He replied to

questions they put to him, but did not consider who was listening to his

replies, nor how they would understand them. He looked at their faces

and figures, but they all seemed to him equally meaningless.

From the moment Pierre had witnessed those terrible murders committed by

men who did not wish to commit them, it was as if the mainspring of his

life, on which everything depended and which made everything appear

alive, had suddenly been wrenched out and everything had collapsed into

a heap of meaningless rubbish. Though he did not acknowledge it to

himself, his faith in the right ordering of the universe, in humanity,

in his own soul, and in God, had been destroyed. He had experienced this

before, but never so strongly as now. When similar doubts had assailed

him before, they had been the result of his own wrongdoing, and at the

bottom of his heart he had felt that relief from his despair and from

those doubts was to be found within himself. But now he felt that the

universe had crumbled before his eyes and only meaningless ruins

remained, and this not by any fault of his own. He felt that it was not

in his power to regain faith in the meaning of life.

Around him in the darkness men were standing and evidently something

about him interested them greatly. They were telling him something and

asking him something. Then they led him away somewhere, and at last he

found himself in a corner of the shed among men who were laughing and

talking on all sides.

"Well, then, mates... that very prince who..." some voice at the other

end of the shed was saying, with a strong emphasis on the word who.

Sitting silent and motionless on a heap of straw against the wall,

Pierre sometimes opened and sometimes closed his eyes. But as soon as he

closed them he saw before him the dreadful face of the factory lad--

especially dreadful because of its simplicity--and the faces of the

murderers, even more dreadful because of their disquiet. And he opened

his eyes again and stared vacantly into the darkness around him.

Beside him in a stooping position sat a small man of whose presence he

was first made aware by a strong smell of perspiration which came from

him every time he moved. This man was doing something to his legs in the

darkness, and though Pierre could not see his face he felt that the man

continually glanced at him. On growing used to the darkness Pierre saw

that the man was taking off his leg bands, and the way he did it aroused

Pierre's interest.

Having unwound the string that tied the band on one leg, he carefully

coiled it up and immediately set to work on the other leg, glancing up

at Pierre. While one hand hung up the first string the other was already

unwinding the band on the second leg. In this way, having carefully

removed the leg bands by deft circular motions of his arm following one

another uninterruptedly, the man hung the leg bands up on some pegs

fixed above his head. Then he took out a knife, cut something, closed

the knife, placed it under the head of his bed, and, seating himself

comfortably, clasped his arms round his lifted knees and fixed his eyes

on Pierre. The latter was conscious of something pleasant, comforting,

and well-rounded in these deft movements, in the man's well-ordered

arrangements in his corner, and even in his very smell, and he looked at

the man without taking his eyes from him.

"You've seen a lot of trouble, sir, eh?" the little man suddenly said.

And there was so much kindliness and simplicity in his singsong voice

that Pierre tried to reply, but his jaw trembled and he felt tears

rising to his eyes. The little fellow, giving Pierre no time to betray

his confusion, instantly continued in the same pleasant tones:

"Eh, lad, don't fret!" said he, in the tender singsong caressing voice

old Russian peasant women employ. "Don't fret, friend--'suffer an hour,

live for an age!' that's how it is, my dear fellow. And here we live,

thank heaven, without offense. Among these folk, too, there are good men

as well as bad," said he, and still speaking, he turned on his knees

with a supple movement, got up, coughed, and went off to another part of

the shed.

"Eh, you rascal!" Pierre heard the same kind voice saying at the other

end of the shed. "So you've come, you rascal? She remembers... Now, now,

that'll do!"

And the soldier, pushing away a little dog that was jumping up at him,

returned to his place and sat down. In his hands he had something

wrapped in a rag.

"Here, eat a bit, sir," said he, resuming his former respectful tone as

he unwrapped and offered Pierre some baked potatoes. "We had soup for

dinner and the potatoes are grand!"

Pierre had not eaten all day and the smell of the potatoes seemed

extremely pleasant to him. He thanked the soldier and began to eat.

"Well, are they all right?" said the soldier with a smile. "You should

do like this."

He took a potato, drew out his clasp knife, cut the potato into two

equal halves on the palm of his hand, sprinkled some salt on it from the

rag, and handed it to Pierre.

"The potatoes are grand!" he said once more. "Eat some like that!"

Pierre thought he had never eaten anything that tasted better.

"Oh, I'm all right," said he, "but why did they shoot those poor

fellows? The last one was hardly twenty."

"Tss, tt...!" said the little man. "Ah, what a sin... what a sin!" he

added quickly, and as if his words were always waiting ready in his

mouth and flew out involuntarily he went on: "How was it, sir, that you

stayed in Moscow?"

"I didn't think they would come so soon. I stayed accidentally," replied

Pierre.

"And how did they arrest you, dear lad? At your house?"

"No, I went to look at the fire, and they arrested me there, and tried

me as an incendiary."

"Where there's law there's injustice," put in the little man.

"And have you been here long?" Pierre asked as he munched the last of

the potato.

"I? It was last Sunday they took me, out of a hospital in Moscow."

"Why, are you a soldier then?"

"Yes, we are soldiers of the Apsheron regiment. I was dying of fever. We

weren't told anything. There were some twenty of us lying there. We had

no idea, never guessed at all."

"And do you feel sad here?" Pierre inquired.

"How can one help it, lad? My name is Platon, and the surname is

Karataev," he added, evidently wishing to make it easier for Pierre to

address him. "They call me 'little falcon' in the regiment. How is one

to help feeling sad? Moscow--she's the mother of cities. How can one see

all this and not feel sad? But 'the maggot gnaws the cabbage, yet dies

first'; that's what the old folks used to tell us," he added rapidly.

"What? What did you say?" asked Pierre.

"Who? I?" said Karataev. "I say things happen not as we plan but as God

judges," he replied, thinking that he was repeating what he had said

before, and immediately continued:

"Well, and you, have you a family estate, sir? And a house? So you have

abundance, then? And a housewife? And your old parents, are they still

living?" he asked.

And though it was too dark for Pierre to see, he felt that a suppressed

smile of kindliness puckered the soldier's lips as he put these

questions. He seemed grieved that Pierre had no parents, especially that

he had no mother.

"A wife for counsel, a mother-in-law for welcome, but there's none as

dear as one's own mother!" said he. "Well, and have you little ones?" he

went on asking.

Again Pierre's negative answer seemed to distress him, and he hastened

to add:

"Never mind! You're young folks yet, and please God may still have some.

The great thing is to live in harmony...."

"But it's all the same now," Pierre could not help saying.

"Ah, my dear fellow!" rejoined Karataev, "never decline a prison or a

beggar's sack!"

He seated himself more comfortably and coughed, evidently preparing to

tell a long story.

"Well, my dear fellow, I was still living at home," he began. "We had a

well-to-do homestead, plenty of land, we peasants lived well and our

house was one to thank God for. When Father and we went out mowing there

were seven of us. We lived well. We were real peasants. It so

happened..."

And Platon Karataev told a long story of how he had gone into someone's

copse to take wood, how he had been caught by the keeper, had been

tried, flogged, and sent to serve as a soldier.

"Well, lad," and a smile changed the tone of his voice "we thought it

was a misfortune but it turned out a blessing! If it had not been for my

sin, my brother would have had to go as a soldier. But he, my younger

brother, had five little ones, while I, you see, only left a wife

behind. We had a little girl, but God took her before I went as a

soldier. I come home on leave and I'll tell you how it was, I look and

see that they are living better than before. The yard full of cattle,

the women at home, two brothers away earning wages, and only Michael the

youngest, at home. Father, he says, 'All my children are the same to me:

it hurts the same whichever finger gets bitten. But if Platon hadn't

been shaved for a soldier, Michael would have had to go.' called us all

to him and, will you believe it, placed us in front of the icons.

'Michael,' he says, 'come here and bow down to his feet; and you, young

woman, you bow down too; and you, grandchildren, also bow down before

him! Do you understand?' he says. That's how it is, dear fellow. Fate

looks for a head. But we are always judging, 'that's not well--that's

not right!' Our luck is like water in a dragnet: you pull at it and it

bulges, but when you've drawn it out it's empty! That's how it is."

And Platon shifted his seat on the straw.

After a short silence he rose.

"Well, I think you must be sleepy," said he, and began rapidly crossing

himself and repeating:

"Lord Jesus Christ, holy Saint Nicholas, Frola and Lavra! Lord Jesus

Christ, holy Saint Nicholas, Frola and Lavra! Lord Jesus Christ, have

mercy on us and save us!" he concluded, then bowed to the ground, got

up, sighed, and sat down again on his heap of straw. "That's the way.

Lay me down like a stone, O God, and raise me up like a loaf," he

muttered as he lay down, pulling his coat over him.

"What prayer was that you were saying?" asked Pierre.

"Eh?" murmured Platon, who had almost fallen asleep. "What was I saying?

I was praying. Don't you pray?"

"Yes, I do," said Pierre. "But what was that you said: Frola and Lavra?"

"Well, of course," replied Platon quickly, "the horses' saints. One must

pity the animals too. Eh, the rascal! Now you've curled up and got warm,

you daughter of a bitch!" said Karataev, touching the dog that lay at

his feet, and again turning over he fell asleep immediately.

Sounds of crying and screaming came from somewhere in the distance

outside, and flames were visible through the cracks of the shed, but

inside it was quiet and dark. For a long time Pierre did not sleep, but

lay with eyes open in the darkness, listening to the regular snoring of

Platon who lay beside him, and he felt that the world that had been

shattered was once more stirring in his soul with a new beauty and on

new and unshakable foundations.

CHAPTER XIII

Twenty-three soldiers, three officers, and two officials were confined

in the shed in which Pierre had been placed and where he remained for

four weeks.

When Pierre remembered them afterwards they all seemed misty figures to

him except Platon Karataev, who always remained in his mind a most vivid

and precious memory and the personification of everything Russian,

kindly, and round. When Pierre saw his neighbor next morning at dawn the

first impression of him, as of something round, was fully confirmed:

Platon's whole figure--in a French overcoat girdled with a cord, a

soldier's cap, and bast shoes--was round. His head was quite round, his

back, chest, shoulders, and even his arms, which he held as if ever

ready to embrace something, were rounded, his pleasant smile and his

large, gentle brown eyes were also round.

Platon Karataev must have been fifty, judging by his stories of

campaigns he had been in, told as by an old soldier. He did not himself

know his age and was quite unable to determine it. But his brilliantly

white, strong teeth which showed in two unbroken semicircles when he

laughed--as he often did--were all sound and good, there was not a gray

hair in his beard or on his head, and his whole body gave an impression

of suppleness and especially of firmness and endurance.

His face, despite its fine, rounded wrinkles, had an expression of

innocence and youth, his voice was pleasant and musical. But the chief

peculiarity of his speech was its directness and appositeness. It was

evident that he never considered what he had said or was going to say,

and consequently the rapidity and justice of his intonation had an

irresistible persuasiveness.

His physical strength and agility during the first days of his

imprisonment were such that he seemed not to know what fatigue and

sickness meant. Every night before lying down, he said: "Lord, lay me

down as a stone and raise me up as a loaf!" and every morning on getting

up, he said: "I lay down and curled up, I get up and shake myself." And

indeed he only had to lie down, to fall asleep like a stone, and he only

had to shake himself, to be ready without a moment's delay for some

work, just as children are ready to play directly they awake. He could

do everything, not very well but not badly. He baked, cooked, sewed,

planed, and mended boots. He was always busy, and only at night allowed

himself conversation--of which he was fond--and songs. He did not sing

like a trained singer who knows he is listened to, but like the birds,

evidently giving vent to the sounds in the same way that one stretches

oneself or walks about to get rid of stiffness, and the sounds were

always high-pitched, mournful, delicate, and almost feminine, and his

face at such times was very serious.

Having been taken prisoner and allowed his beard to grow, he seemed to

have thrown off all that had been forced upon him--everything military

and alien to himself--and had returned to his former peasant habits.

"A soldier on leave--a shirt outside breeches," he would say.

He did not like talking about his life as a soldier, though he did not

complain, and often mentioned that he had not been flogged once during

the whole of his army service. When he related anything it was generally

some old and evidently precious memory of his "Christian" life, as he

called his peasant existence. The proverbs, of which his talk was full,

were for the most part not the coarse and indecent saws soldiers employ,

but those folk sayings which taken without a context seem so

insignificant, but when used appositely suddenly acquire a significance

of profound wisdom.

He would often say the exact opposite of what he had said on a previous

occasion, yet both would be right. He liked to talk and he talked well,

adorning his speech with terms of endearment and with folk sayings which

Pierre thought he invented himself, but the chief charm of his talk lay

in the fact that the commonest events--sometimes just such as Pierre had

witnessed without taking notice of them--assumed in Karataev's a

character of solemn fitness. He liked to hear the folk tales one of the

soldiers used to tell of an evening (they were always the same), but

most of all he liked to hear stories of real life. He would smile

joyfully when listening to such stories, now and then putting in a word

or asking a question to make the moral beauty of what he was told clear

to himself. Karataev had no attachments, friendships, or love, as Pierre

understood them, but loved and lived affectionately with everything life

brought him in contact with, particularly with man--not any particular

man, but those with whom he happened to be. He loved his dog, his

comrades, the French, and Pierre who was his neighbor, but Pierre felt

that in spite of Karataev's affectionate tenderness for him (by which he

unconsciously gave Pierre's spiritual life its due) he would not have

grieved for a moment at parting from him. And Pierre began to feel in

the same way toward Karataev.

To all the other prisoners Platon Karataev seemed a most ordinary

soldier. They called him "little falcon" or "Platosha," chaffed him

good-naturedly, and sent him on errands. But to Pierre he always

remained what he had seemed that first night: an unfathomable, rounded,

eternal personification of the spirit of simplicity and truth.

Platon Karataev knew nothing by heart except his prayers. When he began

to speak he seemed not to know how he would conclude.

Sometimes Pierre, struck by the meaning of his words, would ask him to

repeat them, but Platon could never recall what he had said a moment

before, just as he never could repeat to Pierre the words of his

favorite song: native and birch tree and my heart is sick occurred in

it, but when spoken and not sung, no meaning could be got out of it. He

did not, and could not, understand the meaning of words apart from their

context. Every word and action of his was the manifestation of an

activity unknown to him, which was his life. But his life, as he

regarded it, had no meaning as a separate thing. It had meaning only as

part of a whole of which he was always conscious. His words and actions

flowed from him as evenly, inevitably, and spontaneously as fragrance

exhales from a flower. He could not understand the value or significance

of any word or deed taken separately.

CHAPTER XIV

When Princess Mary heard from Nicholas that her brother was with the

Rostovs at Yaroslavl she at once prepared to go there, in spite of her

aunt's efforts to dissuade her--and not merely to go herself but to take

her nephew with her. Whether it were difficult or easy, possible or

impossible, she did not ask and did not want to know: it was her duty,

not only to herself, to be near her brother who was perhaps dying, but

to do everything possible to take his son to him, and so she prepared to

set off. That she had not heard from Prince Andrew himself, Princess

Mary attributed to his being too weak to write or to his considering the

long journey too hard and too dangerous for her and his son.

In a few days Princess Mary was ready to start. Her equipages were the

huge family coach in which she had traveled to Voronezh, a semiopen

trap, and a baggage cart. With her traveled Mademoiselle Bourienne,

little Nicholas and his tutor, her old nurse, three maids, Tikhon, and a

young footman and courier her aunt had sent to accompany her.

The usual route through Moscow could not be thought of, and the

roundabout way Princess Mary was obliged to take through Lipetsk,

Ryazan, Vladimir, and Shuya was very long and, as post horses were not

everywhere obtainable, very difficult, and near Ryazan where the French

were said to have shown themselves was even dangerous.

During this difficult journey Mademoiselle Bourienne, Dessalles, and

Princess Mary's servants were astonished at her energy and firmness of

spirit. She went to bed later and rose earlier than any of them, and no

difficulties daunted her. Thanks to her activity and energy, which

infected her fellow travelers, they approached Yaroslavl by the end of

the second week.

The last days of her stay in Voronezh had been the happiest of her life.

Her love for Rostov no longer tormented or agitated her. It filled her

whole soul, had become an integral part of herself, and she no longer

struggled against it. Latterly she had become convinced that she loved

and was beloved, though she never said this definitely to herself in

words. She had become convinced of it at her last interview with

Nicholas, when he had come to tell her that her brother was with the

Rostovs. Not by a single word had Nicholas alluded to the fact that

Prince Andrew's relations with Natasha might, if he recovered, be

renewed, but Princess Mary saw by his face that he knew and thought of

this.

Yet in spite of that, his relation to her--considerate, delicate, and

loving--not only remained unchanged, but it sometimes seemed to Princess

Mary that he was even glad that the family connection between them

allowed him to express his friendship more freely. She knew that she

loved for the first and only time in her life and felt that she was

beloved, and was happy in regard to it.

But this happiness on one side of her spiritual nature did not prevent

her feeling grief for her brother with full force; on the contrary, that

spiritual tranquility on the one side made it the more possible for her

to give full play to her feeling for her brother. That feeling was so

strong at the moment of leaving Voronezh that those who saw her off, as

they looked at her careworn, despairing face, felt sure she would fall

ill on the journey. But the very difficulties and preoccupations of the

journey, which she took so actively in hand, saved her for a while from

her grief and gave her strength.

As always happens when traveling, Princess Mary thought only of the

journey itself, forgetting its object. But as she approached Yaroslavl

the thought of what might await her there--not after many days, but that

very evening--again presented itself to her and her agitation increased

to its utmost limit.

The courier who had been sent on in advance to find out where the

Rostovs were staying in Yaroslavl, and in what condition Prince Andrew

was, when he met the big coach just entering the town gates was appalled

by the terrible pallor of the princess' face that looked out at him from

the window.

"I have found out everything, your excellency: the Rostovs are staying

at the merchant Bronnikov's house, in the Square not far from here,

right above the Volga," said the courier.

Princess Mary looked at him with frightened inquiry, not understanding

why he did not reply to what she chiefly wanted to know: how was her

brother? Mademoiselle Bourienne put that question for her.

"How is the prince?" she asked.

"His excellency is staying in the same house with them."

"Then he is alive," thought Princess Mary, and asked in a low voice:

"How is he?"

"The servants say he is still the same."

What "still the same" might mean Princess Mary did not ask, but with an

unnoticed glance at little seven-year-old Nicholas, who was sitting in

front of her looking with pleasure at the town, she bowed her head and

did not raise it again till the heavy coach, rumbling, shaking and

swaying, came to a stop. The carriage steps clattered as they were let

down.

The carriage door was opened. On the left there was water--a great

river--and on the right a porch. There were people at the entrance:

servants, and a rosy girl with a large plait of black hair, smiling as

it seemed to Princess Mary in an unpleasantly affected way. (This was

Sonya.) Princess Mary ran up the steps. "This way, this way!" said the

girl, with the same artificial smile, and the princess found herself in

the hall facing an elderly woman of Oriental type, who came rapidly to

meet her with a look of emotion. This was the countess. She embraced

Princess Mary and kissed her.

"Mon enfant!" she muttered, "je vous aime et vous connais depuis

longtemps." \*

\* "My child! I love you and have known you a long time."

Despite her excitement, Princess Mary realized that this was the

countess and that it was necessary to say something to her. Hardly

knowing how she did it, she contrived to utter a few polite phrases in

French in the same tone as those that had been addressed to her, and

asked: "How is he?"

"The doctor says that he is not in danger," said the countess, but as

she spoke she raised her eyes with a sigh, and her gesture conveyed a

contradiction of her words.

"Where is he? Can I see him--can I?" asked the princess.

"One moment, Princess, one moment, my dear! Is this his son?" said the

countess, turning to little Nicholas who was coming in with Dessalles.

"There will be room for everybody, this is a big house. Oh, what a

lovely boy!"

The countess took Princess Mary into the drawing room, where Sonya was

talking to Mademoiselle Bourienne. The countess caressed the boy, and

the old count came in and welcomed the princess. He had changed very

much since Princess Mary had last seen him. Then he had been a brisk,

cheerful, self-assured old man; now he seemed a pitiful, bewildered

person. While talking to Princess Mary he continually looked round as if

asking everyone whether he was doing the right thing. After the

destruction of Moscow and of his property, thrown out of his accustomed

groove he seemed to have lost the sense of his own significance and to

feel that there was no longer a place for him in life.

In spite of her one desire to see her brother as soon as possible, and

her vexation that at the moment when all she wanted was to see him they

should be trying to entertain her and pretending to admire her nephew,

the princess noticed all that was going on around her and felt the

necessity of submitting, for a time, to this new order of things which

she had entered. She knew it to be necessary, and though it was hard for

her she was not vexed with these people.

"This is my niece," said the count, introducing Sonya--"You don't know

her, Princess?"

Princess Mary turned to Sonya and, trying to stifle the hostile feeling

that arose in her toward the girl, she kissed her. But she felt

oppressed by the fact that the mood of everyone around her was so far

from what was in her own heart.

"Where is he?" she asked again, addressing them all.

"He is downstairs. Natasha is with him," answered Sonya, flushing. "We

have sent to ask. I think you must be tired, Princess."

Tears of vexation showed themselves in Princess Mary's eyes. She turned

away and was about to ask the countess again how to go to him, when

light, impetuous, and seemingly buoyant steps were heard at the door.

The princess looked round and saw Natasha coming in, almost running--

that Natasha whom she had liked so little at their meeting in Moscow

long since.

But hardly had the princess looked at Natasha's face before she realized

that here was a real comrade in her grief, and consequently a friend.

She ran to meet her, embraced her, and began to cry on her shoulder.

As soon as Natasha, sitting at the head of Prince Andrew's bed, heard of

Princess Mary's arrival, she softly left his room and hastened to her

with those swift steps that had sounded buoyant to Princess Mary.

There was only one expression on her agitated face when she ran into the

drawing room--that of love--boundless love for him, for her, and for all

that was near to the man she loved; and of pity, suffering for others,

and passionate desire to give herself entirely to helping them. It was

plain that at that moment there was in Natasha's heart no thought of

herself or of her own relations with Prince Andrew.

Princess Mary, with her acute sensibility, understood all this at the

first glance at Natasha's face, and wept on her shoulder with sorrowful

pleasure.

"Come, come to him, Mary," said Natasha, leading her into the other

room.

Princess Mary raised her head, dried her eyes, and turned to Natasha.

She felt that from her she would be able to understand and learn

everything.

"How..." she began her question but stopped short.

She felt that it was impossible to ask, or to answer, in words.

Natasha's face and eyes would have to tell her all more clearly and

profoundly.

Natasha was gazing at her, but seemed afraid and in doubt whether to say

all she knew or not; she seemed to feel that before those luminous eyes

which penetrated into the very depths of her heart, it was impossible

not to tell the whole truth which she saw. And suddenly, Natasha's lips

twitched, ugly wrinkles gathered round her mouth, and covering her face

with her hands she burst into sobs.

Princess Mary understood.

But she still hoped, and asked, in words she herself did not trust:

"But how is his wound? What is his general condition?"

"You, you... will see," was all Natasha could say.

They sat a little while downstairs near his room till they had left off

crying and were able to go to him with calm faces.

"How has his whole illness gone? Is it long since he grew worse? When

did this happen?" Princess Mary inquired.

Natasha told her that at first there had been danger from his feverish

condition and the pain he suffered, but at Troitsa that had passed and

the doctor had only been afraid of gangrene. That danger had also

passed. When they reached Yaroslavl the wound had begun to fester

(Natasha knew all about such things as festering) and the doctor had

said that the festering might take a normal course. Then fever set in,

but the doctor had said the fever was not very serious.

"But two days ago this suddenly happened," said Natasha, struggling with

her sobs. "I don't know why, but you will see what he is like."

"Is he weaker? Thinner?" asked the princess.

"No, it's not that, but worse. You will see. O, Mary, he is too good, he

cannot, cannot live, because..."

CHAPTER XV

When Natasha opened Prince Andrew's door with a familiar movement and

let Princess Mary pass into the room before her, the princess felt the

sobs in her throat. Hard as she had tried to prepare herself, and now

tried to remain tranquil, she knew that she would be unable to look at

him without tears.

The princess understood what Natasha had meant by the words: "two days

ago this suddenly happened." She understood those words to mean that he

had suddenly softened and that this softening and gentleness were signs

of approaching death. As she stepped to the door she already saw in

imagination Andrew's face as she remembered it in childhood, a gentle,

mild, sympathetic face which he had rarely shown, and which therefore

affected her very strongly. She was sure he would speak soft, tender

words to her such as her father had uttered before his death, and that

she would not be able to bear it and would burst into sobs in his

presence. Yet sooner or later it had to be, and she went in. The sobs

rose higher and higher in her throat as she more and more clearly

distinguished his form and her shortsighted eyes tried to make out his

features, and then she saw his face and met his gaze.

He was lying in a squirrel-fur dressing gown on a divan, surrounded by

pillows. He was thin and pale. In one thin, translucently white hand he

held a handkerchief, while with the other he stroked the delicate

mustache he had grown, moving his fingers slowly. His eyes gazed at them

as they entered.

On seeing his face and meeting his eyes Princess Mary's pace suddenly

slackened, she felt her tears dry up and her sobs ceased. She suddenly

felt guilty and grew timid on catching the expression of his face and

eyes.

"But in what am I to blame?" she asked herself. And his cold, stern look

replied: "Because you are alive and thinking of the living, while I..."

In the deep gaze that seemed to look not outwards but inwards there was

an almost hostile expression as he slowly regarded his sister and

Natasha.

He kissed his sister, holding her hand in his as was their wont.

"How are you, Mary? How did you manage to get here?" said he in a voice

as calm and aloof as his look.

Had he screamed in agony, that scream would not have struck such horror

into Princess Mary's heart as the tone of his voice.

"And have you brought little Nicholas?" he asked in the same slow, quiet

manner and with an obvious effort to remember.

"How are you now?" said Princess Mary, herself surprised at what she was

saying.

"That, my dear, you must ask the doctor," he replied, and again making

an evident effort to be affectionate, he said with his lips only (his

words clearly did not correspond to his thoughts):

"Merci, chere amie, d'etre venue." \*

\* "Thank you for coming, my dear."

Princess Mary pressed his hand. The pressure made him wince just

perceptibly. He was silent, and she did not know what to say. She now

understood what had happened to him two days before. In his words, his

tone, and especially in that calm, almost antagonistic look could be

felt an estrangement from everything belonging to this world, terrible

in one who is alive. Evidently only with an effort did he understand

anything living; but it was obvious that he failed to understand, not

because he lacked the power to do so but because he understood something

else--something the living did not and could not understand--and which

wholly occupied his mind.

"There, you see how strangely fate has brought us together," said he,

breaking the silence and pointing to Natasha. "She looks after me all

the time."

Princess Mary heard him and did not understand how he could say such a

thing. He, the sensitive, tender Prince Andrew, how could he say that,

before her whom he loved and who loved him? Had he expected to live he

could not have said those words in that offensively cold tone. If he had

not known that he was dying, how could he have failed to pity her and

how could he speak like that in her presence? The only explanation was

that he was indifferent, because something else, much more important,

had been revealed to him.

The conversation was cold and disconnected and continually broke off.

"Mary came by way of Ryazan," said Natasha.

Prince Andrew did not notice that she called his sister Mary, and only

after calling her so in his presence did Natasha notice it herself.

"Really?" he asked.

"They told her that all Moscow has been burned down, and that..."

Natasha stopped. It was impossible to talk. It was plain that he was

making an effort to listen, but could not do so.

"Yes, they say it's burned," he said. "It's a great pity," and he gazed

straight before him, absently stroking his mustache with his fingers.

"And so you have met Count Nicholas, Mary?" Prince Andrew suddenly said,

evidently wishing to speak pleasantly to them. "He wrote here that he

took a great liking to you," he went on simply and calmly, evidently

unable to understand all the complex significance his words had for

living people. "If you liked him too, it would be a good thing for you

to get married," he added rather more quickly, as if pleased at having

found words he had long been seeking.

Princess Mary heard his words but they had no meaning for her, except as

a proof of how far away he now was from everything living.

"Why talk of me?" she said quietly and glanced at Natasha.

Natasha, who felt her glance, did not look at her. All three were again

silent.

"Andrew, would you like..." Princess Mary suddenly said in a trembling

voice, "would you like to see little Nicholas? He is always talking

about you!"

Prince Andrew smiled just perceptibly and for the first time, but

Princess Mary, who knew his face so well, saw with horror that he did

not smile with pleasure or affection for his son, but with quiet, gentle

irony because he thought she was trying what she believed to be the last

means of arousing him.

"Yes, I shall be very glad to see him. Is he quite well?"

When little Nicholas was brought into Prince Andrew's room he looked at

his father with frightened eyes, but did not cry, because no one else

was crying. Prince Andrew kissed him and evidently did not know what to

say to him.

When Nicholas had been led away, Princess Mary again went up to her

brother, kissed him, and unable to restrain her tears any longer began

to cry.

He looked at her attentively.

"Is it about Nicholas?" he asked.

Princess Mary nodded her head, weeping.

"Mary, you know the Gosp..." but he broke off.

"What did you say?"

"Nothing. You mustn't cry here," he said, looking at her with the same

cold expression.

When Princess Mary began to cry, he understood that she was crying at

the thought that little Nicholas would be left without a father. With a

great effort he tried to return to life and to see things from their

point of view.

"Yes, to them it must seem sad!" he thought. "But how simple it is.

"The fowls of the air sow not, neither do they reap, yet your Father

feedeth them," he said to himself and wished to say to Princess Mary;

"but no, they will take it their own way, they won't understand! They

can't understand that all those feelings they prize so--all our

feelings, all those ideas that seem so important to us, are unnecessary.

We cannot understand one another," and he remained silent.

Prince Andrew's little son was seven. He could scarcely read, and knew

nothing. After that day he lived through many things, gaining knowledge,

observation, and experience, but had he possessed all the faculties he

afterwards acquired, he could not have had a better or more profound

understanding of the meaning of the scene he had witnessed between his

father, Mary, and Natasha, than he had then. He understood it

completely, and, leaving the room without crying, went silently up to

Natasha who had come out with him and looked shyly at her with his

beautiful, thoughtful eyes, then his uplifted, rosy upper lip trembled

and leaning his head against her he began to cry.

After that he avoided Dessalles and the countess who caressed him and

either sat alone or came timidly to Princess Mary, or to Natasha of whom

he seemed even fonder than of his aunt, and clung to them quietly and

shyly.

When Princess Mary had left Prince Andrew she fully understood what

Natasha's face had told her. She did not speak any more to Natasha of

hopes of saving his life. She took turns with her beside his sofa, and

did not cry any more, but prayed continually, turning in soul to that

Eternal and Unfathomable, whose presence above the dying man was now so

evident.

CHAPTER XVI

Not only did Prince Andrew know he would die, but he felt that he was

dying and was already half dead. He was conscious of an aloofness from

everything earthly and a strange and joyous lightness of existence.

Without haste or agitation he awaited what was coming. That inexorable,

eternal, distant, and unknown the presence of which he had felt

continually all his life--was now near to him and, by the strange

lightness he experienced, almost comprehensible and palpable...

Formerly he had feared the end. He had twice experienced that terribly

tormenting fear of death--the end--but now he no longer understood that

fear.

He had felt it for the first time when the shell spun like a top before

him, and he looked at the fallow field, the bushes, and the sky, and

knew that he was face to face with death. When he came to himself after

being wounded and the flower of eternal, unfettered love had instantly

unfolded itself in his soul as if freed from the bondage of life that

had restrained it, he no longer feared death and ceased to think about

it.

During the hours of solitude, suffering, and partial delirium he spent

after he was wounded, the more deeply he penetrated into the new

principle of eternal love revealed to him, the more he unconsciously

detached himself from earthly life. To love everything and everybody and

always to sacrifice oneself for love meant not to love anyone, not to

live this earthly life. And the more imbued he became with that

principle of love, the more he renounced life and the more completely he

destroyed that dreadful barrier which--in the absence of such love--

stands between life and death. When during those first days he

remembered that he would have to die, he said to himself: "Well, what of

it? So much the better!"

But after the night in Mytishchi when, half delirious, he had seen her

for whom he longed appear before him and, having pressed her hand to his

lips, had shed gentle, happy tears, love for a particular woman again

crept unobserved into his heart and once more bound him to life. And

joyful and agitating thoughts began to occupy his mind. Recalling the

moment at the ambulance station when he had seen Kuragin, he could not

now regain the feeling he then had, but was tormented by the question

whether Kuragin was alive. And he dared not inquire.

His illness pursued its normal physical course, but what Natasha

referred to when she said: "This suddenly happened," had occurred two

days before Princess Mary arrived. It was the last spiritual struggle

between life and death, in which death gained the victory. It was the

unexpected realization of the fact that he still valued life as

presented to him in the form of his love for Natasha, and a last, though

ultimately vanquished, attack of terror before the unknown.

It was evening. As usual after dinner he was slightly feverish, and his

thoughts were preternaturally clear. Sonya was sitting by the table. He

began to doze. Suddenly a feeling of happiness seized him.

"Ah, she has come!" thought he.

And so it was: in Sonya's place sat Natasha who had just come in

noiselessly.

Since she had begun looking after him, he had always experienced this

physical consciousness of her nearness. She was sitting in an armchair

placed sideways, screening the light of the candle from him, and was

knitting a stocking. She had learned to knit stockings since Prince

Andrew had casually mentioned that no one nursed the sick so well as old

nurses who knit stockings, and that there is something soothing in the

knitting of stockings. The needles clicked lightly in her slender,

rapidly moving hands, and he could clearly see the thoughtful profile of

her drooping face. She moved, and the ball rolled off her knees. She

started, glanced round at him, and screening the candle with her hand

stooped carefully with a supple and exact movement, picked up the ball,

and regained her former position.

He looked at her without moving and saw that she wanted to draw a deep

breath after stooping, but refrained from doing so and breathed

cautiously.

At the Troitsa monastery they had spoken of the past, and he had told

her that if he lived he would always thank God for his wound which had

brought them together again, but after that they never spoke of the

future.

"Can it or can it not be?" he now thought as he looked at her and

listened to the light click of the steel needles. "Can fate have brought

me to her so strangely only for me to die?... Is it possible that the

truth of life has been revealed to me only to show me that I have spent

my life in falsity? I love her more than anything in the world! But what

am I to do if I love her?" he thought, and he involuntarily groaned,

from a habit acquired during his sufferings.

On hearing that sound Natasha put down the stocking, leaned nearer to

him, and suddenly, noticing his shining eyes, stepped lightly up to him

and bent over him.

"You are not asleep?"

"No, I have been looking at you a long time. I felt you come in. No one

else gives me that sense of soft tranquillity that you do... that light.

I want to weep for joy."

Natasha drew closer to him. Her face shone with rapturous joy.

"Natasha, I love you too much! More than anything in the world."

"And I!"--She turned away for an instant. "Why too much?" she asked.

"Why too much?... Well, what do you, what do you feel in your soul, your

whole soul--shall I live? What do you think?"

"I am sure of it, sure!" Natasha almost shouted, taking hold of both his

hands with a passionate movement.

He remained silent awhile.

"How good it would be!" and taking her hand he kissed it.

Natasha felt happy and agitated, but at once remembered that this would

not do and that he had to be quiet.

"But you have not slept," she said, repressing her joy. "Try to sleep...

please!"

He pressed her hand and released it, and she went back to the candle and

sat down again in her former position. Twice she turned and looked at

him, and her eyes met his beaming at her. She set herself a task on her

stocking and resolved not to turn round till it was finished.

Soon he really shut his eyes and fell asleep. He did not sleep long and

suddenly awoke with a start and in a cold perspiration.

As he fell asleep he had still been thinking of the subject that now

always occupied his mind--about life and death, and chiefly about death.

He felt himself nearer to it.

"Love? What is love?" he thought.

"Love hinders death. Love is life. All, everything that I understand, I

understand only because I love. Everything is, everything exists, only

because I love. Everything is united by it alone. Love is God, and to

die means that I, a particle of love, shall return to the general and

eternal source." These thoughts seemed to him comforting. But they were

only thoughts. Something was lacking in them, they were not clear, they

were too one-sidedly personal and brain-spun. And there was the former

agitation and obscurity. He fell asleep.

He dreamed that he was lying in the room he really was in, but that he

was quite well and unwounded. Many various, indifferent, and

insignificant people appeared before him. He talked to them and

discussed something trivial. They were preparing to go away somewhere.

Prince Andrew dimly realized that all this was trivial and that he had

more important cares, but he continued to speak, surprising them by

empty witticisms. Gradually, unnoticed, all these persons began to

disappear and a single question, that of the closed door, superseded all

else. He rose and went to the door to bolt and lock it. Everything

depended on whether he was, or was not, in time to lock it. He went, and

tried to hurry, but his legs refused to move and he knew he would not be

in time to lock the door though he painfully strained all his powers. He

was seized by an agonizing fear. And that fear was the fear of death. It

stood behind the door. But just when he was clumsily creeping toward the

door, that dreadful something on the other side was already pressing

against it and forcing its way in. Something not human--death--was

breaking in through that door, and had to be kept out. He seized the

door, making a final effort to hold it back--to lock it was no longer

possible--but his efforts were weak and clumsy and the door, pushed from

behind by that terror, opened and closed again.

Once again it pushed from outside. His last superhuman efforts were vain

and both halves of the door noiselessly opened. It entered, and it was

death, and Prince Andrew died.

But at the instant he died, Prince Andrew remembered that he was asleep,

and at the very instant he died, having made an effort, he awoke.

"Yes, it was death! I died--and woke up. Yes, death is an awakening!"

And all at once it grew light in his soul and the veil that had till

then concealed the unknown was lifted from his spiritual vision. He felt

as if powers till then confined within him had been liberated, and that

strange lightness did not again leave him.

When, waking in a cold perspiration, he moved on the divan, Natasha went

up and asked him what was the matter. He did not answer and looked at

her strangely, not understanding.

That was what had happened to him two days before Princess Mary's

arrival. From that day, as the doctor expressed it, the wasting fever

assumed a malignant character, but what the doctor said did not interest

Natasha, she saw the terrible moral symptoms which to her were more

convincing.

From that day an awakening from life came to Prince Andrew together with

his awakening from sleep. And compared to the duration of life it did

not seem to him slower than an awakening from sleep compared to the

duration of a dream.

There was nothing terrible or violent in this comparatively slow

awakening.

His last days and hours passed in an ordinary and simple way. Both

Princess Mary and Natasha, who did not leave him, felt this. They did

not weep or shudder and during these last days they themselves felt that

they were not attending on him (he was no longer there, he had left

them) but on what reminded them most closely of him--his body. Both felt

this so strongly that the outward and terrible side of death did not

affect them and they did not feel it necessary to foment their grief.

Neither in his presence nor out of it did they weep, nor did they ever

talk to one another about him. They felt that they could not express in

words what they understood.

They both saw that he was sinking slowly and quietly, deeper and deeper,

away from them, and they both knew that this had to be so and that it

was right.

He confessed, and received communion: everyone came to take leave of

him. When they brought his son to him, he pressed his lips to the boy's

and turned away, not because he felt it hard and sad (Princess Mary and

Natasha understood that) but simply because he thought it was all that

was required of him, but when they told him to bless the boy, he did

what was demanded and looked round as if asking whether there was

anything else he should do.

When the last convulsions of the body, which the spirit was leaving,

occurred, Princess Mary and Natasha were present.

"Is it over?" said Princess Mary when his body had for a few minutes

lain motionless, growing cold before them. Natasha went up, looked at

the dead eyes, and hastened to close them. She closed them but did not

kiss them, but clung to that which reminded her most nearly of him--his

body.

"Where has he gone? Where is he now?..."

When the body, washed and dressed, lay in the coffin on a table,

everyone came to take leave of him and they all wept.

Little Nicholas cried because his heart was rent by painful perplexity.

The countess and Sonya cried from pity for Natasha and because he was no

more. The old count cried because he felt that before long, he, too,

must take the same terrible step.

Natasha and Princess Mary also wept now, but not because of their own

personal grief; they wept with a reverent and softening emotion which

had taken possession of their souls at the consciousness of the simple

and solemn mystery of death that had been accomplished in their

presence.

BOOK THIRTEEN: 1812

CHAPTER I

Man's mind cannot grasp the causes of events in their completeness, but

the desire to find those causes is implanted in man's soul. And without

considering the multiplicity and complexity of the conditions any one of

which taken separately may seem to be the cause, he snatches at the

first approximation to a cause that seems to him intelligible and says:

"This is the cause!" In historical events (where the actions of men are

the subject of observation) the first and most primitive approximation

to present itself was the will of the gods and, after that, the will of

those who stood in the most prominent position--the heroes of history.

But we need only penetrate to the essence of any historic event--which

lies in the activity of the general mass of men who take part in it--to

be convinced that the will of the historic hero does not control the

actions of the mass but is itself continually controlled. It may seem to

be a matter of indifference whether we understand the meaning of

historical events this way or that; yet there is the same difference

between a man who says that the people of the West moved on the East

because Napoleon wished it and a man who says that this happened because

it had to happen, as there is between those who declared that the earth

was stationary and that the planets moved round it and those who

admitted that they did not know what upheld the earth, but knew there

were laws directing its movement and that of the other planets. There

is, and can be, no cause of an historical event except the one cause of

all causes. But there are laws directing events, and some of these laws

are known to us while we are conscious of others we cannot comprehend.

The discovery of these laws is only possible when we have quite

abandoned the attempt to find the cause in the will of some one man,

just as the discovery of the laws of the motion of the planets was

possible only when men abandoned the conception of the fixity of the

earth.

The historians consider that, next to the battle of Borodino and the

occupation of Moscow by the enemy and its destruction by fire, the most

important episode of the war of 1812 was the movement of the Russian

army from the Ryazana to the Kaluga road and to the Tarutino camp--the

so-called flank march across the Krasnaya Pakhra River. They ascribe the

glory of that achievement of genius to different men and dispute as to

whom the honor is due. Even foreign historians, including the French,

acknowledge the genius of the Russian commanders when they speak of that

flank march. But it is hard to understand why military writers, and

following them others, consider this flank march to be the profound

conception of some one man who saved Russia and destroyed Napoleon. In

the first place it is hard to understand where the profundity and genius

of this movement lay, for not much mental effort was needed to see that

the best position for an army when it is not being attacked is where

there are most provisions; and even a dull boy of thirteen could have

guessed that the best position for an army after its retreat from Moscow

in 1812 was on the Kaluga road. So it is impossible to understand by

what reasoning the historians reach the conclusion that this maneuver

was a profound one. And it is even more difficult to understand just why

they think that this maneuver was calculated to save Russia and destroy

the French; for this flank march, had it been preceded, accompanied, or

followed by other circumstances, might have proved ruinous to the

Russians and salutary for the French. If the position of the Russian

army really began to improve from the time of that march, it does not at

all follow that the march was the cause of it.

That flank march might not only have failed to give any advantage to the

Russian army, but might in other circumstances have led to its

destruction. What would have happened had Moscow not burned down? If

Murat had not lost sight of the Russians? If Napoleon had not remained

inactive? If the Russian army at Krasnaya Pakhra had given battle as

Bennigsen and Barclay advised? What would have happened had the French

attacked the Russians while they were marching beyond the Pakhra? What

would have happened if on approaching Tarutino, Napoleon had attacked

the Russians with but a tenth of the energy he had shown when he

attacked them at Smolensk? What would have happened had the French moved

on Petersburg?... In any of these eventualities the flank march that

brought salvation might have proved disastrous.

The third and most incomprehensible thing is that people studying

history deliberately avoid seeing that this flank march cannot be

attributed to any one man, that no one ever foresaw it, and that in

reality, like the retreat from Fili, it did not suggest itself to anyone

in its entirety, but resulted--moment by moment, step by step, event by

event--from an endless number of most diverse circumstances and was only

seen in its entirety when it had been accomplished and belonged to the

past.

At the council at Fili the prevailing thought in the minds of the

Russian commanders was the one naturally suggesting itself, namely, a

direct retreat by the Nizhni road. In proof of this there is the fact

that the majority of the council voted for such a retreat, and above all

there is the well-known conversation after the council, between the

commander in chief and Lanskoy, who was in charge of the commissariat

department. Lanskoy informed the commander-in-chief that the army

supplies were for the most part stored along the Oka in the Tula and

Ryazan provinces, and that if they retreated on Nizhni the army would be

separated from its supplies by the broad river Oka, which cannot be

crossed early in winter. This was the first indication of the necessity

of deviating from what had previously seemed the most natural course--a

direct retreat on Nizhni-Novgorod. The army turned more to the south,

along the Ryazan road and nearer to its supplies. Subsequently the

inactivity of the French (who even lost sight of the Russian army),

concern for the safety of the arsenal at Tula, and especially the

advantages of drawing nearer to its supplies caused the army to turn

still further south to the Tula road. Having crossed over, by a forced

march, to the Tula road beyond the Pakhra, the Russian commanders

intended to remain at Podolsk and had no thought of the Tarutino

position; but innumerable circumstances and the reappearance of French

troops who had for a time lost touch with the Russians, and projects of

giving battle, and above all the abundance of provisions in Kaluga

province, obliged our army to turn still more to the south and to cross

from the Tula to the Kaluga road and go to Tarutino, which was between

the roads along which those supplies lay. Just as it is impossible to

say when it was decided to abandon Moscow, so it is impossible to say

precisely when, or by whom, it was decided to move to Tarutino. Only

when the army had got there, as the result of innumerable and varying

forces, did people begin to assure themselves that they had desired this

movement and long ago foreseen its result.

CHAPTER II

The famous flank movement merely consisted in this: after the advance of

the French had ceased, the Russian army, which had been continually

retreating straight back from the invaders, deviated from that direct

course and, not finding itself pursued, was naturally drawn toward the

district where supplies were abundant.

If instead of imagining to ourselves commanders of genius leading the

Russian army, we picture that army without any leaders, it could not

have done anything but make a return movement toward Moscow, describing

an arc in the direction where most provisions were to be found and where

the country was richest.

That movement from the Nizhni to the Ryazan, Tula, and Kaluga roads was

so natural that even the Russian marauders moved in that direction, and

demands were sent from Petersburg for Kutuzov to take his army that way.

At Tarutino Kutuzov received what was almost a reprimand from the

Emperor for having moved his army along the Ryazan road, and the

Emperor's letter indicated to him the very position he had already

occupied near Kaluga.

Having rolled like a ball in the direction of the impetus given by the

whole campaign and by the battle of Borodino, the Russian army--when the

strength of that impetus was exhausted and no fresh push was received--

assumed the position natural to it.

Kutuzov's merit lay, not in any strategic maneuver of genius, as it is

called, but in the fact that he alone understood the significance of

what had happened. He alone then understood the meaning of the French

army's inactivity, he alone continued to assert that the battle of

Borodino had been a victory, he alone--who as commander-in-chief might

have been expected to be eager to attack--employed his whole strength to

restrain the Russian army from useless engagements.

The beast wounded at Borodino was lying where the fleeing hunter had

left him; but whether he was still alive, whether he was strong and

merely lying low, the hunter did not know. Suddenly the beast was heard

to moan.

The moan of that wounded beast (the French army) which betrayed its

calamitous condition was the sending of Lauriston to Kutuzov's camp with

overtures for peace.

Napoleon, with his usual assurance that whatever entered his head was

right, wrote to Kutuzov the first words that occurred to him, though

they were meaningless.

MONSIEUR LE PRINCE KOUTOUZOV: I am sending one of my adjutants-general

to discuss several interesting questions with you. I beg your Highness

to credit what he says to you, especially when he expresses the

sentiment of esteem and special regard I have long entertained for your

person. This letter having no other object, I pray God, monsieur le

Prince Koutouzov, to keep you in His holy and gracious protection!

NAPOLEON MOSCOW, OCTOBER 30, 1812

Kutuzov replied: "I should be cursed by posterity were I looked on as

the initiator of a settlement of any sort. Such is the present spirit of

my nation." But he continued to exert all his powers to restrain his

troops from attacking.

During the month that the French troops were pillaging in Moscow and the

Russian troops were quietly encamped at Tarutino, a change had taken

place in the relative strength of the two armies--both in spirit and in

number--as a result of which the superiority had passed to the Russian

side. Though the condition and numbers of the French army were unknown

to the Russians, as soon as that change occurred the need of attacking

at once showed itself by countless signs. These signs were: Lauriston's

mission; the abundance of provisions at Tarutino; the reports coming in

from all sides of the inactivity and disorder of the French; the flow of

recruits to our regiments; the fine weather; the long rest the Russian

soldiers had enjoyed, and the impatience to do what they had been

assembled for, which usually shows itself in an army that has been

resting; curiosity as to what the French army, so long lost sight of,

was doing; the boldness with which our outposts now scouted close up to

the French stationed at Tarutino; the news of easy successes gained by

peasants and guerrilla troops over the French, the envy aroused by this;

the desire for revenge that lay in the heart of every Russian as long as

the French were in Moscow, and (above all) a dim consciousness in every

soldier's mind that the relative strength of the armies had changed and

that the advantage was now on our side. There was a substantial change

in the relative strength, and an advance had become inevitable. And at

once, as a clock begins to strike and chime as soon as the minute hand

has completed a full circle, this change was shown by an increased

activity, whirring, and chiming in the higher spheres.

CHAPTER III

The Russian army was commanded by Kutuzov and his staff, and also by the

Emperor from Petersburg. Before the news of the abandonment of Moscow

had been received in Petersburg, a detailed plan of the whole campaign

had been drawn up and sent to Kutuzov for his guidance. Though this plan

had been drawn up on the supposition that Moscow was still in our hands,

it was approved by the staff and accepted as a basis for action. Kutuzov

only replied that movements arranged from a distance were always

difficult to execute. So fresh instructions were sent for the solution

of difficulties that might be encountered, as well as fresh people who

were to watch Kutuzov's actions and report upon them.

Besides this, the whole staff of the Russian army was now reorganized.

The posts left vacant by Bagration, who had been killed, and by Barclay,

who had gone away in dudgeon, had to be filled. Very serious

consideration was given to the question whether it would be better to

put A in B's place and B in D's, or on the contrary to put D in A's

place, and so on--as if anything more than A's or B's satisfaction

depended on this.

As a result of the hostility between Kutuzov and Bennigsen, his Chief of

Staff, the presence of confidential representatives of the Emperor, and

these transfers, a more than usually complicated play of parties was

going on among the staff of the army. A was undermining B, D was

undermining C, and so on in all possible combinations and permutations.

In all these plottings the subject of intrigue was generally the conduct

of the war, which all these men believed they were directing; but this

affair of the war went on independently of them, as it had to go: that

is, never in the way people devised, but flowing always from the

essential attitude of the masses. Only in the highest spheres did all

these schemes, crossings, and interminglings appear to be a true

reflection of what had to happen.

Prince Michael Ilarionovich! (wrote the Emperor on the second of October

in a letter that reached Kutuzov after the battle at Tarutino) Since

September 2 Moscow has been in the hands of the enemy. Your last reports

were written on the twentieth, and during all this time not only has no

action been taken against the enemy or for the relief of the ancient

capital, but according to your last report you have even retreated

farther. Serpukhov is already occupied by an enemy detachment and Tula

with its famous arsenal so indispensable to the army, is in danger. From

General Wintzingerode's reports, I see that an enemy corps of ten

thousand men is moving on the Petersburg road. Another corps of several

thousand men is moving on Dmitrov. A third has advanced along the

Vladimir road, and a fourth, rather considerable detachment is stationed

between Ruza and Mozhaysk. Napoleon himself was in Moscow as late as the

twenty-fifth. In view of all this information, when the enemy has

scattered his forces in large detachments, and with Napoleon and his

Guards in Moscow, is it possible that the enemy's forces confronting you

are so considerable as not to allow of your taking the offensive? On the

contrary, he is probably pursuing you with detachments, or at most with

an army corps much weaker than the army entrusted to you. It would seem

that, availing yourself of these circumstances, you might advantageously

attack a weaker one and annihilate him, or at least oblige him to

retreat, retaining in our hands an important part of the provinces now

occupied by the enemy, and thereby averting danger from Tula and other

towns in the interior. You will be responsible if the enemy is able to

direct a force of any size against Petersburg to threaten this capital

in which it has not been possible to retain many troops; for with the

army entrusted to you, and acting with resolution and energy, you have

ample means to avert this fresh calamity. Remember that you have still

to answer to our offended country for the loss of Moscow. You have

experienced my readiness to reward you. That readiness will not weaken

in me, but I and Russia have a right to expect from you all the zeal,

firmness, and success which your intellect, military talent, and the

courage of the troops you command justify us in expecting.

But by the time this letter, which proved that the real relation of the

forces had already made itself felt in Petersburg, was dispatched,

Kutuzov had found himself unable any longer to restrain the army he

commanded from attacking and a battle had taken place.

On the second of October a Cossack, Shapovalov, who was out scouting,

killed one hare and wounded another. Following the wounded hare he made

his way far into the forest and came upon the left flank of Murat's

army, encamped there without any precautions. The Cossack laughingly

told his comrades how he had almost fallen into the hands of the French.

A cornet, hearing the story, informed his commander.

The Cossack was sent for and questioned. The Cossack officers wished to

take advantage of this chance to capture some horses, but one of the

superior officers, who was acquainted with the higher authorities,

reported the incident to a general on the staff. The state of things on

the staff had of late been exceedingly strained. Ermolov had been to see

Bennigsen a few days previously and had entreated him to use his

influence with the commander-in-chief to induce him to take the

offensive.

"If I did not know you I should think you did not want what you are

asking for. I need only advise anything and his Highness is sure to do

the opposite," replied Bennigsen.

The Cossack's report, confirmed by horse patrols who were sent out, was

the final proof that events had matured. The tightly coiled spring was

released, the clock began to whirr and the chimes to play. Despite all

his supposed power, his intellect, his experience, and his knowledge of

men, Kutuzov--having taken into consideration the Cossack's report, a

note from Bennigsen who sent personal reports to the Emperor, the wishes

he supposed the Emperor to hold, and the fact that all the generals

expressed the same wish--could no longer check the inevitable movement,

and gave the order to do what he regarded as useless and harmful--gave

his approval, that is, to the accomplished fact.

CHAPTER IV

Bennigsen's note and the Cossack's information that the left flank of

the French was unguarded were merely final indications that it was

necessary to order an attack, and it was fixed for the fifth of October.

On the morning of the fourth of October Kutuzov signed the dispositions.

Toll read them to Ermolov, asking him to attend to the further

arrangements.

"All right--all right. I haven't time just now," replied Ermolov, and

left the hut.

The dispositions drawn up by Toll were very good. As in the Austerlitz

dispositions, it was written--though not in German this time:

"The First Column will march here and here," "the Second Column will

march there and there," and so on; and on paper, all these columns

arrived at their places at the appointed time and destroyed the enemy.

Everything had been admirably thought out as is usual in dispositions,

and as is always the case, not a single column reached its place at the

appointed time.

When the necessary number of copies of the dispositions had been

prepared, an officer was summoned and sent to deliver them to Ermolov to

deal with. A young officer of the Horse Guards, Kutuzov's orderly,

pleased at the importance of the mission entrusted to him, went to

Ermolov's quarters.

"Gone away," said Ermolov's orderly.

The officer of the Horse Guards went to a general with whom Ermolov was

often to be found.

"No, and the general's out too."

The officer, mounting his horse, rode off to someone else.

"No, he's gone out."

"If only they don't make me responsible for this delay! What a nuisance

it is!" thought the officer, and he rode round the whole camp. One man

said he had seen Ermolov ride past with some other generals, others said

he must have returned home. The officer searched till six o'clock in the

evening without even stopping to eat. Ermolov was nowhere to be found

and no one knew where he was. The officer snatched a little food at a

comrade's, and rode again to the vanguard to find Miloradovich.

Miloradovich too was away, but here he was told that he had gone to a

ball at General Kikin's and that Ermolov was probably there too.

"But where is it?"

"Why, there, over at Echkino," said a Cossack officer, pointing to a

country house in the far distance.

"What, outside our line?"

"They've put two regiments as outposts, and they're having such a spree

there, it's awful! Two bands and three sets of singers!"

The officer rode out beyond our lines to Echkino. While still at a

distance he heard as he rode the merry sounds of a soldier's dance song

proceeding from the house.

"In the meadows... in the meadows!" he heard, accompanied by whistling

and the sound of a torban, drowned every now and then by shouts. These

sounds made his spirits rise, but at the same time he was afraid that he

would be blamed for not having executed sooner the important order

entrusted to him. It was already past eight o'clock. He dismounted and

went up into the porch of a large country house which had remained

intact between the Russian and French forces. In the refreshment room

and the hall, footmen were bustling about with wine and viands. Groups

of singers stood outside the windows. The officer was admitted and

immediately saw all the chief generals of the army together, and among

them Ermolov's big imposing figure. They all had their coats unbuttoned

and were standing in a semicircle with flushed and animated faces,

laughing loudly. In the middle of the room a short handsome general with

a red face was dancing the trepak with much spirit and agility.

"Ha, ha, ha! Bravo, Nicholas Ivanych! Ha, ha, ha!"

The officer felt that by arriving with important orders at such a moment

he was doubly to blame, and he would have preferred to wait; but one of

the generals espied him and, hearing what he had come about, informed

Ermolov.

Ermolov came forward with a frown on his face and, hearing what the

officer had to say, took the papers from him without a word.

"You think he went off just by chance?" said a comrade, who was on the

staff that evening, to the officer of the Horse Guards, referring to

Ermolov. "It was a trick. It was done on purpose to get Konovnitsyn into

trouble. You'll see what a mess there'll be tomorrow."

CHAPTER V

Next day the decrepit Kutuzov, having given orders to be called early,

said his prayers, dressed, and, with an unpleasant consciousness of

having to direct a battle he did not approve of, got into his caleche

and drove from Letashovka (a village three and a half miles from

Tarutino) to the place where the attacking columns were to meet. He sat

in the caleche, dozing and waking up by turns, and listening for any

sound of firing on the right as an indication that the action had begun.

But all was still quiet. A damp dull autumn morning was just dawning. On

approaching Tarutino Kutuzov noticed cavalrymen leading their horses to

water across the road along which he was driving. Kutuzov looked at them

searchingly, stopped his carriage, and inquired what regiment they

belonged to. They belonged to a column that should have been far in

front and in ambush long before then. "It may be a mistake," thought the

old commander-in-chief. But a little further on he saw infantry

regiments with their arms piled and the soldiers, only partly dressed,

eating their rye porridge and carrying fuel. He sent for an officer. The

officer reported that no order to advance had been received.

"How! Not rec..." Kutuzov began, but checked himself immediately and

sent for a senior officer. Getting out of his caleche, he waited with

drooping head and breathing heavily, pacing silently up and down. When

Eykhen, the officer of the general staff whom he had summoned, appeared,

Kutuzov went purple in the face, not because that officer was to blame

for the mistake, but because he was an object of sufficient importance

for him to vent his wrath on. Trembling and panting the old man fell

into that state of fury in which he sometimes used to roll on the

ground, and he fell upon Eykhen, threatening him with his hands,

shouting and loading him with gross abuse. Another man, Captain Brozin,

who happened to turn up and who was not at all to blame, suffered the

same fate.

"What sort of another blackguard are you? I'll have you shot!

Scoundrels!" yelled Kutuzov in a hoarse voice, waving his arms and

reeling.

He was suffering physically. He, the commander-in-chief, a Serene

Highness who everybody said possessed powers such as no man had ever had

in Russia, to be placed in this position--made the laughingstock of the

whole army! "I needn't have been in such a hurry to pray about today, or

have kept awake thinking everything over all night," thought he to

himself. "When I was a chit of an officer no one would have dared to

mock me so... and now!" He was in a state of physical suffering as if

from corporal punishment, and could not avoid expressing it by cries of

anger and distress. But his strength soon began to fail him, and looking

about him, conscious of having said much that was amiss, he again got

into his caleche and drove back in silence.

His wrath, once expended, did not return, and blinking feebly he

listened to excuses and self-justifications (Ermolov did not come to see

him till the next day) and to the insistence of Bennigsen, Konovnitsyn,

and Toll that the movement that had miscarried should be executed next

day. And once more Kutuzov had to consent.

CHAPTER VI

Next day the troops assembled in their appointed places in the evening

and advanced during the night. It was an autumn night with dark purple

clouds, but no rain. The ground was damp but not muddy, and the troops

advanced noiselessly, only occasionally a jingling of the artillery

could be faintly heard. The men were forbidden to talk out loud, to

smoke their pipes, or to strike a light, and they tried to prevent their

horses neighing. The secrecy of the undertaking heightened its charm and

they marched gaily. Some columns, supposing they had reached their

destination, halted, piled arms, and settled down on the cold ground,

but the majority marched all night and arrived at places where they

evidently should not have been.

Only Count Orlov-Denisov with his Cossacks (the least important

detachment of all) got to his appointed place at the right time. This

detachment halted at the outskirts of a forest, on the path leading from

the village of Stromilova to Dmitrovsk.

Toward dawn, Count Orlov-Denisov, who had dozed off, was awakened by a

deserter from the French army being brought to him. This was a Polish

sergeant of Poniatowski's corps, who explained in Polish that he had

come over because he had been slighted in the service: that he ought

long ago to have been made an officer, that he was braver than any of

them, and so he had left them and wished to pay them out. He said that

Murat was spending the night less than a mile from where they were, and

that if they would let him have a convoy of a hundred men he would

capture him alive. Count Orlov-Denisov consulted his fellow officers.

The offer was too tempting to be refused. Everyone volunteered to go and

everybody advised making the attempt. After much disputing and arguing,

Major-General Grekov with two Cossack regiments decided to go with the

Polish sergeant.

"Now, remember," said Count Orlov-Denisov to the sergeant at parting,

"if you have been lying I'll have you hanged like a dog; but if it's

true you shall have a hundred gold pieces!"

Without replying, the sergeant, with a resolute air, mounted and rode

away with Grekov whose men had quickly assembled. They disappeared into

the forest, and Count Orlov-Denisov, having seen Grekov off, returned,

shivering from the freshness of the early dawn and excited by what he

had undertaken on his own responsibility, and began looking at the enemy

camp, now just visible in the deceptive light of dawn and the dying

campfires. Our columns ought to have begun to appear on an open

declivity to his right. He looked in that direction, but though the

columns would have been visible quite far off, they were not to be seen.

It seemed to the count that things were beginning to stir in the French

camp, and his keen-sighted adjutant confirmed this.

"Oh, it is really too late," said Count Orlov, looking at the camp.

As often happens when someone we have trusted is no longer before our

eyes, it suddenly seemed quite clear and obvious to him that the

sergeant was an impostor, that he had lied, and that the whole Russian

attack would be ruined by the absence of those two regiments, which he

would lead away heaven only knew where. How could one capture a

commander-in-chief from among such a mass of troops!

"I am sure that rascal was lying," said the count.

"They can still be called back," said one of his suite, who like Count

Orlov felt distrustful of the adventure when he looked at the enemy's

camp.

"Eh? Really... what do you think? Should we let them go on or not?"

"Will you have them fetched back?"

"Fetch them back, fetch them back!" said Count Orlov with sudden

determination, looking at his watch. "It will be too late. It is quite

light."

And the adjutant galloped through the forest after Grekov. When Grekov

returned, Count Orlov-Denisov, excited both by the abandoned attempt and

by vainly awaiting the infantry columns that still did not appear, as

well as by the proximity of the enemy, resolved to advance. All his men

felt the same excitement.

"Mount!" he commanded in a whisper. The men took their places and

crossed themselves.... "Forward, with God's aid!"

"Hurrah-ah-ah!" reverberated in the forest, and the Cossack companies,

trailing their lances and advancing one after another as if poured out

of a sack, dashed gaily across the brook toward the camp.

One desperate, frightened yell from the first French soldier who saw the

Cossacks, and all who were in the camp, undressed and only just waking

up, ran off in all directions, abandoning cannons, muskets, and horses.

Had the Cossacks pursued the French, without heeding what was behind and

around them, they would have captured Murat and everything there. That

was what the officers desired. But it was impossible to make the

Cossacks budge when once they had got booty and prisoners. None of them

listened to orders. Fifteen hundred prisoners and thirty-eight guns were

taken on the spot, besides standards and (what seemed most important to

the Cossacks) horses, saddles, horsecloths, and the like. All this had

to be dealt with, the prisoners and guns secured, the booty divided--not

without some shouting and even a little fighting among themselves--and

it was on this that the Cossacks all busied themselves.

The French, not being farther pursued, began to recover themselves: they

formed into detachments and began firing. Orlov-Denisov, still waiting

for the other columns to arrive, advanced no further.

Meantime, according to the dispositions which said that "the First

Column will march" and so on, the infantry of the belated columns,

commanded by Bennigsen and directed by Toll, had started in due order

and, as always happens, had got somewhere, but not to their appointed

places. As always happens the men, starting cheerfully, began to halt;

murmurs were heard, there was a sense of confusion, and finally a

backward movement. Adjutants and generals galloped about, shouted, grew

angry, quarreled, said they had come quite wrong and were late, gave

vent to a little abuse, and at last gave it all up and went forward,

simply to get somewhere. "We shall get somewhere or other!" And they did

indeed get somewhere, though not to their right places; a few eventually

even got to their right place, but too late to be of any use and only in

time to be fired at. Toll, who in this battle played the part of

Weyrother at Austerlitz, galloped assiduously from place to place,

finding everything upside down everywhere. Thus he stumbled on Bagovut's

corps in a wood when it was already broad daylight, though the corps

should long before have joined Orlov-Denisov. Excited and vexed by the

failure and supposing that someone must be responsible for it, Toll

galloped up to the commander of the corps and began upbraiding him

severely, saying that he ought to be shot. General Bagovut, a fighting

old soldier of placid temperament, being also upset by all the delay,

confusion, and cross-purposes, fell into a rage to everybody's surprise

and quite contrary to his usual character and said disagreeable things

to Toll.

"I prefer not to take lessons from anyone, but I can die with my men as

well as anybody," he said, and advanced with a single division.

Coming out onto a field under the enemy's fire, this brave general went

straight ahead, leading his men under fire, without considering in his

agitation whether going into action now, with a single division, would

be of any use or no. Danger, cannon balls, and bullets were just what he

needed in his angry mood. One of the first bullets killed him, and other

bullets killed many of his men. And his division remained under fire for

some time quite uselessly.

CHAPTER VII

Meanwhile another column was to have attacked the French from the front,

but Kutuzov accompanied that column. He well knew that nothing but

confusion would come of this battle undertaken against his will, and as

far as was in his power held the troops back. He did not advance.

He rode silently on his small gray horse, indolently answering

suggestions that they should attack.

"The word attack is always on your tongue, but you don't see that we are

unable to execute complicated maneuvers," said he to Miloradovich who

asked permission to advance.

"We couldn't take Murat prisoner this morning or get to the place in

time, and nothing can be done now!" he replied to someone else.

When Kutuzov was informed that at the French rear--where according to

the reports of the Cossacks there had previously been nobody--there were

now two battalions of Poles, he gave a sidelong glance at Ermolov who

was behind him and to whom he had not spoken since the previous day.

"You see! They are asking to attack and making plans of all kinds, but

as soon as one gets to business nothing is ready, and the enemy,

forewarned, takes measures accordingly."

Ermolov screwed up his eyes and smiled faintly on hearing these words.

He understood that for him the storm had blown over, and that Kutuzov

would content himself with that hint.

"He's having a little fun at my expense," said Ermolov softly, nudging

with his knee Raevski who was at his side.

Soon after this, Ermolov moved up to Kutuzov and respectfully remarked:

"It is not too late yet, your Highness--the enemy has not gone away--if

you were to order an attack! If not, the Guards will not so much as see

a little smoke."

Kutuzov did not reply, but when they reported to him that Murat's troops

were in retreat he ordered an advance, though at every hundred paces he

halted for three quarters of an hour.

The whole battle consisted in what Orlov-Denisov's Cossacks had done:

the rest of the army merely lost some hundreds of men uselessly.

In consequence of this battle Kutuzov received a diamond decoration, and

Bennigsen some diamonds and a hundred thousand rubles, others also

received pleasant recognitions corresponding to their various grades,

and following the battle fresh changes were made in the staff.

"That's how everything is done with us, all topsy-turvy!" said the

Russian officers and generals after the Tarutino battle, letting it be

understood that some fool there is doing things all wrong but that we

ourselves should not have done so, just as people speak today. But

people who talk like that either do not know what they are talking about

or deliberately deceive themselves. No battle--Tarutino, Borodino, or

Austerlitz--takes place as those who planned it anticipated. That is an

essential condition.

A countless number of free forces (for nowhere is man freer than during

a battle, where it is a question of life and death) influence the course

taken by the fight, and that course never can be known in advance and

never coincides with the direction of any one force.

If many simultaneously and variously directed forces act on a given

body, the direction of its motion cannot coincide with any one of those

forces, but will always be a mean--what in mechanics is represented by

the diagonal of a parallelogram of forces.

If in the descriptions given by historians, especially French ones, we

find their wars and battles carried out in accordance with previously

formed plans, the only conclusion to be drawn is that those descriptions

are false.

The battle of Tarutino obviously did not attain the aim Toll had in

view--to lead the troops into action in the order prescribed by the

dispositions; nor that which Count Orlov-Denisov may have had in view--

to take Murat prisoner; nor the result of immediately destroying the

whole corps, which Bennigsen and others may have had in view; nor the

aim of the officer who wished to go into action to distinguish himself;

nor that of the Cossack who wanted more booty than he got, and so on.

But if the aim of the battle was what actually resulted and what all the

Russians of that day desired--to drive the French out of Russia and

destroy their army--it is quite clear that the battle of Tarutino, just

because of its incongruities, was exactly what was wanted at that stage

of the campaign. It would be difficult and even impossible to imagine

any result more opportune than the actual outcome of this battle. With a

minimum of effort and insignificant losses, despite the greatest

confusion, the most important results of the whole campaign were

attained: the transition from retreat to advance, an exposure of the

weakness of the French, and the administration of that shock which

Napoleon's army had only awaited to begin its flight.

CHAPTER VIII

Napoleon enters Moscow after the brilliant victory de la Moskowa; there

can be no doubt about the victory for the battlefield remains in the

hands of the French. The Russians retreat and abandon their ancient

capital. Moscow, abounding in provisions, arms, munitions, and

incalculable wealth, is in Napoleon's hands. The Russian army, only half

the strength of the French, does not make a single attempt to attack for

a whole month. Napoleon's position is most brilliant. He can either fall

on the Russian army with double its strength and destroy it; negotiate

an advantageous peace, or in case of a refusal make a menacing move on

Petersburg, or even, in the case of a reverse, return to Smolensk or

Vilna; or remain in Moscow; in short, no special genius would seem to be

required to retain the brilliant position the French held at that time.

For that, only very simple and easy steps were necessary: not to allow

the troops to loot, to prepare winter clothing--of which there was

sufficient in Moscow for the whole army--and methodically to collect the

provisions, of which (according to the French historians) there were

enough in Moscow to supply the whole army for six months. Yet Napoleon,

that greatest of all geniuses, who the historians declare had control of

the army, took none of these steps.

He not merely did nothing of the kind, but on the contrary he used his

power to select the most foolish and ruinous of all the courses open to

him. Of all that Napoleon might have done: wintering in Moscow,

advancing on Petersburg or on Nizhni-Novgorod, or retiring by a more

northerly or more southerly route (say by the road Kutuzov afterwards

took), nothing more stupid or disastrous can be imagined than what he

actually did. He remained in Moscow till October, letting the troops

plunder the city; then, hesitating whether to leave a garrison behind

him, he quitted Moscow, approached Kutuzov without joining battle,

turned to the right and reached Malo-Yaroslavets, again without

attempting to break through and take the road Kutuzov took, but retiring

instead to Mozhaysk along the devastated Smolensk road. Nothing more

stupid than that could have been devised, or more disastrous for the

army, as the sequel showed. Had Napoleon's aim been to destroy his army,

the most skillful strategist could hardly have devised any series of

actions that would so completely have accomplished that purpose,

independently of anything the Russian army might do.

Napoleon, the man of genius, did this! But to say that he destroyed his

army because he wished to, or because he was very stupid, would be as

unjust as to say that he had brought his troops to Moscow because he

wished to and because he was very clever and a genius.

In both cases his personal activity, having no more force than the

personal activity of any soldier, merely coincided with the laws that

guided the event.

The historians quite falsely represent Napoleon's faculties as having

weakened in Moscow, and do so only because the results did not justify

his actions. He employed all his ability and strength to do the best he

could for himself and his army, as he had done previously and as he did

subsequently in 1813. His activity at that time was no less astounding

than it was in Egypt, in Italy, in Austria, and in Prussia. We do not

know for certain in how far his genius was genuine in Egypt--where forty

centuries looked down upon his grandeur--for his great exploits there

are all told us by Frenchmen. We cannot accurately estimate his genius

in Austria or Prussia, for we have to draw our information from French

or German sources, and the incomprehensible surrender of whole corps

without fighting and of fortresses without a siege must incline Germans

to recognize his genius as the only explanation of the war carried on in

Germany. But we, thank God, have no need to recognize his genius in

order to hide our shame. We have paid for the right to look at the

matter plainly and simply, and we will not abandon that right.

His activity in Moscow was as amazing and as full of genius as

elsewhere. Order after order and plan after plan were issued by him from

the time he entered Moscow till the time he left it. The absence of

citizens and of a deputation, and even the burning of Moscow, did not

disconcert him. He did not lose sight either of the welfare of his army

or of the doings of the enemy, or of the welfare of the people of

Russia, or of the direction of affairs in Paris, or of diplomatic

considerations concerning the terms of the anticipated peace.

CHAPTER IX

With regard to military matters, Napoleon immediately on his entry into

Moscow gave General Sabastiani strict orders to observe the movements of

the Russian army, sent army corps out along the different roads, and

charged Murat to find Kutuzov. Then he gave careful directions about the

fortification of the Kremlin, and drew up a brilliant plan for a future

campaign over the whole map of Russia.

With regard to diplomatic questions, Napoleon summoned Captain Yakovlev,

who had been robbed and was in rags and did not know how to get out of

Moscow, minutely explained to him his whole policy and his magnanimity,

and having written a letter to the Emperor Alexander in which he

considered it his duty to inform his Friend and Brother that Rostopchin

had managed affairs badly in Moscow, he dispatched Yakovlev to

Petersburg.

Having similarly explained his views and his magnanimity to Tutolmin, he

dispatched that old man also to Petersburg to negotiate.

With regard to legal matters, immediately after the fires he gave orders

to find and execute the incendiaries. And the scoundrel Rostopchin was

punished by an order to burn down his houses.

With regard to administrative matters, Moscow was granted a

constitution. A municipality was established and the following

announcement issued:

INHABITANTS OF MOSCOW!

Your misfortunes are cruel, but His Majesty the Emperor and King desires

to arrest their course. Terrible examples have taught you how he

punishes disobedience and crime. Strict measures have been taken to put

an end to disorder and to re-establish public security. A paternal

administration, chosen from among yourselves, will form your

municipality or city government. It will take care of you, of your

needs, and of your welfare. Its members will be distinguished by a red

ribbon worn across the shoulder, and the mayor of the city will wear a

white belt as well. But when not on duty they will only wear a red

ribbon round the left arm.

The city police is established on its former footing, and better order

already prevails in consequence of its activity. The government has

appointed two commissaries general, or chiefs of police, and twenty

commissaries or captains of wards have been appointed to the different

wards of the city. You will recognize them by the white ribbon they will

wear on the left arm. Several churches of different denominations are

open, and divine service is performed in them unhindered. Your fellow

citizens are returning every day to their homes and orders have been

given that they should find in them the help and protection due to their

misfortunes. These are the measures the government has adopted to re-

establish order and relieve your condition. But to achieve this aim it

is necessary that you should add your efforts and should, if possible,

forget the misfortunes you have suffered, should entertain the hope of a

less cruel fate, should be certain that inevitable and ignominious death

awaits those who make any attempt on your persons or on what remains of

your property, and finally that you should not doubt that these will be

safeguarded, since such is the will of the greatest and most just of

monarchs. Soldiers and citizens, of whatever nation you may be, re-

establish public confidence, the source of the welfare of a state, live

like brothers, render mutual aid and protection one to another, unite to

defeat the intentions of the evil-minded, obey the military and civil

authorities, and your tears will soon cease to flow!

With regard to supplies for the army, Napoleon decreed that all the

troops in turn should enter Moscow a la maraude \* to obtain provisions

for themselves, so that the army might have its future provided for.

\* As looters.

With regard to religion, Napoleon ordered the priests to be brought back

and services to be again performed in the churches.

With regard to commerce and to provisioning the army, the following was

placarded everywhere:

PROCLAMATION!

You, peaceful inhabitants of Moscow, artisans and workmen whom

misfortune has driven from the city, and you scattered tillers of the

soil, still kept out in the fields by groundless fear, listen!

Tranquillity is returning to this capital and order is being restored in

it. Your fellow countrymen are emerging boldly from their hiding places

on finding that they are respected. Any violence to them or to their

property is promptly punished. His Majesty the Emperor and King protects

them, and considers no one among you his enemy except those who disobey

his orders. He desires to end your misfortunes and restore you to your

homes and families. Respond, therefore, to his benevolent intentions and

come to us without fear. Inhabitants, return with confidence to your

abodes! You will soon find means of satisfying your needs. Craftsmen and

industrious artisans, return to your work, your houses, your shops,

where the protection of guards awaits you! You shall receive proper pay

for your work. And lastly you too, peasants, come from the forests where

you are hiding in terror, return to your huts without fear, in full

assurance that you will find protection! Markets are established in the

city where peasants can bring their surplus supplies and the products of

the soil. The government has taken the following steps to ensure freedom

of sale for them: (1) From today, peasants, husbandmen, and those living

in the neighborhood of Moscow may without any danger bring their

supplies of all kinds to two appointed markets, of which one is on the

Mokhovaya Street and the other at the Provision Market. (2) Such

supplies will be bought from them at such prices as seller and buyer may

agree on, and if a seller is unable to obtain a fair price he will be

free to take his goods back to his village and no one may hinder him

under any pretense. (3) Sunday and Wednesday of each week are appointed

as the chief market days and to that end a sufficient number of troops

will be stationed along the highroads on Tuesdays and Saturdays at such

distances from the town as to protect the carts. (4) Similar measures

will be taken that peasants with their carts and horses may meet with no

hindrance on their return journey. (5) Steps will immediately be taken

to re-establish ordinary trading.

Inhabitants of the city and villages, and you, workingmen and artisans,

to whatever nation you belong, you are called on to carry out the

paternal intentions of His Majesty the Emperor and King and to co-

operate with him for the public welfare! Lay your respect and confidence

at his feet and do not delay to unite with us!

With the object of raising the spirits of the troops and of the people,

reviews were constantly held and rewards distributed. The Emperor rode

through the streets to comfort the inhabitants, and, despite his

preoccupation with state affairs, himself visited the theaters that were

established by his order.

In regard to philanthropy, the greatest virtue of crowned heads,

Napoleon also did all in his power. He caused the words Maison de ma

Mere to be inscribed on the charitable institutions, thereby combining

tender filial affection with the majestic benevolence of a monarch. He

visited the Foundling Hospital and, allowing the orphans saved by him to

kiss his white hands, graciously conversed with Tutolmin. Then, as

Thiers eloquently recounts, he ordered his soldiers to be paid in forged

Russian money which he had prepared: "Raising the use of these means by

an act worthy of himself and of the French army, he let relief be

distributed to those who had been burned out. But as food was too

precious to be given to foreigners, who were for the most part enemies,

Napoleon preferred to supply them with money with which to purchase food

from outside, and had paper rubles distributed to them."

With reference to army discipline, orders were continually being issued

to inflict severe punishment for the nonperformance of military duties

and to suppress robbery.

CHAPTER X

But strange to say, all these measures, efforts, and plans--which were

not at all worse than others issued in similar circumstances--did not

affect the essence of the matter but, like the hands of a clock detached

from the mechanism, swung about in an arbitrary and aimless way without

engaging the cogwheels.

With reference to the military side--the plan of campaign--that work of

genius of which Thiers remarks that, "His genius never devised anything

more profound, more skillful, or more admirable," and enters into a

polemic with M. Fain to prove that this work of genius must be referred

not to the fourth but to the fifteenth of October--that plan never was

or could be executed, for it was quite out of touch with the facts of

the case. The fortifying of the Kremlin, for which la Mosquee (as

Napoleon termed the church of Basil the Beatified) was to have been

razed to the ground, proved quite useless. The mining of the Kremlin

only helped toward fulfilling Napoleon's wish that it should be blown up

when he left Moscow--as a child wants the floor on which he has hurt

himself to be beaten. The pursuit of the Russian army, about which

Napoleon was so concerned, produced an unheard-of result. The French

generals lost touch with the Russian army of sixty thousand men, and

according to Thiers it was only eventually found, like a lost pin, by

the skill--and apparently the genius--of Murat.

With reference to diplomacy, all Napoleon's arguments as to his

magnanimity and justice, both to Tutolmin and to Yakovlev (whose chief

concern was to obtain a greatcoat and a conveyance), proved useless;

Alexander did not receive these envoys and did not reply to their

embassage.

With regard to legal matters, after the execution of the supposed

incendiaries the rest of Moscow burned down.

With regard to administrative matters, the establishment of a

municipality did not stop the robberies and was only of use to certain

people who formed part of that municipality and under pretext of

preserving order looted Moscow or saved their own property from being

looted.

With regard to religion, as to which in Egypt matters had so easily been

settled by Napoleon's visit to a mosque, no results were achieved. Two

or three priests who were found in Moscow did try to carry out

Napoleon's wish, but one of them was slapped in the face by a French

soldier while conducting service, and a French official reported of

another that: "The priest whom I found and invited to say Mass cleaned

and locked up the church. That night the doors were again broken open,

the padlocks smashed, the books mutilated, and other disorders

perpetrated."

With reference to commerce, the proclamation to industrious workmen and

to peasants evoked no response. There were no industrious workmen, and

the peasants caught the commissaries who ventured too far out of town

with the proclamation and killed them.

As to the theaters for the entertainment of the people and the troops,

these did not meet with success either. The theaters set up in the

Kremlin and in Posnyakov's house were closed again at once because the

actors and actresses were robbed.

Even philanthropy did not have the desired effect. The genuine as well

as the false paper money which flooded Moscow lost its value. The

French, collecting booty, cared only for gold. Not only was the paper

money valueless which Napoleon so graciously distributed to the

unfortunate, but even silver lost its value in relation to gold.

But the most amazing example of the ineffectiveness of the orders given

by the authorities at that time was Napoleon's attempt to stop the

looting and re-establish discipline.

This is what the army authorities were reporting:

"Looting continues in the city despite the decrees against it. Order is

not yet restored and not a single merchant is carrying on trade in a

lawful manner. The sutlers alone venture to trade, and they sell stolen

goods."

"The neighborhood of my ward continues to be pillaged by soldiers of the

3rd Corps who, not satisfied with taking from the unfortunate

inhabitants hiding in the cellars the little they have left, even have

the ferocity to wound them with their sabers, as I have repeatedly

witnessed."

"Nothing new, except that the soldiers are robbing and pillaging--

October 9."

"Robbery and pillaging continue. There is a band of thieves in our

district who ought to be arrested by a strong force--October 11."

"The Emperor is extremely displeased that despite the strict orders to

stop pillage, parties of marauding Guards are continually seen returning

to the Kremlin. Among the Old Guard disorder and pillage were renewed

more violently than ever yesterday evening, last night, and today. The

Emperor sees with regret that the picked soldiers appointed to guard his

person, who should set an example of discipline, carry disobedience to

such a point that they break into the cellars and stores containing army

supplies. Others have disgraced themselves to the extent of disobeying

sentinels and officers, and have abused and beaten them."

"The Grand Marshal of the palace," wrote the governor, "complains

bitterly that in spite of repeated orders, the soldiers continue to

commit nuisances in all the courtyards and even under the very windows

of the Emperor."

That army, like a herd of cattle run wild and trampling underfoot the

provender which might have saved it from starvation, disintegrated and

perished with each additional day it remained in Moscow. But it did not

go away.

It began to run away only when suddenly seized by a panic caused by the

capture of transport trains on the Smolensk road, and by the battle of

Tarutino. The news of that battle of Tarutino, unexpectedly received by

Napoleon at a review, evoked in him a desire to punish the Russians

(Thiers says), and he issued the order for departure which the whole

army was demanding.

Fleeing from Moscow the soldiers took with them everything they had

stolen. Napoleon, too, carried away his own personal tresor, but on

seeing the baggage trains that impeded the army, he was (Thiers says)

horror-struck. And yet with his experience of war he did not order all

the superfluous vehicles to be burned, as he had done with those of a

certain marshal when approaching Moscow. He gazed at the caleches and

carriages in which soldiers were riding and remarked that it was a very

good thing, as those vehicles could be used to carry provisions, the

sick, and the wounded.

The plight of the whole army resembled that of a wounded animal which

feels it is perishing and does not know what it is doing. To study the

skillful tactics and aims of Napoleon and his army from the time it

entered Moscow till it was destroyed is like studying the dying leaps

and shudders of a mortally wounded animal. Very often a wounded animal,

hearing a rustle, rushes straight at the hunter's gun, runs forward and

back again, and hastens its own end. Napoleon, under pressure from his

whole army, did the same thing. The rustle of the battle of Tarutino

frightened the beast, and it rushed forward onto the hunter's gun,

reached him, turned back, and finally--like any wild beast--ran back

along the most disadvantageous and dangerous path, where the old scent

was familiar.

During the whole of that period Napoleon, who seems to us to have been

the leader of all these movements--as the figurehead of a ship may seem

to a savage to guide the vessel--acted like a child who, holding a

couple of strings inside a carriage, thinks he is driving it.

CHAPTER XI

Early in the morning of the sixth of October Pierre went out of the

shed, and on returning stopped by the door to play with a little blue-

gray dog, with a long body and short bandy legs, that jumped about him.

This little dog lived in their shed, sleeping beside Karataev at night;

it sometimes made excursions into the town but always returned again.

Probably it had never had an owner, and it still belonged to nobody and

had no name. The French called it Azor; the soldier who told stories

called it Femgalka; Karataev and others called it Gray, or sometimes

Flabby. Its lack of a master, a name, or even of a breed or any definite

color did not seem to trouble the blue-gray dog in the least. Its furry

tail stood up firm and round as a plume, its bandy legs served it so

well that it would often gracefully lift a hind leg and run very easily

and quickly on three legs, as if disdaining to use all four. Everything

pleased it. Now it would roll on its back, yelping with delight, now

bask in the sun with a thoughtful air of importance, and now frolic

about playing with a chip of wood or a straw.

Pierre's attire by now consisted of a dirty torn shirt (the only remnant

of his former clothing), a pair of soldier's trousers which by

Karataev's advice he tied with string round the ankles for warmth, and a

peasant coat and cap. Physically he had changed much during this time.

He no longer seemed stout, though he still had the appearance of

solidity and strength hereditary in his family. A beard and mustache

covered the lower part of his face, and a tangle of hair, infested with

lice, curled round his head like a cap. The look of his eyes was

resolute, calm, and animatedly alert, as never before. The former

slackness which had shown itself even in his eyes was now replaced by an

energetic readiness for action and resistance. His feet were bare.

Pierre first looked down the field across which vehicles and horsemen

were passing that morning, then into the distance across the river, then

at the dog who was pretending to be in earnest about biting him, and

then at his bare feet which he placed with pleasure in various

positions, moving his dirty thick big toes. Every time he looked at his

bare feet a smile of animated self-satisfaction flitted across his face.

The sight of them reminded him of all he had experienced and learned

during these weeks and this recollection was pleasant to him.

For some days the weather had been calm and clear with slight frosts in

the mornings--what is called an "old wives' summer."

In the sunshine the air was warm, and that warmth was particularly

pleasant with the invigorating freshness of the morning frost still in

the air.

On everything--far and near--lay the magic crystal glitter seen only at

that time of autumn. The Sparrow Hills were visible in the distance,

with the village, the church, and the large white house. The bare trees,

the sand, the bricks and roofs of the houses, the green church spire,

and the corners of the white house in the distance, all stood out in the

transparent air in most delicate outline and with unnatural clearness.

Near by could be seen the familiar ruins of a half-burned mansion

occupied by the French, with lilac bushes still showing dark green

beside the fence. And even that ruined and befouled house--which in dull

weather was repulsively ugly--seemed quietly beautiful now, in the

clear, motionless brilliance.

A French corporal, with coat unbuttoned in a homely way, a skullcap on

his head, and a short pipe in his mouth, came from behind a corner of

the shed and approached Pierre with a friendly wink.

"What sunshine, Monsieur Kiril!" (Their name for Pierre.) "Eh? Just like

spring!"

And the corporal leaned against the door and offered Pierre his pipe,

though whenever he offered it Pierre always declined it.

"To be on the march in such weather..." he began.

Pierre inquired what was being said about leaving, and the corporal told

him that nearly all the troops were starting and there ought to be an

order about the prisoners that day. Sokolov, one of the soldiers in the

shed with Pierre, was dying, and Pierre told the corporal that something

should be done about him. The corporal replied that Pierre need not

worry about that as they had an ambulance and a permanent hospital and

arrangements would be made for the sick, and that in general everything

that could happen had been foreseen by the authorities.

"Besides, Monsieur Kiril, you have only to say a word to the captain,

you know. He is a man who never forgets anything. Speak to the captain

when he makes his round, he will do anything for you."

(The captain of whom the corporal spoke often had long chats with Pierre

and showed him all sorts of favors.)

"'You see, St. Thomas,' he said to me the other day. 'Monsieur Kiril is

a man of education, who speaks French. He is a Russian seigneur who has

had misfortunes, but he is a man. He knows what's what.... If he wants

anything and asks me, he won't get a refusal. When one has studied, you

see, one likes education and well-bred people.' It is for your sake I

mention it, Monsieur Kiril. The other day if it had not been for you

that affair would have ended ill."

And after chatting a while longer, the corporal went away. (The affair

he had alluded to had happened a few days before--a fight between the

prisoners and the French soldiers, in which Pierre had succeeded in

pacifying his comrades.) Some of the prisoners who had heard Pierre

talking to the corporal immediately asked what the Frenchman had said.

While Pierre was repeating what he had been told about the army leaving

Moscow, a thin, sallow, tattered French soldier came up to the door of

the shed. Rapidly and timidly raising his fingers to his forehead by way

of greeting, he asked Pierre whether the soldier Platoche to whom he had

given a shirt to sew was in that shed.

A week before the French had had boot leather and linen issued to them,

which they had given out to the prisoners to make up into boots and

shirts for them.

"Ready, ready, dear fellow!" said Karataev, coming out with a neatly

folded shirt.

Karataev, on account of the warm weather and for convenience at work,

was wearing only trousers and a tattered shirt as black as soot. His

hair was bound round, workman fashion, with a wisp of lime-tree bast,

and his round face seemed rounder and pleasanter than ever.

"A promise is own brother to performance! I said Friday and here it is,

ready," said Platon, smiling and unfolding the shirt he had sewn.

The Frenchman glanced around uneasily and then, as if overcoming his

hesitation, rapidly threw off his uniform and put on the shirt. He had a

long, greasy, flowered silk waistcoat next to his sallow, thin bare

body, but no shirt. He was evidently afraid the prisoners looking on

would laugh at him, and thrust his head into the shirt hurriedly. None

of the prisoners said a word.

"See, it fits well!" Platon kept repeating, pulling the shirt straight.

The Frenchman, having pushed his head and hands through, without raising

his eyes, looked down at the shirt and examined the seams.

"You see, dear man, this is not a sewing shop, and I had no proper

tools; and, as they say, one needs a tool even to kill a louse," said

Platon with one of his round smiles, obviously pleased with his work.

"It's good, quite good, thank you," said the Frenchman, in French, "but

there must be some linen left over."

"It will fit better still when it sets to your body," said Karataev,

still admiring his handiwork. "You'll be nice and comfortable...."

"Thanks, thanks, old fellow.... But the bits left over?" said the

Frenchman again and smiled. He took out an assignation ruble note and

gave it to Karataev. "But give me the pieces that are over."

Pierre saw that Platon did not want to understand what the Frenchman was

saying, and he looked on without interfering. Karataev thanked the

Frenchman for the money and went on admiring his own work. The Frenchman

insisted on having the pieces returned that were left over and asked

Pierre to translate what he said.

"What does he want the bits for?" said Karataev. "They'd make fine leg

bands for us. Well, never mind."

And Karataev, with a suddenly changed and saddened expression, took a

small bundle of scraps from inside his shirt and gave it to the

Frenchman without looking at him. "Oh dear!" muttered Karataev and went

away. The Frenchman looked at the linen, considered for a moment, then

looked inquiringly at Pierre and, as if Pierre's look had told him

something, suddenly blushed and shouted in a squeaky voice:

"Platoche! Eh, Platoche! Keep them yourself!" And handing back the odd

bits he turned and went out.

"There, look at that," said Karataev, swaying his head. "People said

they were not Christians, but they too have souls. It's what the old

folk used to say: 'A sweating hand's an open hand, a dry hand's close.'

He's naked, but yet he's given it back."

Karataev smiled thoughtfully and was silent awhile looking at the

pieces.

"But they'll make grand leg bands, dear friend," he said, and went back

into the shed.

CHAPTER XII

Four weeks had passed since Pierre had been taken prisoner and though

the French had offered to move him from the men's to the officers' shed,

he had stayed in the shed where he was first put.

In burned and devastated Moscow Pierre experienced almost the extreme

limits of privation a man can endure; but thanks to his physical

strength and health, of which he had till then been unconscious, and

thanks especially to the fact that the privations came so gradually that

it was impossible to say when they began, he endured his position not

only lightly but joyfully. And just at this time he obtained the

tranquillity and ease of mind he had formerly striven in vain to reach.

He had long sought in different ways that tranquillity of mind, that

inner harmony which had so impressed him in the soldiers at the battle

of Borodino. He had sought it in philanthropy, in Freemasonry, in the

dissipations of town life, in wine, in heroic feats of self-sacrifice,

and in romantic love for Natasha; he had sought it by reasoning--and all

these quests and experiments had failed him. And now without thinking

about it he had found that peace and inner harmony only through the

horror of death, through privation, and through what he recognized in

Karataev.

Those dreadful moments he had lived through at the executions had as it

were forever washed away from his imagination and memory the agitating

thoughts and feelings that had formerly seemed so important. It did not

now occur to him to think of Russia, or the war, or politics, or

Napoleon. It was plain to him that all these things were no business of

his, and that he was not called on to judge concerning them and

therefore could not do so. "Russia and summer weather are not bound

together," he thought, repeating words of Karataev's which he found

strangely consoling. His intention of killing Napoleon and his

calculations of the cabalistic number of the beast of the Apocalypse now

seemed to him meaningless and even ridiculous. His anger with his wife

and anxiety that his name should not be smirched now seemed not merely

trivial but even amusing. What concern was it of his that somewhere or

other that woman was leading the life she preferred? What did it matter

to anybody, and especially to him, whether or not they found out that

their prisoner's name was Count Bezukhov?

He now often remembered his conversation with Prince Andrew and quite

agreed with him, though he understood Prince Andrew's thoughts somewhat

differently. Prince Andrew had thought and said that happiness could

only be negative, but had said it with a shade of bitterness and irony

as though he was really saying that all desire for positive happiness is

implanted in us merely to torment us and never be satisfied. But Pierre

believed it without any mental reservation. The absence of suffering,

the satisfaction of one's needs and consequent freedom in the choice of

one's occupation, that is, of one's way of life, now seemed to Pierre to

be indubitably man's highest happiness. Here and now for the first time

he fully appreciated the enjoyment of eating when he wanted to eat,

drinking when he wanted to drink, sleeping when he wanted to sleep, of

warmth when he was cold, of talking to a fellow man when he wished to

talk and to hear a human voice. The satisfaction of one's needs--good

food, cleanliness, and freedom--now that he was deprived of all this,

seemed to Pierre to constitute perfect happiness; and the choice of

occupation, that is, of his way of life--now that that was so

restricted--seemed to him such an easy matter that he forgot that a

superfluity of the comforts of life destroys all joy in satisfying one's

needs, while great freedom in the choice of occupation--such freedom as

his wealth, his education, and his social position had given him in his

own life--is just what makes the choice of occupation insolubly

difficult and destroys the desire and possibility of having an

occupation.

All Pierre's daydreams now turned on the time when he would be free. Yet

subsequently, and for the rest of his life, he thought and spoke with

enthusiasm of that month of captivity, of those irrecoverable, strong,

joyful sensations, and chiefly of the complete peace of mind and inner

freedom which he experienced only during those weeks.

When on the first day he got up early, went out of the shed at dawn, and

saw the cupolas and crosses of the New Convent of the Virgin still dark

at first, the hoarfrost on the dusty grass, the Sparrow Hills, and the

wooded banks above the winding river vanishing in the purple distance,

when he felt the contact of the fresh air and heard the noise of the

crows flying from Moscow across the field, and when afterwards light

gleamed from the east and the sun's rim appeared solemnly from behind a

cloud, and the cupolas and crosses, the hoarfrost, the distance and the

river, all began to sparkle in the glad light--Pierre felt a new joy and

strength in life such as he had never before known. And this not only

stayed with him during the whole of his imprisonment, but even grew in

strength as the hardships of his position increased.

That feeling of alertness and of readiness for anything was still

further strengthened in him by the high opinion his fellow prisoners

formed of him soon after his arrival at the shed. With his knowledge of

languages, the respect shown him by the French, his simplicity, his

readiness to give anything asked of him (he received the allowance of

three rubles a week made to officers); with his strength, which he

showed to the soldiers by pressing nails into the walls of the hut; his

gentleness to his companions, and his capacity for sitting still and

thinking without doing anything (which seemed to them incomprehensible),

he appeared to them a rather mysterious and superior being. The very

qualities that had been a hindrance, if not actually harmful, to him in

the world he had lived in--his strength, his disdain for the comforts of

life, his absent-mindedness and simplicity--here among these people gave

him almost the status of a hero. And Pierre felt that their opinion

placed responsibilities upon him.

CHAPTER XIII

The French evacuation began on the night between the sixth and seventh

of October: kitchens and sheds were dismantled, carts loaded, and troops

and baggage trains started.

At seven in the morning a French convoy in marching trim, wearing shakos

and carrying muskets, knapsacks, and enormous sacks, stood in front of

the sheds, and animated French talk mingled with curses sounded all

along the lines.

In the shed everyone was ready, dressed, belted, shod, and only awaited

the order to start. The sick soldier, Sokolov, pale and thin with dark

shadows round his eyes, alone sat in his place barefoot and not dressed.

His eyes, prominent from the emaciation of his face, gazed inquiringly

at his comrades who were paying no attention to him, and he moaned

regularly and quietly. It was evidently not so much his sufferings that

caused him to moan (he had dysentery) as his fear and grief at being

left alone.

Pierre, girt with a rope round his waist and wearing shoes Karataev had

made for him from some leather a French soldier had torn off a tea chest

and brought to have his boots mended with, went up to the sick man and

squatted down beside him.

"You know, Sokolov, they are not all going away! They have a hospital

here. You may be better off than we others," said Pierre.

"O Lord! Oh, it will be the death of me! O Lord!" moaned the man in a

louder voice.

"I'll go and ask them again directly," said Pierre, rising and going to

the door of the shed.

Just as Pierre reached the door, the corporal who had offered him a pipe

the day before came up to it with two soldiers. The corporal and

soldiers were in marching kit with knapsacks and shakos that had metal

straps, and these changed their familiar faces.

The corporal came, according to orders, to shut the door. The prisoners

had to be counted before being let out.

"Corporal, what will they do with the sick man?..." Pierre began.

But even as he spoke he began to doubt whether this was the corporal he

knew or a stranger, so unlike himself did the corporal seem at that

moment. Moreover, just as Pierre was speaking a sharp rattle of drums

was suddenly heard from both sides. The corporal frowned at Pierre's

words and, uttering some meaningless oaths, slammed the door. The shed

became semidark, and the sharp rattle of the drums on two sides drowned

the sick man's groans.

"There it is!... It again!..." said Pierre to himself, and an

involuntary shudder ran down his spine. In the corporal's changed face,

in the sound of his voice, in the stirring and deafening noise of the

drums, he recognized that mysterious, callous force which compelled

people against their will to kill their fellow men--that force the

effect of which he had witnessed during the executions. To fear or to

try to escape that force, to address entreaties or exhortations to those

who served as its tools, was useless. Pierre knew this now. One had to

wait and endure. He did not again go to the sick man, nor turn to look

at him, but stood frowning by the door of the hut.

When that door was opened and the prisoners, crowding against one

another like a flock of sheep, squeezed into the exit, Pierre pushed his

way forward and approached that very captain who as the corporal had

assured him was ready to do anything for him. The captain was also in

marching kit, and on his cold face appeared that same it which Pierre

had recognized in the corporal's words and in the roll of the drums.

"Pass on, pass on!" the captain reiterated, frowning sternly, and

looking at the prisoners who thronged past him.

Pierre went up to him, though he knew his attempt would be vain.

"What now?" the officer asked with a cold look as if not recognizing

Pierre.

Pierre told him about the sick man.

"He'll manage to walk, devil take him!" said the captain. "Pass on, pass

on!" he continued without looking at Pierre.

"But he is dying," Pierre again began.

"Be so good..." shouted the captain, frowning angrily.

"Dram-da-da-dam, dam-dam..." rattled the drums, and Pierre understood

that this mysterious force completely controlled these men and that it

was now useless to say any more.

The officer prisoners were separated from the soldiers and told to march

in front. There were about thirty officers, with Pierre among them, and

about three hundred men.

The officers, who had come from the other sheds, were all strangers to

Pierre and much better dressed than he. They looked at him and at his

shoes mistrustfully, as at an alien. Not far from him walked a fat major

with a sallow, bloated, angry face, who was wearing a Kazan dressing

gown tied round with a towel, and who evidently enjoyed the respect of

his fellow prisoners. He kept one hand, in which he clasped his tobacco

pouch, inside the bosom of his dressing gown and held the stem of his

pipe firmly with the other. Panting and puffing, the major grumbled and

growled at everybody because he thought he was being pushed and that

they were all hurrying when they had nowhere to hurry to and were all

surprised at something when there was nothing to be surprised at.

Another, a thin little officer, was speaking to everyone, conjecturing

where they were now being taken and how far they would get that day. An

official in felt boots and wearing a commissariat uniform ran round from

side to side and gazed at the ruins of Moscow, loudly announcing his

observations as to what had been burned down and what this or that part

of the city was that they could see. A third officer, who by his accent

was a Pole, disputed with the commissariat officer, arguing that he was

mistaken in his identification of the different wards of Moscow.

"What are you disputing about?" said the major angrily. "What does it

matter whether it is St. Nicholas or St. Blasius? You see it's burned

down, and there's an end of it.... What are you pushing for? Isn't the

road wide enough?" said he, turning to a man behind him who was not

pushing him at all.

"Oh, oh, oh! What have they done?" the prisoners on one side and another

were heard saying as they gazed on the charred ruins. "All beyond the

river, and Zubova, and in the Kremlin.... Just look! There's not half of

it left. Yes, I told you--the whole quarter beyond the river, and so it

is."

"Well, you know it's burned, so what's the use of talking?" said the

major.

As they passed near a church in the Khamovniki (one of the few unburned

quarters of Moscow) the whole mass of prisoners suddenly started to one

side and exclamations of horror and disgust were heard.

"Ah, the villains! What heathens! Yes; dead, dead, so he is... And

smeared with something!"

Pierre too drew near the church where the thing was that evoked these

exclamations, and dimly made out something leaning against the palings

surrounding the church. From the words of his comrades who saw better

than he did, he found that this was the body of a man, set upright

against the palings with its face smeared with soot.

"Go on! What the devil... Go on! Thirty thousand devils!..." the convoy

guards began cursing and the French soldiers, with fresh virulence,

drove away with their swords the crowd of prisoners who were gazing at

the dead man.

CHAPTER XIV

Through the cross streets of the Khamovniki quarter the prisoners

marched, followed only by their escort and the vehicles and wagons

belonging to that escort, but when they reached the supply stores they

came among a huge and closely packed train of artillery mingled with

private vehicles.

At the bridge they all halted, waiting for those in front to get across.

From the bridge they had a view of endless lines of moving baggage

trains before and behind them. To the right, where the Kaluga road turns

near Neskuchny, endless rows of troops and carts stretched away into the

distance. These were troops of Beauharnais' corps which had started

before any of the others. Behind, along the riverside and across the

Stone Bridge, were Ney's troops and transport.

Davout's troops, in whose charge were the prisoners, were crossing the

Crimean bridge and some were already debouching into the Kaluga road.

But the baggage trains stretched out so that the last of Beauharnais'

train had not yet got out of Moscow and reached the Kaluga road when the

vanguard of Ney's army was already emerging from the Great Ordynka

Street.

When they had crossed the Crimean bridge the prisoners moved a few steps

forward, halted, and again moved on, and from all sides vehicles and men

crowded closer and closer together. They advanced the few hundred paces

that separated the bridge from the Kaluga road, taking more than an hour

to do so, and came out upon the square where the streets of the

Transmoskva ward and the Kaluga road converge, and the prisoners jammed

close together had to stand for some hours at that crossway. From all

sides, like the roar of the sea, were heard the rattle of wheels, the

tramp of feet, and incessant shouts of anger and abuse. Pierre stood

pressed against the wall of a charred house, listening to that noise

which mingled in his imagination with the roll of the drums.

To get a better view, several officer prisoners climbed onto the wall of

the half-burned house against which Pierre was leaning.

"What crowds! Just look at the crowds!... They've loaded goods even on

the cannon! Look there, those are furs!" they exclaimed. "Just see what

the blackguards have looted.... There! See what that one has behind in

the cart.... Why, those are settings taken from some icons, by

heaven!... Oh, the rascals!... See how that fellow has loaded himself

up, he can hardly walk! Good lord, they've even grabbed those

chaises!... See that fellow there sitting on the trunks.... Heavens!

They're fighting."

"That's right, hit him on the snout--on his snout! Like this, we shan't

get away before evening. Look, look there.... Why, that must be

Napoleon's own. See what horses! And the monograms with a crown! It's

like a portable house.... That fellow's dropped his sack and doesn't see

it. Fighting again... A woman with a baby, and not bad-looking either!

Yes, I dare say, that's the way they'll let you pass... Just look,

there's no end to it. Russian wenches, by heaven, so they are! In

carriages--see how comfortably they've settled themselves!"

Again, as at the church in Khamovniki, a wave of general curiosity bore

all the prisoners forward onto the road, and Pierre, thanks to his

stature, saw over the heads of the others what so attracted their

curiosity. In three carriages involved among the munition carts, closely

squeezed together, sat women with rouged faces, dressed in glaring

colors, who were shouting something in shrill voices.

From the moment Pierre had recognized the appearance of the mysterious

force nothing had seemed to him strange or dreadful: neither the corpse

smeared with soot for fun nor these women hurrying away nor the burned

ruins of Moscow. All that he now witnessed scarcely made an impression

on him--as if his soul, making ready for a hard struggle, refused to

receive impressions that might weaken it.

The women's vehicles drove by. Behind them came more carts, soldiers,

wagons, soldiers, gun carriages, carriages, soldiers, ammunition carts,

more soldiers, and now and then women.

Pierre did not see the people as individuals but saw their movement.

All these people and horses seemed driven forward by some invisible

power. During the hour Pierre watched them they all came flowing from

the different streets with one and the same desire to get on quickly;

they all jostled one another, began to grow angry and to fight, white

teeth gleamed, brows frowned, ever the same words of abuse flew from

side to side, and all the faces bore the same swaggeringly resolute and

coldly cruel expression that had struck Pierre that morning on the

corporal's face when the drums were beating.

It was not till nearly evening that the officer commanding the escort

collected his men and with shouts and quarrels forced his way in among

the baggage trains, and the prisoners, hemmed in on all sides, emerged

onto the Kaluga road.

They marched very quickly, without resting, and halted only when the sun

began to set. The baggage carts drew up close together and the men began

to prepare for their night's rest. They all appeared angry and

dissatisfied. For a long time, oaths, angry shouts, and fighting could

be heard from all sides. A carriage that followed the escort ran into

one of the carts and knocked a hole in it with its pole. Several

soldiers ran toward the cart from different sides: some beat the

carriage horses on their heads, turning them aside, others fought among

themselves, and Pierre saw that one German was badly wounded on the head

by a sword.

It seemed that all these men, now that they had stopped amid fields in

the chill dusk of the autumn evening, experienced one and the same

feeling of unpleasant awakening from the hurry and eagerness to push on

that had seized them at the start. Once at a standstill they all seemed

to understand that they did not yet know where they were going, and that

much that was painful and difficult awaited them on this journey.

During this halt the escort treated the prisoners even worse than they

had done at the start. It was here that the prisoners for the first time

received horseflesh for their meat ration.

From the officer down to the lowest soldier they showed what seemed like

personal spite against each of the prisoners, in unexpected contrast to

their former friendly relations.

This spite increased still more when, on calling over the roll of

prisoners, it was found that in the bustle of leaving Moscow one Russian

soldier, who had pretended to suffer from colic, had escaped. Pierre saw

a Frenchman beat a Russian soldier cruelly for straying too far from the

road, and heard his friend the captain reprimand and threaten to court-

martial a noncommissioned officer on account of the escape of the

Russian. To the noncommissioned officer's excuse that the prisoner was

ill and could not walk, the officer replied that the order was to shoot

those who lagged behind. Pierre felt that that fatal force which had

crushed him during the executions, but which he had not felt during his

imprisonment, now again controlled his existence. It was terrible, but

he felt that in proportion to the efforts of that fatal force to crush

him, there grew and strengthened in his soul a power of life independent

of it.

He ate his supper of buckwheat soup with horseflesh and chatted with his

comrades.

Neither Pierre nor any of the others spoke of what they had seen in

Moscow, or of the roughness of their treatment by the French, or of the

order to shoot them which had been announced to them. As if in reaction

against the worsening of their position they were all particularly

animated and gay. They spoke of personal reminiscences, of amusing

scenes they had witnessed during the campaign, and avoided all talk of

their present situation.

The sun had set long since. Bright stars shone out here and there in the

sky. A red glow as of a conflagration spread above the horizon from the

rising full moon, and that vast red ball swayed strangely in the gray

haze. It grew light. The evening was ending, but the night had not yet

come. Pierre got up and left his new companions, crossing between the

campfires to the other side of the road where he had been told the

common soldier prisoners were stationed. He wanted to talk to them. On

the road he was stopped by a French sentinel who ordered him back.

Pierre turned back, not to his companions by the campfire, but to an

unharnessed cart where there was nobody. Tucking his legs under him and

dropping his head he sat down on the cold ground by the wheel of the

cart and remained motionless a long while sunk in thought. Suddenly he

burst out into a fit of his broad, good-natured laughter, so loud that

men from various sides turned with surprise to see what this strange and

evidently solitary laughter could mean.

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Pierre. And he said aloud to himself: "The soldier

did not let me pass. They took me and shut me up. They hold me captive.

What, me? Me? My immortal soul? Ha-ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha!..." and he laughed

till tears started to his eyes.

A man got up and came to see what this queer big fellow was laughing at

all by himself. Pierre stopped laughing, got up, went farther away from

the inquisitive man, and looked around him.

The huge, endless bivouac that had previously resounded with the

crackling of campfires and the voices of many men had grown quiet, the

red campfires were growing paler and dying down. High up in the light

sky hung the full moon. Forests and fields beyond the camp, unseen

before, were now visible in the distance. And farther still, beyond

those forests and fields, the bright, oscillating, limitless distance

lured one to itself. Pierre glanced up at the sky and the twinkling

stars in its faraway depths. "And all that is me, all that is within me,

and it is all I!" thought Pierre. "And they caught all that and put it

into a shed boarded up with planks!" He smiled, and went and lay down to

sleep beside his companions.

CHAPTER XV

In the early days of October another envoy came to Kutuzov with a letter

from Napoleon proposing peace and falsely dated from Moscow, though

Napoleon was already not far from Kutuzov on the old Kaluga road.

Kutuzov replied to this letter as he had done to the one formerly

brought by Lauriston, saying that there could be no question of peace.

Soon after that a report was received from Dorokhov's guerrilla

detachment operating to the left of Tarutino that troops of Broussier's

division had been seen at Forminsk and that being separated from the

rest of the French army they might easily be destroyed. The soldiers and

officers again demanded action. Generals on the staff, excited by the

memory of the easy victory at Tarutino, urged Kutuzov to carry out

Dorokhov's suggestion. Kutuzov did not consider any offensive necessary.

The result was a compromise which was inevitable: a small detachment was

sent to Forminsk to attack Broussier.

By a strange coincidence, this task, which turned out to be a most

difficult and important one, was entrusted to Dokhturov--that same

modest little Dokhturov whom no one had described to us as drawing up

plans of battles, dashing about in front of regiments, showering crosses

on batteries, and so on, and who was thought to be and was spoken of as

undecided and undiscerning--but whom we find commanding wherever the

position was most difficult all through the Russo-French wars from

Austerlitz to the year 1813. At Austerlitz he remained last at the

Augezd dam, rallying the regiments, saving what was possible when all

were flying and perishing and not a single general was left in the rear

guard. Ill with fever he went to Smolensk with twenty thousand men to

defend the town against Napoleon's whole army. In Smolensk, at the

Malakhov Gate, he had hardly dozed off in a paroxysm of fever before he

was awakened by the bombardment of the town--and Smolensk held out all

day long. At the battle of Borodino, when Bagration was killed and nine

tenths of the men of our left flank had fallen and the full force of the

French artillery fire was directed against it, the man sent there was

this same irresolute and undiscerning Dokhturov--Kutuzov hastening to

rectify a mistake he had made by sending someone else there first. And

the quiet little Dokhturov rode thither, and Borodino became the

greatest glory of the Russian army. Many heroes have been described to

us in verse and prose, but of Dokhturov scarcely a word has been said.

It was Dokhturov again whom they sent to Forminsk and from there to

Malo-Yaroslavets, the place where the last battle with the French was

fought and where the obvious disintegration of the French army began;

and we are told of many geniuses and heroes of that period of the

campaign, but of Dokhturov nothing or very little is said and that

dubiously. And this silence about Dokhturov is the clearest testimony to

his merit.

It is natural for a man who does not understand the workings of a

machine to imagine that a shaving that has fallen into it by chance and

is interfering with its action and tossing about in it is its most

important part. The man who does not understand the construction of the

machine cannot conceive that the small connecting cogwheel which

revolves quietly is one of the most essential parts of the machine, and

not the shaving which merely harms and hinders the working.

On the tenth of October when Dokhturov had gone halfway to Forminsk and

stopped at the village of Aristovo, preparing faithfully to execute the

orders he had received, the whole French army having, in its convulsive

movement, reached Murat's position apparently in order to give battle--

suddenly without any reason turned off to the left onto the new Kaluga

road and began to enter Forminsk, where only Broussier had been till

then. At that time Dokhturov had under his command, besides Dorokhov's

detachment, the two small guerrilla detachments of Figner and Seslavin.

On the evening of October 11 Seslavin came to the Aristovo headquarters

with a French guardsman he had captured. The prisoner said that the

troops that had entered Forminsk that day were the vanguard of the whole

army, that Napoleon was there and the whole army had left Moscow four

days previously. That same evening a house serf who had come from

Borovsk said he had seen an immense army entering the town. Some

Cossacks of Dokhturov's detachment reported having sighted the French

Guards marching along the road to Borovsk. From all these reports it was

evident that where they had expected to meet a single division there was

now the whole French army marching from Moscow in an unexpected

direction--along the Kaluga road. Dokhturov was unwilling to undertake

any action, as it was not clear to him now what he ought to do. He had

been ordered to attack Forminsk. But only Broussier had been there at

that time and now the whole French army was there. Ermolov wished to act

on his own judgment, but Dokhturov insisted that he must have Kutuzov's

instructions. So it was decided to send a dispatch to the staff.

For this purpose a capable officer, Bolkhovitinov, was chosen, who was

to explain the whole affair by word of mouth, besides delivering a

written report. Toward midnight Bolkhovitinov, having received the

dispatch and verbal instructions, galloped off to the General Staff

accompanied by a Cossack with spare horses.

CHAPTER XVI

It was a warm, dark, autumn night. It had been raining for four days.

Having changed horses twice and galloped twenty miles in an hour and a

half over a sticky, muddy road, Bolkhovitinov reached Litashevka after

one o'clock at night. Dismounting at a cottage on whose wattle fence

hung a signboard, GENERAL STAFF, and throwing down his reins, he entered

a dark passage.

"The general on duty, quick! It's very important!" said he to someone

who had risen and was sniffing in the dark passage.

"He has been very unwell since the evening and this is the third night

he has not slept," said the orderly pleadingly in a whisper. "You should

wake the captain first."

"But this is very important, from General Dokhturov," said

Bolkhovitinov, entering the open door which he had found by feeling in

the dark.

The orderly had gone in before him and began waking somebody.

"Your honor, your honor! A courier."

"What? What's that? From whom?" came a sleepy voice.

"From Dokhturov and from Alexey Petrovich. Napoleon is at Forminsk,"

said Bolkhovitinov, unable to see in the dark who was speaking but

guessing by the voice that it was not Konovnitsyn.

The man who had wakened yawned and stretched himself.

"I don't like waking him," he said, fumbling for something. "He is very

ill. Perhaps this is only a rumor."

"Here is the dispatch," said Bolkhovitinov. "My orders are to give it at

once to the general on duty."

"Wait a moment, I'll light a candle. You damned rascal, where do you

always hide it?" said the voice of the man who was stretching himself,

to the orderly. (This was Shcherbinin, Konovnitsyn's adjutant.) "I've

found it, I've found it!" he added.

The orderly was striking a light and Shcherbinin was fumbling for

something on the candlestick.

"Oh, the nasty beasts!" said he with disgust.

By the light of the sparks Bolkhovitinov saw Shcherbinin's youthful face

as he held the candle, and the face of another man who was still asleep.

This was Konovnitsyn.

When the flame of the sulphur splinters kindled by the tinder burned up,

first blue and then red, Shcherbinin lit the tallow candle, from the

candlestick of which the cockroaches that had been gnawing it were

running away, and looked at the messenger. Bolkhovitinov was bespattered

all over with mud and had smeared his face by wiping it with his sleeve.

"Who gave the report?" inquired Shcherbinin, taking the envelope.

"The news is reliable," said Bolkhovitinov. "Prisoners, Cossacks, and

the scouts all say the same thing."

"There's nothing to be done, we'll have to wake him," said Shcherbinin,

rising and going up to the man in the nightcap who lay covered by a

greatcoat. "Peter Petrovich!" said he. (Konovnitsyn did not stir.) "To

the General Staff!" he said with a smile, knowing that those words would

be sure to arouse him.

And in fact the head in the nightcap was lifted at once. On

Konovnitsyn's handsome, resolute face with cheeks flushed by fever,

there still remained for an instant a faraway dreamy expression remote

from present affairs, but then he suddenly started and his face assumed

its habitual calm and firm appearance.

"Well, what is it? From whom?" he asked immediately but without hurry,

blinking at the light.

While listening to the officer's report Konovnitsyn broke the seal and

read the dispatch. Hardly had he done so before he lowered his legs in

their woolen stockings to the earthen floor and began putting on his

boots. Then he took off his nightcap, combed his hair over his temples,

and donned his cap.

"Did you get here quickly? Let us go to his Highness."

Konovnitsyn had understood at once that the news brought was of great

importance and that no time must be lost. He did not consider or ask

himself whether the news was good or bad. That did not interest him. He

regarded the whole business of the war not with his intelligence or his

reason but by something else. There was within him a deep unexpressed

conviction that all would be well, but that one must not trust to this

and still less speak about it, but must only attend to one's own work.

And he did his work, giving his whole strength to the task.

Peter Petrovich Konovnitsyn, like Dokhturov, seems to have been included

merely for propriety's sake in the list of the so-called heroes of 1812-

-the Barclays, Raevskis, Ermolovs, Platovs, and Miloradoviches. Like

Dokhturov he had the reputation of being a man of very limited capacity

and information, and like Dokhturov he never made plans of battle but

was always found where the situation was most difficult. Since his

appointment as general on duty he had always slept with his door open,

giving orders that every messenger should be allowed to wake him up. In

battle he was always under fire, so that Kutuzov reproved him for it and

feared to send him to the front, and like Dokhturov he was one of those

unnoticed cogwheels that, without clatter or noise, constitute the most

essential part of the machine.

Coming out of the hut into the damp, dark night Konovnitsyn frowned--

partly from an increased pain in his head and partly at the unpleasant

thought that occurred to him, of how all that nest of influential men on

the staff would be stirred up by this news, especially Bennigsen, who

ever since Tarutino had been at daggers drawn with Kutuzov; and how they

would make suggestions, quarrel, issue orders, and rescind them. And

this premonition was disagreeable to him though he knew it could not be

helped.

And in fact Toll, to whom he went to communicate the news, immediately

began to expound his plans to a general sharing his quarters, until

Konovnitsyn, who listened in weary silence, reminded him that they must

go to see his Highness.

CHAPTER XVII

Kutuzov like all old people did not sleep much at night. He often fell

asleep unexpectedly in the daytime, but at night, lying on his bed

without undressing, he generally remained awake thinking.

So he lay now on his bed, supporting his large, heavy, scarred head on

his plump hand, with his one eye open, meditating and peering into the

darkness.

Since Bennigsen, who corresponded with the Emperor and had more

influence than anyone else on the staff, had begun to avoid him, Kutuzov

was more at ease as to the possibility of himself and his troops being

obliged to take part in useless aggressive movements. The lesson of the

Tarutino battle and of the day before it, which Kutuzov remembered with

pain, must, he thought, have some effect on others too.

"They must understand that we can only lose by taking the offensive.

Patience and time are my warriors, my champions," thought Kutuzov. He

knew that an apple should not be plucked while it is green. It will fall

of itself when ripe, but if picked unripe the apple is spoiled, the tree

is harmed, and your teeth are set on edge. Like an experienced sportsman

he knew that the beast was wounded, and wounded as only the whole

strength of Russia could have wounded it, but whether it was mortally

wounded or not was still an undecided question. Now by the fact of

Lauriston and Barthelemi having been sent, and by the reports of the

guerrillas, Kutuzov was almost sure that the wound was mortal. But he

needed further proofs and it was necessary to wait.

"They want to run to see how they have wounded it. Wait and we shall

see! Continual maneuvers, continual advances!" thought he. "What for?

Only to distinguish themselves! As if fighting were fun. They are like

children from whom one can't get any sensible account of what has

happened because they all want to show how well they can fight. But

that's not what is needed now.

"And what ingenious maneuvers they all propose to me! It seems to them

that when they have thought of two or three contingencies" (he

remembered the general plan sent him from Petersburg) "they have

foreseen everything. But the contingencies are endless."

The undecided question as to whether the wound inflicted at Borodino was

mortal or not had hung over Kutuzov's head for a whole month. On the one

hand the French had occupied Moscow. On the other Kutuzov felt assured

with all his being that the terrible blow into which he and all the

Russians had put their whole strength must have been mortal. But in any

case proofs were needed; he had waited a whole month for them and grew

more impatient the longer he waited. Lying on his bed during those

sleepless nights he did just what he reproached those younger generals

for doing. He imagined all sorts of possible contingencies, just like

the younger men, but with this difference, that he saw thousands of

contingencies instead of two or three and based nothing on them. The

longer he thought the more contingencies presented themselves. He

imagined all sorts of movements of the Napoleonic army as a whole or in

sections--against Petersburg, or against him, or to outflank him. He

thought too of the possibility (which he feared most of all) that

Napoleon might fight him with his own weapon and remain in Moscow

awaiting him. Kutuzov even imagined that Napoleon's army might turn back

through Medyn and Yukhnov, but the one thing he could not foresee was

what happened--the insane, convulsive stampede of Napoleon's army during

its first eleven days after leaving Moscow: a stampede which made

possible what Kutuzov had not yet even dared to think of--the complete

extermination of the French. Dorokhov's report about Broussier's

division, the guerrillas' reports of distress in Napoleon's army, rumors

of preparations for leaving Moscow, all confirmed the supposition that

the French army was beaten and preparing for flight. But these were only

suppositions, which seemed important to the younger men but not to

Kutuzov. With his sixty years' experience he knew what value to attach

to rumors, knew how apt people who desire anything are to group all news

so that it appears to confirm what they desire, and he knew how readily

in such cases they omit all that makes for the contrary. And the more he

desired it the less he allowed himself to believe it. This question

absorbed all his mental powers. All else was to him only life's

customary routine. To such customary routine belonged his conversations

with the staff, the letters he wrote from Tarutino to Madame de Stael,

the reading of novels, the distribution of awards, his correspondence

with Petersburg, and so on. But the destruction of the French, which he

alone foresaw, was his heart's one desire.

On the night of the eleventh of October he lay leaning on his arm and

thinking of that.

There was a stir in the next room and he heard the steps of Toll,

Konovnitsyn, and Bolkhovitinov.

"Eh, who's there? Come in, come in! What news?" the field marshal called

out to them.

While a footman was lighting a candle, Toll communicated the substance

of the news.

"Who brought it?" asked Kutuzov with a look which, when the candle was

lit, struck Toll by its cold severity.

"There can be no doubt about it, your Highness."

"Call him in, call him here."

Kutuzov sat up with one leg hanging down from the bed and his big paunch

resting against the other which was doubled under him. He screwed up his

seeing eye to scrutinize the messenger more carefully, as if wishing to

read in his face what preoccupied his own mind.

"Tell me, tell me, friend," said he to Bolkhovitinov in his low, aged

voice, as he pulled together the shirt which gaped open on his chest,

"come nearer--nearer. What news have you brought me? Eh? That Napoleon

has left Moscow? Are you sure? Eh?"

Bolkhovitinov gave a detailed account from the beginning of all he had

been told to report.

"Speak quicker, quicker! Don't torture me!" Kutuzov interrupted him.

Bolkhovitinov told him everything and was then silent, awaiting

instructions. Toll was beginning to say something but Kutuzov checked

him. He tried to say something, but his face suddenly puckered and

wrinkled; he waved his arm at Toll and turned to the opposite side of

the room, to the corner darkened by the icons that hung there.

"O Lord, my Creator, Thou has heard our prayer..." said he in a

tremulous voice with folded hands. "Russia is saved. I thank Thee, O

Lord!" and he wept.

CHAPTER XVIII

From the time he received this news to the end of the campaign all

Kutuzov's activity was directed toward restraining his troops, by

authority, by guile, and by entreaty, from useless attacks, maneuvers,

or encounters with the perishing enemy. Dokhturov went to Malo-

Yaroslavets, but Kutuzov lingered with the main army and gave orders for

the evacuation of Kaluga--a retreat beyond which town seemed to him

quite possible.

Everywhere Kutuzov retreated, but the enemy without waiting for his

retreat fled in the opposite direction.

Napoleon's historians describe to us his skilled maneuvers at Tarutino

and Malo-Yaroslavets, and make conjectures as to what would have

happened had Napoleon been in time to penetrate into the rich southern

provinces.

But not to speak of the fact that nothing prevented him from advancing

into those southern provinces (for the Russian army did not bar his

way), the historians forget that nothing could have saved his army, for

then already it bore within itself the germs of inevitable ruin. How

could that army--which had found abundant supplies in Moscow and had

trampled them underfoot instead of keeping them, and on arriving at

Smolensk had looted provisions instead of storing them--how could that

army recuperate in Kaluga province, which was inhabited by Russians such

as those who lived in Moscow, and where fire had the same property of

consuming what was set ablaze?

That army could not recover anywhere. Since the battle of Borodino and

the pillage of Moscow it had borne within itself, as it were, the

chemical elements of dissolution.

The members of what had once been an army--Napoleon himself and all his

soldiers fled--without knowing whither, each concerned only to make his

escape as quickly as possible from this position, of the hopelessness of

which they were all more or less vaguely conscious.

So it came about that at the council at Malo-Yaroslavets, when the

generals pretending to confer together expressed various opinions, all

mouths were closed by the opinion uttered by the simple-minded soldier

Mouton who, speaking last, said what they all felt: that the one thing

needful was to get away as quickly as possible; and no one, not even

Napoleon, could say anything against that truth which they all

recognized.

But though they all realized that it was necessary to get away, there

still remained a feeling of shame at admitting that they must flee. An

external shock was needed to overcome that shame, and this shock came in

due time. It was what the French called "le hourra de l'Empereur."

The day after the council at Malo-Yaroslavets Napoleon rode out early in

the morning amid the lines of his army with his suite of marshals and an

escort, on the pretext of inspecting the army and the scene of the

previous and of the impending battle. Some Cossacks on the prowl for

booty fell in with the Emperor and very nearly captured him. If the

Cossacks did not capture Napoleon then, what saved him was the very

thing that was destroying the French army, the booty on which the

Cossacks fell. Here as at Tarutino they went after plunder, leaving the

men. Disregarding Napoleon they rushed after the plunder and Napoleon

managed to escape.

When les enfants du Don might so easily have taken the Emperor himself

in the midst of his army, it was clear that there was nothing for it but

to fly as fast as possible along the nearest, familiar road. Napoleon

with his forty-year-old stomach understood that hint, not feeling his

former agility and boldness, and under the influence of the fright the

Cossacks had given him he at once agreed with Mouton and issued orders--

as the historians tell us--to retreat by the Smolensk road.

That Napoleon agreed with Mouton, and that the army retreated, does not

prove that Napoleon caused it to retreat, but that the forces which

influenced the whole army and directed it along the Mozhaysk (that is,

the Smolensk) road acted simultaneously on him also.

CHAPTER XIX

A man in motion always devises an aim for that motion. To be able to go

a thousand miles he must imagine that something good awaits him at the

end of those thousand miles. One must have the prospect of a promised

land to have the strength to move.

The promised land for the French during their advance had been Moscow,

during their retreat it was their native land. But that native land was

too far off, and for a man going a thousand miles it is absolutely

necessary to set aside his final goal and to say to himself: "Today I

shall get to a place twenty-five miles off where I shall rest and spend

the night," and during the first day's journey that resting place

eclipses his ultimate goal and attracts all his hopes and desires. And

the impulses felt by a single person are always magnified in a crowd.

For the French retreating along the old Smolensk road, the final goal--

their native land--was too remote, and their immediate goal was

Smolensk, toward which all their desires and hopes, enormously

intensified in the mass, urged them on. It was not that they knew that

much food and fresh troops awaited them in Smolensk, nor that they were

told so (on the contrary their superior officers, and Napoleon himself,

knew that provisions were scarce there), but because this alone could

give them strength to move on and endure their present privations. So

both those who knew and those who did not know deceived themselves, and

pushed on to Smolensk as to a promised land.

Coming out onto the highroad the French fled with surprising energy and

unheard-of rapidity toward the goal they had fixed on. Besides the

common impulse which bound the whole crowd of French into one mass and

supplied them with a certain energy, there was another cause binding

them together--their great numbers. As with the physical law of gravity,

their enormous mass drew the individual human atoms to itself. In their

hundreds of thousands they moved like a whole nation.

Each of them desired nothing more than to give himself up as a prisoner

to escape from all this horror and misery; but on the one hand the force

of this common attraction to Smolensk, their goal, drew each of them in

the same direction; on the other hand an army corps could not surrender

to a company, and though the French availed themselves of every

convenient opportunity to detach themselves and to surrender on the

slightest decent pretext, such pretexts did not always occur. Their very

numbers and their crowded and swift movement deprived them of that

possibility and rendered it not only difficult but impossible for the

Russians to stop this movement, to which the French were directing all

their energies. Beyond a certain limit no mechanical disruption of the

body could hasten the process of decomposition.

A lump of snow cannot be melted instantaneously. There is a certain

limit of time in less than which no amount of heat can melt the snow. On

the contrary the greater the heat the more solidified the remaining snow

becomes.

Of the Russian commanders Kutuzov alone understood this. When the flight

of the French army along the Smolensk road became well defined, what

Konovnitsyn had foreseen on the night of the eleventh of October began

to occur. The superior officers all wanted to distinguish themselves, to

cut off, to seize, to capture, and to overthrow the French, and all

clamored for action.

Kutuzov alone used all his power (and such power is very limited in the

case of any commander-in-chief) to prevent an attack.

He could not tell them what we say now: "Why fight, why block the road,

losing our own men and inhumanly slaughtering unfortunate wretches? What

is the use of that, when a third of their army has melted away on the

road from Moscow to Vyazma without any battle?" But drawing from his

aged wisdom what they could understand, he told them of the golden

bridge, and they laughed at and slandered him, flinging themselves on,

rending and exulting over the dying beast.

Ermolov, Miloradovich, Platov, and others in proximity to the French

near Vyazma could not resist their desire to cut off and break up two

French corps, and by way of reporting their intention to Kutuzov they

sent him a blank sheet of paper in an envelope.

And try as Kutuzov might to restrain the troops, our men attacked,

trying to bar the road. Infantry regiments, we are told, advanced to the

attack with music and with drums beating, and killed and lost thousands

of men.

But they did not cut off or overthrow anybody and the French army,

closing up more firmly at the danger, continued, while steadily melting

away, to pursue its fatal path to Smolensk.

BOOK FOURTEEN: 1812

CHAPTER I

The Battle of Borodino, with the occupation of Moscow that followed it

and the flight of the French without further conflicts, is one of the

most instructive phenomena in history.

All historians agree that the external activity of states and nations in

their conflicts with one another is expressed in wars, and that as a

direct result of greater or less success in war the political strength

of states and nations increases or decreases.

Strange as may be the historical account of how some king or emperor,

having quarreled with another, collects an army, fights his enemy's

army, gains a victory by killing three, five, or ten thousand men, and

subjugates a kingdom and an entire nation of several millions, all the

facts of history (as far as we know it) confirm the truth of the

statement that the greater or lesser success of one army against another

is the cause, or at least an essential indication, of an increase or

decrease in the strength of the nation--even though it is unintelligible

why the defeat of an army--a hundredth part of a nation--should oblige

that whole nation to submit. An army gains a victory, and at once the

rights of the conquering nation have increased to the detriment of the

defeated. An army has suffered defeat, and at once a people loses its

rights in proportion to the severity of the reverse, and if its army

suffers a complete defeat the nation is quite subjugated.

So according to history it has been found from the most ancient times,

and so it is to our own day. All Napoleon's wars serve to confirm this

rule. In proportion to the defeat of the Austrian army Austria loses its

rights, and the rights and the strength of France increase. The

victories of the French at Jena and Auerstadt destroy the independent

existence of Prussia.

But then, in 1812, the French gain a victory near Moscow. Moscow is

taken and after that, with no further battles, it is not Russia that

ceases to exist, but the French army of six hundred thousand, and then

Napoleonic France itself. To strain the facts to fit the rules of

history: to say that the field of battle at Borodino remained in the

hands of the Russians, or that after Moscow there were other battles

that destroyed Napoleon's army, is impossible.

After the French victory at Borodino there was no general engagement nor

any that were at all serious, yet the French army ceased to exist. What

does this mean? If it were an example taken from the history of China,

we might say that it was not an historic phenomenon (which is the

historians' usual expedient when anything does not fit their standards);

if the matter concerned some brief conflict in which only a small number

of troops took part, we might treat it as an exception; but this event

occurred before our fathers' eyes, and for them it was a question of the

life or death of their fatherland, and it happened in the greatest of

all known wars.

The period of the campaign of 1812 from the battle of Borodino to the

expulsion of the French proved that the winning of a battle does not

produce a conquest and is not even an invariable indication of conquest;

it proved that the force which decides the fate of peoples lies not in

the conquerors, nor even in armies and battles, but in something else.

The French historians, describing the condition of the French army

before it left Moscow, affirm that all was in order in the Grand Army,

except the cavalry, the artillery, and the transport--there was no

forage for the horses or the cattle. That was a misfortune no one could

remedy, for the peasants of the district burned their hay rather than

let the French have it.

The victory gained did not bring the usual results because the peasants

Karp and Vlas (who after the French had evacuated Moscow drove in their

carts to pillage the town, and in general personally failed to manifest

any heroic feelings), and the whole innumerable multitude of such

peasants, did not bring their hay to Moscow for the high price offered

them, but burned it instead.

Let us imagine two men who have come out to fight a duel with rapiers

according to all the rules of the art of fencing. The fencing has gone

on for some time; suddenly one of the combatants, feeling himself

wounded and understanding that the matter is no joke but concerns his

life, throws down his rapier, and seizing the first cudgel that comes to

hand begins to brandish it. Then let us imagine that the combatant who

so sensibly employed the best and simplest means to attain his end was

at the same time influenced by traditions of chivalry and, desiring to

conceal the facts of the case, insisted that he had gained his victory

with the rapier according to all the rules of art. One can imagine what

confusion and obscurity would result from such an account of the duel.

The fencer who demanded a contest according to the rules of fencing was

the French army; his opponent who threw away the rapier and snatched up

the cudgel was the Russian people; those who try to explain the matter

according to the rules of fencing are the historians who have described

the event.

After the burning of Smolensk a war began which did not follow any

previous traditions of war. The burning of towns and villages, the

retreats after battles, the blow dealt at Borodino and the renewed

retreat, the burning of Moscow, the capture of marauders, the seizure of

transports, and the guerrilla war were all departures from the rules.

Napoleon felt this, and from the time he took up the correct fencing

attitude in Moscow and instead of his opponent's rapier saw a cudgel

raised above his head, he did not cease to complain to Kutuzov and to

the Emperor Alexander that the war was being carried on contrary to all

the rules--as if there were any rules for killing people. In spite of

the complaints of the French as to the nonobservance of the rules, in

spite of the fact that to some highly placed Russians it seemed rather

disgraceful to fight with a cudgel and they wanted to assume a pose en

quarte or en tierce according to all the rules, and to make an adroit

thrust en prime, and so on--the cudgel of the people's war was lifted

with all its menacing and majestic strength, and without consulting

anyone's tastes or rules and regardless of anything else, it rose and

fell with stupid simplicity, but consistently, and belabored the French

till the whole invasion had perished.

And it is well for a people who do not--as the French did in 1813--

salute according to all the rules of art, and, presenting the hilt of

their rapier gracefully and politely, hand it to their magnanimous

conqueror, but at the moment of trial, without asking what rules others

have adopted in similar cases, simply and easily pick up the first

cudgel that comes to hand and strike with it till the feeling of

resentment and revenge in their soul yields to a feeling of contempt and

compassion.

CHAPTER II

One of the most obvious and advantageous departures from the so-called

laws of war is the action of scattered groups against men pressed

together in a mass. Such action always occurs in wars that take on a

national character. In such actions, instead of two crowds opposing each

other, the men disperse, attack singly, run away when attacked by

stronger forces, but again attack when opportunity offers. This was done

by the guerrillas in Spain, by the mountain tribes in the Caucasus, and

by the Russians in 1812.

People have called this kind of war "guerrilla warfare" and assume that

by so calling it they have explained its meaning. But such a war does

not fit in under any rule and is directly opposed to a well-known rule

of tactics which is accepted as infallible. That rule says that an

attacker should concentrate his forces in order to be stronger than his

opponent at the moment of conflict.

Guerrilla war (always successful, as history shows) directly infringes

that rule.

This contradiction arises from the fact that military science assumes

the strength of an army to be identical with its numbers. Military

science says that the more troops the greater the strength. Les gros

bataillons ont toujours raison. \*

\* Large battalions are always victorious.

For military science to say this is like defining momentum in mechanics

by reference to the mass only: stating that momenta are equal or unequal

to each other simply because the masses involved are equal or unequal.

Momentum (quantity of motion) is the product of mass and velocity.

In military affairs the strength of an army is the product of its mass

and some unknown x.

Military science, seeing in history innumerable instances of the fact

that the size of any army does not coincide with its strength and that

small detachments defeat larger ones, obscurely admits the existence of

this unknown factor and tries to discover it--now in a geometric

formation, now in the equipment employed, now, and most usually, in the

genius of the commanders. But the assignment of these various meanings

to the factor does not yield results which accord with the historic

facts.

Yet it is only necessary to abandon the false view (adopted to gratify

the "heroes") of the efficacy of the directions issued in wartime by

commanders, in order to find this unknown quantity.

That unknown quantity is the spirit of the army, that is to say, the

greater or lesser readiness to fight and face danger felt by all the men

composing an army, quite independently of whether they are, or are not,

fighting under the command of a genius, in two--or three-line formation,

with cudgels or with rifles that repeat thirty times a minute. Men who

want to fight will always put themselves in the most advantageous

conditions for fighting.

The spirit of an army is the factor which multiplied by the mass gives

the resulting force. To define and express the significance of this

unknown factor--the spirit of an army--is a problem for science.

This problem is only solvable if we cease arbitrarily to substitute for

the unknown x itself the conditions under which that force becomes

apparent--such as the commands of the general, the equipment employed,

and so on--mistaking these for the real significance of the factor, and

if we recognize this unknown quantity in its entirety as being the

greater or lesser desire to fight and to face danger. Only then,

expressing known historic facts by equations and comparing the relative

significance of this factor, can we hope to define the unknown.

Ten men, battalions, or divisions, fighting fifteen men, battalions, or

divisions, conquer--that is, kill or take captive--all the others, while

themselves losing four, so that on the one side four and on the other

fifteen were lost. Consequently the four were equal to the fifteen, and

therefore 4x = 15y. Consequently x/y = 15/4. This equation does not give

us the value of the unknown factor but gives us a ratio between two

unknowns. And by bringing variously selected historic units (battles,

campaigns, periods of war) into such equations, a series of numbers

could be obtained in which certain laws should exist and might be

discovered.

The tactical rule that an army should act in masses when attacking, and

in smaller groups in retreat, unconsciously confirms the truth that the

strength of an army depends on its spirit. To lead men forward under

fire more discipline (obtainable only by movement in masses) is needed

than is needed to resist attacks. But this rule which leaves out of

account the spirit of the army continually proves incorrect and is in

particularly striking contrast to the facts when some strong rise or

fall in the spirit of the troops occurs, as in all national wars.

The French, retreating in 1812--though according to tactics they should

have separated into detachments to defend themselves--congregated into a

mass because the spirit of the army had so fallen that only the mass

held the army together. The Russians, on the contrary, ought according

to tactics to have attacked in mass, but in fact they split up into

small units, because their spirit had so risen that separate

individuals, without orders, dealt blows at the French without needing

any compulsion to induce them to expose themselves to hardships and

dangers.

CHAPTER III

The so-called partisan war began with the entry of the French into

Smolensk.

Before partisan warfare had been officially recognized by the

government, thousands of enemy stragglers, marauders, and foragers had

been destroyed by the Cossacks and the peasants, who killed them off as

instinctively as dogs worry a stray mad dog to death. Denis Davydov,

with his Russian instinct, was the first to recognize the value of this

terrible cudgel which regardless of the rules of military science

destroyed the French, and to him belongs the credit for taking the first

step toward regularizing this method of warfare.

On August 24 Davydov's first partisan detachment was formed and then

others were recognized. The further the campaign progressed the more

numerous these detachments became.

The irregulars destroyed the great army piecemeal. They gathered the

fallen leaves that dropped of themselves from that withered tree--the

French army--and sometimes shook that tree itself. By October, when the

French were fleeing toward Smolensk, there were hundreds of such

companies, of various sizes and characters. There were some that adopted

all the army methods and had infantry, artillery, staffs, and the

comforts of life. Others consisted solely of Cossack cavalry. There were

also small scratch groups of foot and horse, and groups of peasants and

landowners that remained unknown. A sacristan commanded one party which

captured several hundred prisoners in the course of a month; and there

was Vasilisa, the wife of a village elder, who slew hundreds of the

French.

The partisan warfare flamed up most fiercely in the latter days of

October. Its first period had passed: when the partisans themselves,

amazed at their own boldness, feared every minute to be surrounded and

captured by the French, and hid in the forests without unsaddling,

hardly daring to dismount and always expecting to be pursued. By the end

of October this kind of warfare had taken definite shape: it had become

clear to all what could be ventured against the French and what could

not. Now only the commanders of detachments with staffs, and moving

according to rules at a distance from the French, still regarded many

things as impossible. The small bands that had started their activities

long before and had already observed the French closely considered

things possible which the commanders of the big detachments did not dare

to contemplate. The Cossacks and peasants who crept in among the French

now considered everything possible.

On October 22, Denisov (who was one of the irregulars) was with his

group at the height of the guerrilla enthusiasm. Since early morning he

and his party had been on the move. All day long he had been watching

from the forest that skirted the highroad a large French convoy of

cavalry baggage and Russian prisoners separated from the rest of the

army, which--as was learned from spies and prisoners--was moving under a

strong escort to Smolensk. Besides Denisov and Dolokhov (who also led a

small party and moved in Denisov's vicinity), the commanders of some

large divisions with staffs also knew of this convoy and, as Denisov

expressed it, were sharpening their teeth for it. Two of the commanders

of large parties--one a Pole and the other a German--sent invitations to

Denisov almost simultaneously, requesting him to join up with their

divisions to attack the convoy.

"No, bwother, I have gwown mustaches myself," said Denisov on reading

these documents, and he wrote to the German that, despite his heartfelt

desire to serve under so valiant and renowned a general, he had to forgo

that pleasure because he was already under the command of the Polish

general. To the Polish general he replied to the same effect, informing

him that he was already under the command of the German.

Having arranged matters thus, Denisov and Dolokhov intended, without

reporting matters to the higher command, to attack and seize that convoy

with their own small forces. On October 22 it was moving from the

village of Mikulino to that of Shamshevo. To the left of the road

between Mikulino and Shamshevo there were large forests, extending in

some places up to the road itself though in others a mile or more back

from it. Through these forests Denisov and his party rode all day,

sometimes keeping well back in them and sometimes coming to the very

edge, but never losing sight of the moving French. That morning,

Cossacks of Denisov's party had seized and carried off into the forest

two wagons loaded with cavalry saddles, which had stuck in the mud not

far from Mikulino where the forest ran close to the road. Since then,

and until evening, the party had watched the movements of the French

without attacking. It was necessary to let the French reach Shamshevo

quietly without alarming them and then, after joining Dolokhov who was

to come that evening to a consultation at a watchman's hut in the forest

less than a mile from Shamshevo, to surprise the French at dawn, falling

like an avalanche on their heads from two sides, and rout and capture

them all at one blow.

In their rear, more than a mile from Mikulino where the forest came

right up to the road, six Cossacks were posted to report if any fresh

columns of French should show themselves.

Beyond Shamshevo, Dolokhov was to observe the road in the same way, to

find out at what distance there were other French troops. They reckoned

that the convoy had fifteen hundred men. Denisov had two hundred, and

Dolokhov might have as many more, but the disparity of numbers did not

deter Denisov. All that he now wanted to know was what troops these were

and to learn that he had to capture a "tongue"--that is, a man from the

enemy column. That morning's attack on the wagons had been made so

hastily that the Frenchmen with the wagons had all been killed; only a

little drummer boy had been taken alive, and as he was a straggler he

could tell them nothing definite about the troops in that column.

Denisov considered it dangerous to make a second attack for fear of

putting the whole column on the alert, so he sent Tikhon Shcherbaty, a

peasant of his party, to Shamshevo to try and seize at least one of the

French quartermasters who had been sent on in advance.

CHAPTER IV

It was a warm rainy autumn day. The sky and the horizon were both the

color of muddy water. At times a sort of mist descended, and then

suddenly heavy slanting rain came down.

Denisov in a felt cloak and a sheepskin cap from which the rain ran down

was riding a thin thoroughbred horse with sunken sides. Like his horse,

which turned its head and laid its ears back, he shrank from the driving

rain and gazed anxiously before him. His thin face with its short, thick

black beard looked angry.

Beside Denisov rode an esaul, \* Denisov's fellow worker, also in felt

cloak and sheepskin cap, and riding a large sleek Don horse.

\* A captain of Cossacks.

Esaul Lovayski the Third was a tall man as straight as an arrow, pale-

faced, fair-haired, with narrow light eyes and with calm self-

satisfaction in his face and bearing. Though it was impossible to say in

what the peculiarity of the horse and rider lay, yet at first glance at

the esaul and Denisov one saw that the latter was wet and uncomfortable

and was a man mounted on a horse, while looking at the esaul one saw

that he was as comfortable and as much at ease as always and that he was

not a man who had mounted a horse, but a man who was one with his horse,

a being consequently possessed of twofold strength.

A little ahead of them walked a peasant guide, wet to the skin and

wearing a gray peasant coat and a white knitted cap.

A little behind, on a poor, small, lean Kirghiz mount with an enormous

tail and mane and a bleeding mouth, rode a young officer in a blue

French overcoat.

Beside him rode an hussar, with a boy in a tattered French uniform and

blue cap behind him on the crupper of his horse. The boy held on to the

hussar with cold, red hands, and raising his eyebrows gazed about him

with surprise. This was the French drummer boy captured that morning.

Behind them along the narrow, sodden, cutup forest road came hussars in

threes and fours, and then Cossacks: some in felt cloaks, some in French

greatcoats, and some with horsecloths over their heads. The horses,

being drenched by the rain, all looked black whether chestnut or bay.

Their necks, with their wet, close-clinging manes, looked strangely

thin. Steam rose from them. Clothes, saddles, reins, were all wet,

slippery, and sodden, like the ground and the fallen leaves that strewed

the road. The men sat huddled up trying not to stir, so as to warm the

water that had trickled to their bodies and not admit the fresh cold

water that was leaking in under their seats, their knees, and at the

back of their necks. In the midst of the outspread line of Cossacks two

wagons, drawn by French horses and by saddled Cossack horses that had

been hitched on in front, rumbled over the tree stumps and branches and

splashed through the water that lay in the ruts.

Denisov's horse swerved aside to avoid a pool in the track and bumped

his rider's knee against a tree.

"Oh, the devil!" exclaimed Denisov angrily, and showing his teeth he

struck his horse three times with his whip, splashing himself and his

comrades with mud.

Denisov was out of sorts both because of the rain and also from hunger

(none of them had eaten anything since morning), and yet more because he

still had no news from Dolokhov and the man sent to capture a "tongue"

had not returned.

"There'll hardly be another such chance to fall on a transport as today.

It's too risky to attack them by oneself, and if we put it off till

another day one of the big guerrilla detachments will snatch the prey

from under our noses," thought Denisov, continually peering forward,

hoping to see a messenger from Dolokhov.

On coming to a path in the forest along which he could see far to the

right, Denisov stopped.

"There's someone coming," said he.

The esaul looked in the direction Denisov indicated.

"There are two, an officer and a Cossack. But it is not presupposable

that it is the lieutenant colonel himself," said the esaul, who was fond

of using words the Cossacks did not know.

The approaching riders having descended a decline were no longer

visible, but they reappeared a few minutes later. In front, at a weary

gallop and using his leather whip, rode an officer, disheveled and

drenched, whose trousers had worked up to above his knees. Behind him,

standing in the stirrups, trotted a Cossack. The officer, a very young

lad with a broad rosy face and keen merry eyes, galloped up to Denisov

and handed him a sodden envelope.

"From the general," said the officer. "Please excuse its not being quite

dry."

Denisov, frowning, took the envelope and opened it.

"There, they kept telling us: 'It's dangerous, it's dangerous,'" said

the officer, addressing the esaul while Denisov was reading the

dispatch. "But Komarov and I"--he pointed to the Cossack--"were

prepared. We have each of us two pistols.... But what's this?" he asked,

noticing the French drummer boy. "A prisoner? You've already been in

action? May I speak to him?"

"Wostov! Petya!" exclaimed Denisov, having run through the dispatch.

"Why didn't you say who you were?" and turning with a smile he held out

his hand to the lad.

The officer was Petya Rostov.

All the way Petya had been preparing himself to behave with Denisov as

befitted a grownup man and an officer--without hinting at their previous

acquaintance. But as soon as Denisov smiled at him Petya brightened up,

blushed with pleasure, forgot the official manner he had been

rehearsing, and began telling him how he had already been in a battle

near Vyazma and how a certain hussar had distinguished himself there.

"Well, I am glad to see you," Denisov interrupted him, and his face

again assumed its anxious expression.

"Michael Feoklitych," said he to the esaul, "this is again fwom that

German, you know. He"--he indicated Petya--"is serving under him."

And Denisov told the esaul that the dispatch just delivered was a

repetition of the German general's demand that he should join forces

with him for an attack on the transport.

"If we don't take it tomowwow, he'll snatch it fwom under our noses," he

added.

While Denisov was talking to the esaul, Petya--abashed by Denisov's cold

tone and supposing that it was due to the condition of his trousers--

furtively tried to pull them down under his greatcoat so that no one

should notice it, while maintaining as martial an air as possible.

"Will there be any orders, your honor?" he asked Denisov, holding his

hand at the salute and resuming the game of adjutant and general for

which he had prepared himself, "or shall I remain with your honor?"

"Orders?" Denisov repeated thoughtfully. "But can you stay till

tomowwow?"

"Oh, please... May I stay with you?" cried Petya.

"But, just what did the genewal tell you? To weturn at once?" asked

Denisov.

Petya blushed.

"He gave me no instructions. I think I could?" he returned, inquiringly.

"Well, all wight," said Denisov.

And turning to his men he directed a party to go on to the halting place

arranged near the watchman's hut in the forest, and told the officer on

the Kirghiz horse (who performed the duties of an adjutant) to go and

find out where Dolokhov was and whether he would come that evening.

Denisov himself intended going with the esaul and Petya to the edge of

the forest where it reached out to Shamshevo, to have a look at the part

of the French bivouac they were to attack next day.

"Well, old fellow," said he to the peasant guide, "lead us to

Shamshevo."

Denisov, Petya, and the esaul, accompanied by some Cossacks and the

hussar who had the prisoner, rode to the left across a ravine to the

edge of the forest.

CHAPTER V

The rain had stopped, and only the mist was falling and drops from the

trees. Denisov, the esaul, and Petya rode silently, following the

peasant in the knitted cap who, stepping lightly with outturned toes and

moving noiselessly in his bast shoes over the roots and wet leaves,

silently led them to the edge of the forest.

He ascended an incline, stopped, looked about him, and advanced to where

the screen of trees was less dense. On reaching a large oak tree that

had not yet shed its leaves, he stopped and beckoned mysteriously to

them with his hand.

Denisov and Petya rode up to him. From the spot where the peasant was

standing they could see the French. Immediately beyond the forest, on a

downward slope, lay a field of spring rye. To the right, beyond a steep

ravine, was a small village and a landowner's house with a broken roof.

In the village, in the house, in the garden, by the well, by the pond,

over all the rising ground, and all along the road uphill from the

bridge leading to the village, not more than five hundred yards away,

crowds of men could be seen through the shimmering mist. Their un-

Russian shouting at their horses which were straining uphill with the

carts, and their calls to one another, could be clearly heard.

"Bwing the prisoner here," said Denisov in a low voice, not taking his

eyes off the French.

A Cossack dismounted, lifted the boy down, and took him to Denisov.

Pointing to the French troops, Denisov asked him what these and those of

them were. The boy, thrusting his cold hands into his pockets and

lifting his eyebrows, looked at Denisov in affright, but in spite of an

evident desire to say all he knew gave confused answers, merely

assenting to everything Denisov asked him. Denisov turned away from him

frowning and addressed the esaul, conveying his own conjectures to him.

Petya, rapidly turning his head, looked now at the drummer boy, now at

Denisov, now at the esaul, and now at the French in the village and

along the road, trying not to miss anything of importance.

"Whether Dolokhov comes or not, we must seize it, eh?" said Denisov with

a merry sparkle in his eyes.

"It is a very suitable spot," said the esaul.

"We'll send the infantwy down by the swamps," Denisov continued.

"They'll cweep up to the garden; you'll wide up fwom there with the

Cossacks"--he pointed to a spot in the forest beyond the village--"and I

with my hussars fwom here. And at the signal shot..."

"The hollow is impassable--there's a swamp there," said the esaul. "The

horses would sink. We must ride round more to the left...."

While they were talking in undertones the crack of a shot sounded from

the low ground by the pond, a puff of white smoke appeared, then

another, and the sound of hundreds of seemingly merry French voices

shouting together came up from the slope. For a moment Denisov and the

esaul drew back. They were so near that they thought they were the cause

of the firing and shouting. But the firing and shouting did not relate

to them. Down below, a man wearing something red was running through the

marsh. The French were evidently firing and shouting at him.

"Why, that's our Tikhon," said the esaul.

"So it is! It is!"

"The wascal!" said Denisov.

"He'll get away!" said the esaul, screwing up his eyes.

The man whom they called Tikhon, having run to the stream, plunged in so

that the water splashed in the air, and, having disappeared for an

instant, scrambled out on all fours, all black with the wet, and ran on.

The French who had been pursuing him stopped.

"Smart, that!" said the esaul.

"What a beast!" said Denisov with his former look of vexation. "What has

he been doing all this time?"

"Who is he?" asked Petya.

"He's our plastun. I sent him to capture a 'tongue.'"

"Oh, yes," said Petya, nodding at the first words Denisov uttered as if

he understood it all, though he really did not understand anything of

it.

Tikhon Shcherbaty was one of the most indispensable men in their band.

He was a peasant from Pokrovsk, near the river Gzhat. When Denisov had

come to Pokrovsk at the beginning of his operations and had as usual

summoned the village elder and asked him what he knew about the French,

the elder, as though shielding himself, had replied, as all village

elders did, that he had neither seen nor heard anything of them. But

when Denisov explained that his purpose was to kill the French, and

asked if no French had strayed that way, the elder replied that some

"more-orderers" had really been at their village, but that Tikhon

Shcherbaty was the only man who dealt with such matters. Denisov had

Tikhon called and, having praised him for his activity, said a few words

in the elder's presence about loyalty to the Tsar and the country and

the hatred of the French that all sons of the fatherland should cherish.

"We don't do the French any harm," said Tikhon, evidently frightened by

Denisov's words. "We only fooled about with the lads for fun, you know!

We killed a score or so of 'more-orderers,' but we did no harm else..."

Next day when Denisov had left Pokrovsk, having quite forgotten about

this peasant, it was reported to him that Tikhon had attached himself to

their party and asked to be allowed to remain with it. Denisov gave

orders to let him do so.

Tikhon, who at first did rough work, laying campfires, fetching water,

flaying dead horses, and so on, soon showed a great liking and aptitude

for partisan warfare. At night he would go out for booty and always

brought back French clothing and weapons, and when told to would bring

in French captives also. Denisov then relieved him from drudgery and

began taking him with him when he went out on expeditions and had him

enrolled among the Cossacks.

Tikhon did not like riding, and always went on foot, never lagging

behind the cavalry. He was armed with a musketoon (which he carried

rather as a joke), a pike and an ax, which latter he used as a wolf uses

its teeth, with equal ease picking fleas out of its fur or crunching

thick bones. Tikhon with equal accuracy would split logs with blows at

arm's length, or holding the head of the ax would cut thin little pegs

or carve spoons. In Denisov's party he held a peculiar and exceptional

position. When anything particularly difficult or nasty had to be done--

to push a cart out of the mud with one's shoulders, pull a horse out of

a swamp by its tail, skin it, slink in among the French, or walk more

than thirty miles in a day--everybody pointed laughingly at Tikhon.

"It won't hurt that devil--he's as strong as a horse!" they said of him.

Once a Frenchman Tikhon was trying to capture fired a pistol at him and

shot him in the fleshy part of the back. That wound (which Tikhon

treated only with internal and external applications of vodka) was the

subject of the liveliest jokes by the whole detachment--jokes in which

Tikhon readily joined.

"Hallo, mate! Never again? Gave you a twist?" the Cossacks would banter

him. And Tikhon, purposely writhing and making faces, pretended to be

angry and swore at the French with the funniest curses. The only effect

of this incident on Tikhon was that after being wounded he seldom

brought in prisoners.

He was the bravest and most useful man in the party. No one found more

opportunities for attacking, no one captured or killed more Frenchmen,

and consequently he was made the buffoon of all the Cossacks and hussars

and willingly accepted that role. Now he had been sent by Denisov

overnight to Shamshevo to capture a "tongue." But whether because he had

not been content to take only one Frenchman or because he had slept

through the night, he had crept by day into some bushes right among the

French and, as Denisov had witnessed from above, had been detected by

them.

CHAPTER VI

After talking for some time with the esaul about next day's attack,

which now, seeing how near they were to the French, he seemed to have

definitely decided on, Denisov turned his horse and rode back.

"Now, my lad, we'll go and get dwy," he said to Petya.

As they approached the watchhouse Denisov stopped, peering into the

forest. Among the trees a man with long legs and long, swinging arms,

wearing a short jacket, bast shoes, and a Kazan hat, was approaching

with long, light steps. He had a musketoon over his shoulder and an ax

stuck in his girdle. When he espied Denisov he hastily threw something

into the bushes, removed his sodden hat by its floppy brim, and

approached his commander. It was Tikhon. His wrinkled and pockmarked

face and narrow little eyes beamed with self-satisfied merriment. He

lifted his head high and gazed at Denisov as if repressing a laugh.

"Well, where did you disappear to?" inquired Denisov.

"Where did I disappear to? I went to get Frenchmen," answered Tikhon

boldly and hurriedly, in a husky but melodious bass voice.

"Why did you push yourself in there by daylight? You ass! Well, why

haven't you taken one?"

"Oh, I took one all right," said Tikhon.

"Where is he?"

"You see, I took him first thing at dawn," Tikhon continued, spreading

out his flat feet with outturned toes in their bast shoes. "I took him

into the forest. Then I see he's no good and think I'll go and fetch a

likelier one."

"You see?... What a wogue--it's just as I thought," said Denisov to the

esaul. "Why didn't you bwing that one?"

"What was the good of bringing him?" Tikhon interrupted hastily and

angrily--"that one wouldn't have done for you. As if I don't know what

sort you want!"

"What a bwute you are!... Well?"

"I went for another one," Tikhon continued, "and I crept like this

through the wood and lay down." (He suddenly lay down on his stomach

with a supple movement to show how he had done it.) "One turned up and I

grabbed him, like this." (He jumped up quickly and lightly.) "'Come

along to the colonel,' I said. He starts yelling, and suddenly there

were four of them. They rushed at me with their little swords. So I went

for them with my ax, this way: 'What are you up to?' says I. 'Christ be

with you!'" shouted Tikhon, waving his arms with an angry scowl and

throwing out his chest.

"Yes, we saw from the hill how you took to your heels through the

puddles!" said the esaul, screwing up his glittering eyes.

Petya badly wanted to laugh, but noticed that they all refrained from

laughing. He turned his eyes rapidly from Tikhon's face to the esaul's

and Denisov's, unable to make out what it all meant.

"Don't play the fool!" said Denisov, coughing angrily. "Why didn't you

bwing the first one?"

Tikhon scratched his back with one hand and his head with the other,

then suddenly his whole face expanded into a beaming, foolish grin,

disclosing a gap where he had lost a tooth (that was why he was called

Shcherbaty--the gap-toothed). Denisov smiled, and Petya burst into a

peal of merry laughter in which Tikhon himself joined.

"Oh, but he was a regular good-for-nothing," said Tikhon. "The clothes

on him--poor stuff! How could I bring him? And so rude, your honor! Why,

he says: 'I'm a general's son myself, I won't go!' he says."

"You are a bwute!" said Denisov. "I wanted to question..."

"But I questioned him," said Tikhon. "He said he didn't know much.

'There are a lot of us,' he says, 'but all poor stuff--only soldiers in

name,' he says. 'Shout loud at them,' he says, 'and you'll take them

all,'" Tikhon concluded, looking cheerfully and resolutely into

Denisov's eyes.

"I'll give you a hundwed sharp lashes--that'll teach you to play the

fool!" said Denisov severely.

"But why are you angry?" remonstrated Tikhon, "just as if I'd never seen

your Frenchmen! Only wait till it gets dark and I'll fetch you any of

them you want--three if you like."

"Well, let's go," said Denisov, and rode all the way to the watchhouse

in silence and frowning angrily.

Tikhon followed behind and Petya heard the Cossacks laughing with him

and at him, about some pair of boots he had thrown into the bushes.

When the fit of laughter that had seized him at Tikhon's words and smile

had passed and Petya realized for a moment that this Tikhon had killed a

man, he felt uneasy. He looked round at the captive drummer boy and felt

a pang in his heart. But this uneasiness lasted only a moment. He felt

it necessary to hold his head higher, to brace himself, and to question

the esaul with an air of importance about tomorrow's undertaking, that

he might not be unworthy of the company in which he found himself.

The officer who had been sent to inquire met Denisov on the way with the

news that Dolokhov was soon coming and that all was well with him.

Denisov at once cheered up and, calling Petya to him, said: "Well, tell

me about yourself."

CHAPTER VII

Petya, having left his people after their departure from Moscow, joined

his regiment and was soon taken as orderly by a general commanding a

large guerrilla detachment. From the time he received his commission,

and especially since he had joined the active army and taken part in the

battle of Vyazma, Petya had been in a constant state of blissful

excitement at being grown-up and in a perpetual ecstatic hurry not to

miss any chance to do something really heroic. He was highly delighted

with what he saw and experienced in the army, but at the same time it

always seemed to him that the really heroic exploits were being

performed just where he did not happen to be. And he was always in a

hurry to get where he was not.

When on the twenty-first of October his general expressed a wish to send

somebody to Denisov's detachment, Petya begged so piteously to be sent

that the general could not refuse. But when dispatching him he recalled

Petya's mad action at the battle of Vyazma, where instead of riding by

the road to the place to which he had been sent, he had galloped to the

advanced line under the fire of the French and had there twice fired his

pistol. So now the general explicitly forbade his taking part in any

action whatever of Denisov's. That was why Petya had blushed and grown

confused when Denisov asked him whether he could stay. Before they had

ridden to the outskirts of the forest Petya had considered he must carry

out his instructions strictly and return at once. But when he saw the

French and saw Tikhon and learned that there would certainly be an

attack that night, he decided, with the rapidity with which young people

change their views, that the general, whom he had greatly respected till

then, was a rubbishy German, that Denisov was a hero, the esaul a hero,

and Tikhon a hero too, and that it would be shameful for him to leave

them at a moment of difficulty.

It was already growing dusk when Denisov, Petya, and the esaul rode up

to the watchhouse. In the twilight saddled horses could be seen, and

Cossacks and hussars who had rigged up rough shelters in the glade and

were kindling glowing fires in a hollow of the forest where the French

could not see the smoke. In the passage of the small watchhouse a

Cossack with sleeves rolled up was chopping some mutton. In the room

three officers of Denisov's band were converting a door into a tabletop.

Petya took off his wet clothes, gave them to be dried, and at once began

helping the officers to fix up the dinner table.

In ten minutes the table was ready and a napkin spread on it. On the

table were vodka, a flask of rum, white bread, roast mutton, and salt.

Sitting at table with the officers and tearing the fat savory mutton

with his hands, down which the grease trickled, Petya was in an ecstatic

childish state of love for all men, and consequently of confidence that

others loved him in the same way.

"So then what do you think, Vasili Dmitrich?" said he to Denisov. "It's

all right my staying a day with you?" And not waiting for a reply he

answered his own question: "You see I was told to find out--well, I am

finding out.... Only do let me into the very... into the chief... I

don't want a reward... But I want..."

Petya clenched his teeth and looked around, throwing back his head and

flourishing his arms.

"Into the vewy chief..." Denisov repeated with a smile.

"Only, please let me command something, so that I may really command..."

Petya went on. "What would it be to you?... Oh, you want a knife?" he

said, turning to an officer who wished to cut himself a piece of mutton.

And he handed him his clasp knife. The officer admired it.

"Please keep it. I have several like it," said Petya, blushing.

"Heavens! I was quite forgetting!" he suddenly cried. "I have some

raisins, fine ones; you know, seedless ones. We have a new sutler and he

has such capital things. I bought ten pounds. I am used to something

sweet. Would you like some?..." and Petya ran out into the passage to

his Cossack and brought back some bags which contained about five pounds

of raisins. "Have some, gentlemen, have some!"

"You want a coffeepot, don't you?" he asked the esaul. "I bought a

capital one from our sutler! He has splendid things. And he's very

honest, that's the chief thing. I'll be sure to send it to you. Or

perhaps your flints are giving out, or are worn out--that happens

sometimes, you know. I have brought some with me, here they are"--and he

showed a bag--"a hundred flints. I bought them very cheap. Please take

as many as you want, or all if you like...."

Then suddenly, dismayed lest he had said too much, Petya stopped and

blushed.

He tried to remember whether he had not done anything else that was

foolish. And running over the events of the day he remembered the French

drummer boy. "It's capital for us here, but what of him? Where have they

put him? Have they fed him? Haven't they hurt his feelings?" he thought.

But having caught himself saying too much about the flints, he was now

afraid to speak out.

"I might ask," he thought, "but they'll say: 'He's a boy himself and so

he pities the boy.' I'll show them tomorrow whether I'm a boy. Will it

seem odd if I ask?" Petya thought. "Well, never mind!" and immediately,

blushing and looking anxiously at the officers to see if they appeared

ironical, he said:

"May I call in that boy who was taken prisoner and give him something to

eat?... Perhaps..."

"Yes, he's a poor little fellow," said Denisov, who evidently saw

nothing shameful in this reminder. "Call him in. His name is Vincent

Bosse. Have him fetched."

"I'll call him," said Petya.

"Yes, yes, call him. A poor little fellow," Denisov repeated.

Petya was standing at the door when Denisov said this. He slipped in

between the officers, came close to Denisov, and said:

"Let me kiss you, dear old fellow! Oh, how fine, how splendid!"

And having kissed Denisov he ran out of the hut.

"Bosse! Vincent!" Petya cried, stopping outside the door.

"Who do you want, sir?" asked a voice in the darkness.

Petya replied that he wanted the French lad who had been captured that

day.

"Ah, Vesenny?" said a Cossack.

Vincent, the boy's name, had already been changed by the Cossacks into

Vesenny (vernal) and into Vesenya by the peasants and soldiers. In both

these adaptations the reference to spring (vesna) matched the impression

made by the young lad.

"He is warming himself there by the bonfire. Ho, Vesenya! Vesenya!--

Vesenny!" laughing voices were heard calling to one another in the

darkness.

"He's a smart lad," said an hussar standing near Petya. "We gave him

something to eat a while ago. He was awfully hungry!"

The sound of bare feet splashing through the mud was heard in the

darkness, and the drummer boy came to the door.

"Ah, c'est vous!" said Petya. "Voulez-vous manger? N'ayez pas peur, on

ne vous fera pas de mal," \* he added shyly and affectionately, touching

the boy's hand. "Entrez, entrez." \*(2)

\* "Ah, it's you! Do you want something to eat? Don't be afraid, they

won't hurt you."

\* (2) "Come in, come in."

"Merci, monsieur," \* said the drummer boy in a trembling almost childish

voice, and he began scraping his dirty feet on the threshold.

\* "Thank you, sir."

There were many things Petya wanted to say to the drummer boy, but did

not dare to. He stood irresolutely beside him in the passage. Then in

the darkness he took the boy's hand and pressed it.

"Come in, come in!" he repeated in a gentle whisper. "Oh, what can I do

for him?" he thought, and opening the door he let the boy pass in first.

When the boy had entered the hut, Petya sat down at a distance from him,

considering it beneath his dignity to pay attention to him. But he

fingered the money in his pocket and wondered whether it would seem

ridiculous to give some to the drummer boy.

CHAPTER VIII

The arrival of Dolokhov diverted Petya's attention from the drummer boy,

to whom Denisov had had some mutton and vodka given, and whom he had had

dressed in a Russian coat so that he might be kept with their band and

not sent away with the other prisoners. Petya had heard in the army many

stories of Dolokhov's extraordinary bravery and of his cruelty to the

French, so from the moment he entered the hut Petya did not take his

eyes from him, but braced himself up more and more and held his head

high, that he might not be unworthy even of such company.

Dolokhov's appearance amazed Petya by its simplicity.

Denisov wore a Cossack coat, had a beard, had an icon of Nicholas the

Wonder-Worker on his breast, and his way of speaking and everything he

did indicated his unusual position. But Dolokhov, who in Moscow had worn

a Persian costume, had now the appearance of a most correct officer of

the Guards. He was clean-shaven and wore a Guardsman's padded coat with

an Order of St. George at his buttonhole and a plain forage cap set

straight on his head. He took off his wet felt cloak in a corner of the

room, and without greeting anyone went up to Denisov and began

questioning him about the matter in hand. Denisov told him of the

designs the large detachments had on the transport, of the message Petya

had brought, and his own replies to both generals. Then he told him all

he knew of the French detachment.

"That's so. But we must know what troops they are and their numbers,"

said Dolokhov. "It will be necessary to go there. We can't start the

affair without knowing for certain how many there are. I like to work

accurately. Here now--wouldn't one of these gentlemen like to ride over

to the French camp with me? I have brought a spare uniform."

"I, I... I'll go with you!" cried Petya.

"There's no need for you to go at all," said Denisov, addressing

Dolokhov, "and as for him, I won't let him go on any account."

"I like that!" exclaimed Petya. "Why shouldn't I go?"

"Because it's useless."

"Well, you must excuse me, because... because... I shall go, and that's

all. You'll take me, won't you?" he said, turning to Dolokhov.

"Why not?" Dolokhov answered absently, scrutinizing the face of the

French drummer boy. "Have you had that youngster with you long?" he

asked Denisov.

"He was taken today but he knows nothing. I'm keeping him with me."

"Yes, and where do you put the others?" inquired Dolokhov.

"Where? I send them away and take a weceipt for them," shouted Denisov,

suddenly flushing. "And I say boldly that I have not a single man's life

on my conscience. Would it be difficult for you to send thirty or thwee

hundwed men to town under escort, instead of staining--I speak bluntly--

staining the honor of a soldier?"

"That kind of amiable talk would be suitable from this young count of

sixteen," said Dolokhov with cold irony, "but it's time for you to drop

it."

"Why, I've not said anything! I only say that I'll certainly go with

you," said Petya shyly.

"But for you and me, old fellow, it's time to drop these amenities,"

continued Dolokhov, as if he found particular pleasure in speaking of

this subject which irritated Denisov. "Now, why have you kept this lad?"

he went on, swaying his head. "Because you are sorry for him! Don't we

know those 'receipts' of yours? You send a hundred men away, and thirty

get there. The rest either starve or get killed. So isn't it all the

same not to send them?"

The esaul, screwing up his light-colored eyes, nodded approvingly.

"That's not the point. I'm not going to discuss the matter. I do not

wish to take it on my conscience. You say they'll die. All wight. Only

not by my fault!"

Dolokhov began laughing.

"Who has told them not to capture me these twenty times over? But if

they did catch me they'd string me up to an aspen tree, and with all

your chivalry just the same." He paused. "However, we must get to work.

Tell the Cossack to fetch my kit. I have two French uniforms in it.

Well, are you coming with me?" he asked Petya.

"I? Yes, yes, certainly!" cried Petya, blushing almost to tears and

glancing at Denisov.

While Dolokhov had been disputing with Denisov what should be done with

prisoners, Petya had once more felt awkward and restless; but again he

had no time to grasp fully what they were talking about. "If grown-up,

distinguished men think so, it must be necessary and right," thought he.

"But above all Denisov must not dare to imagine that I'll obey him and

that he can order me about. I will certainly go to the French camp with

Dolokhov. If he can, so can I!"

And to all Denisov's persuasions, Petya replied that he too was

accustomed to do everything accurately and not just anyhow, and that he

never considered personal danger.

"For you'll admit that if we don't know for sure how many of them there

are... hundreds of lives may depend on it, while there are only two of

us. Besides, I want to go very much and certainly will go, so don't

hinder me," said he. "It will only make things worse..."

CHAPTER IX

Having put on French greatcoats and shakos, Petya and Dolokhov rode to

the clearing from which Denisov had reconnoitered the French camp, and

emerging from the forest in pitch darkness they descended into the

hollow. On reaching the bottom, Dolokhov told the Cossacks accompanying

him to await him there and rode on at a quick trot along the road to the

bridge. Petya, his heart in his mouth with excitement, rode by his side.

"If we're caught, I won't be taken alive! I have a pistol," whispered

he.

"Don't talk Russian," said Dolokhov in a hurried whisper, and at that

very moment they heard through the darkness the challenge: "Qui vive?" \*

and the click of a musket.

\* "Who goes there?"

The blood rushed to Petya's face and he grasped his pistol.

"Lanciers du 6-me," \* replied Dolokhov, neither hastening nor slackening

his horse's pace.

\* "Lancers of the 6th Regiment."

The black figure of a sentinel stood on the bridge.

"Mot d'ordre." \*

\* "Password."

Dolokhov reined in his horse and advanced at a walk.

"Dites donc, le colonel Gerard est ici?" \* he asked.

\* "Tell me, is Colonel Gerard here?"

"Mot d'ordre," repeated the sentinel, barring the way and not replying.

"Quand un officier fait sa ronde, les sentinelles ne demandent pas le

mot d'ordre..." cried Dolokhov suddenly flaring up and riding straight

at the sentinel. "Je vous demande si le colonel est ici." \*

\* "When an officer is making his round, sentinels don't ask him for the

password.... I am asking you if the colonel is here."

And without waiting for an answer from the sentinel, who had stepped

aside, Dolokhov rode up the incline at a walk.

Noticing the black outline of a man crossing the road, Dolokhov stopped

him and inquired where the commander and officers were. The man, a

soldier with a sack over his shoulder, stopped, came close up to

Dolokhov's horse, touched it with his hand, and explained simply and in

a friendly way that the commander and the officers were higher up the

hill to the right in the courtyard of the farm, as he called the

landowner's house.

Having ridden up the road, on both sides of which French talk could be

heard around the campfires, Dolokhov turned into the courtyard of the

landowner's house. Having ridden in, he dismounted and approached a big

blazing campfire, around which sat several men talking noisily.

Something was boiling in a small cauldron at the edge of the fire and a

soldier in a peaked cap and blue overcoat, lit up by the fire, was

kneeling beside it stirring its contents with a ramrod.

"Oh, he's a hard nut to crack," said one of the officers who was sitting

in the shadow at the other side of the fire.

"He'll make them get a move on, those fellows!" said another, laughing.

Both fell silent, peering out through the darkness at the sound of

Dolokhov's and Petya's steps as they advanced to the fire leading their

horses.

"Bonjour, messieurs!" \* said Dolokhov loudly and clearly.

\* "Good day, gentlemen."

There was a stir among the officers in the shadow beyond the fire, and

one tall, long-necked officer, walking round the fire, came up to

Dolokhov.

"Is that you, Clement?" he asked. "Where the devil...?" But, noticing

his mistake, he broke off short and, with a frown, greeted Dolokhov as a

stranger, asking what he could do for him.

Dolokhov said that he and his companion were trying to overtake their

regiment, and addressing the company in general asked whether they knew

anything of the 6th Regiment. None of them knew anything, and Petya

thought the officers were beginning to look at him and Dolokhov with

hostility and suspicion. For some seconds all were silent.

"If you were counting on the evening soup, you have come too late," said

a voice from behind the fire with a repressed laugh.

Dolokhov replied that they were not hungry and must push on farther that

night.

He handed the horses over to the soldier who was stirring the pot and

squatted down on his heels by the fire beside the officer with the long

neck. That officer did not take his eyes from Dolokhov and again asked

to what regiment he belonged. Dolokhov, as if he had not heard the

question, did not reply, but lighting a short French pipe which he took

from his pocket began asking the officer in how far the road before them

was safe from Cossacks.

"Those brigands are everywhere," replied an officer from behind the

fire.

Dolokhov remarked that the Cossacks were a danger only to stragglers

such as his companion and himself, "but probably they would not dare to

attack large detachments?" he added inquiringly. No one replied.

"Well, now he'll come away," Petya thought every moment as he stood by

the campfire listening to the talk.

But Dolokhov restarted the conversation which had dropped and began

putting direct questions as to how many men there were in the battalion,

how many battalions, and how many prisoners. Asking about the Russian

prisoners with that detachment, Dolokhov said:

"A horrid business dragging these corpses about with one! It would be

better to shoot such rabble," and burst into loud laughter, so strange

that Petya thought the French would immediately detect their disguise,

and involuntarily took a step back from the campfire.

No one replied a word to Dolokhov's laughter, and a French officer whom

they could not see (he lay wrapped in a greatcoat) rose and whispered

something to a companion. Dolokhov got up and called to the soldier who

was holding their horses.

"Will they bring our horses or not?" thought Petya, instinctively

drawing nearer to Dolokhov.

The horses were brought.

"Good evening, gentlemen," said Dolokhov.

Petya wished to say "Good night" but could not utter a word. The

officers were whispering together. Dolokhov was a long time mounting his

horse which would not stand still, then he rode out of the yard at a

footpace. Petya rode beside him, longing to look round to see whether or

not the French were running after them, but not daring to.

Coming out onto the road Dolokhov did not ride back across the open

country, but through the village. At one spot he stopped and listened.

"Do you hear?" he asked. Petya recognized the sound of Russian voices

and saw the dark figures of Russian prisoners round their campfires.

When they had descended to the bridge Petya and Dolokhov rode past the

sentinel, who without saying a word paced morosely up and down it, then

they descended into the hollow where the Cossacks awaited them.

"Well now, good-by. Tell Denisov, 'at the first shot at daybreak,'" said

Dolokhov and was about to ride away, but Petya seized hold of him.

"Really!" he cried, "you are such a hero! Oh, how fine, how splendid!

How I love you!"

"All right, all right!" said Dolokhov. But Petya did not let go of him

and Dolokhov saw through the gloom that Petya was bending toward him and

wanted to kiss him. Dolokhov kissed him, laughed, turned his horse, and

vanished into the darkness.

CHAPTER X

Having returned to the watchman's hut, Petya found Denisov in the

passage. He was awaiting Petya's return in a state of agitation,

anxiety, and self-reproach for having let him go.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed. "Yes, thank God!" he repeated, listening to

Petya's rapturous account. "But, devil take you, I haven't slept because

of you! Well, thank God. Now lie down. We can still get a nap before

morning."

"But... no," said Petya, "I don't want to sleep yet. Besides I know

myself, if I fall asleep it's finished. And then I am used to not

sleeping before a battle."

He sat awhile in the hut joyfully recalling the details of his

expedition and vividly picturing to himself what would happen next day.

Then, noticing that Denisov was asleep, he rose and went out of doors.

It was still quite dark outside. The rain was over, but drops were still

falling from the trees. Near the watchman's hut the black shapes of the

Cossacks' shanties and of horses tethered together could be seen. Behind

the hut the dark shapes of the two wagons with their horses beside them

were discernible, and in the hollow the dying campfire gleamed red. Not

all the Cossacks and hussars were asleep; here and there, amid the

sounds of falling drops and the munching of the horses near by, could be

heard low voices which seemed to be whispering.

Petya came out, peered into the darkness, and went up to the wagons.

Someone was snoring under them, and around them stood saddled horses

munching their oats. In the dark Petya recognized his own horse, which

he called "Karabakh" though it was of Ukranian breed, and went up to it.

"Well, Karabakh! We'll do some service tomorrow," said he, sniffing its

nostrils and kissing it.

"Why aren't you asleep, sir?" said a Cossack who was sitting under a

wagon.

"No, ah... Likhachev--isn't that your name? Do you know I have only just

come back! We've been into the French camp."

And Petya gave the Cossack a detailed account not only of his ride but

also of his object, and why he considered it better to risk his life

than to act "just anyhow."

"Well, you should get some sleep now," said the Cossack.

"No, I am used to this," said Petya. "I say, aren't the flints in your

pistols worn out? I brought some with me. Don't you want any? You can

have some."

The Cossack bent forward from under the wagon to get a closer look at

Petya.

"Because I am accustomed to doing everything accurately," said Petya.

"Some fellows do things just anyhow, without preparation, and then

they're sorry for it afterwards. I don't like that."

"Just so," said the Cossack.

"Oh yes, another thing! Please, my dear fellow, will you sharpen my

saber for me? It's got bl..." (Petya feared to tell a lie, and the saber

never had been sharpened.) "Can you do it?"

"Of course I can."

Likhachev got up, rummaged in his pack, and soon Petya heard the warlike

sound of steel on whetstone. He climbed onto the wagon and sat on its

edge. The Cossack was sharpening the saber under the wagon.

"I say! Are the lads asleep?" asked Petya.

"Some are, and some aren't--like us."

"Well, and that boy?"

"Vesenny? Oh, he's thrown himself down there in the passage. Fast asleep

after his fright. He was that glad!"

After that Petya remained silent for a long time, listening to the

sounds. He heard footsteps in the darkness and a black figure appeared.

"What are you sharpening?" asked a man coming up to the wagon.

"Why, this gentleman's saber."

"That's right," said the man, whom Petya took to be an hussar. "Was the

cup left here?"

"There, by the wheel!"

The hussar took the cup.

"It must be daylight soon," said he, yawning, and went away.

Petya ought to have known that he was in a forest with Denisov's

guerrilla band, less than a mile from the road, sitting on a wagon

captured from the French beside which horses were tethered, that under

it Likhachev was sitting sharpening a saber for him, that the big dark

blotch to the right was the watchman's hut, and the red blotch below to

the left was the dying embers of a campfire, that the man who had come

for the cup was an hussar who wanted a drink; but he neither knew nor

waited to know anything of all this. He was in a fairy kingdom where

nothing resembled reality. The big dark blotch might really be the

watchman's hut or it might be a cavern leading to the very depths of the

earth. Perhaps the red spot was a fire, or it might be the eye of an

enormous monster. Perhaps he was really sitting on a wagon, but it might

very well be that he was not sitting on a wagon but on a terribly high

tower from which, if he fell, he would have to fall for a whole day or a

whole month, or go on falling and never reach the bottom. Perhaps it was

just the Cossack, Likhachev, who was sitting under the wagon, but it

might be the kindest, bravest, most wonderful, most splendid man in the

world, whom no one knew of. It might really have been that the hussar

came for water and went back into the hollow, but perhaps he had simply

vanished--disappeared altogether and dissolved into nothingness.

Nothing Petya could have seen now would have surprised him. He was in a

fairy kingdom where everything was possible.

He looked up at the sky. And the sky was a fairy realm like the earth.

It was clearing, and over the tops of the trees clouds were swiftly

sailing as if unveiling the stars. Sometimes it looked as if the clouds

were passing, and a clear black sky appeared. Sometimes it seemed as if

the black spaces were clouds. Sometimes the sky seemed to be rising

high, high overhead, and then it seemed to sink so low that one could

touch it with one's hand.

Petya's eyes began to close and he swayed a little.

The trees were dripping. Quiet talking was heard. The horses neighed and

jostled one another. Someone snored.

"Ozheg-zheg, Ozheg-zheg..." hissed the saber against the whetstone, and

suddenly Petya heard an harmonious orchestra playing some unknown,

sweetly solemn hymn. Petya was as musical as Natasha and more so than

Nicholas, but had never learned music or thought about it, and so the

melody that unexpectedly came to his mind seemed to him particularly

fresh and attractive. The music became more and more audible. The melody

grew and passed from one instrument to another. And what was played was

a fugue--though Petya had not the least conception of what a fugue is.

Each instrument--now resembling a violin and now a horn, but better and

clearer than violin or horn--played its own part, and before it had

finished the melody merged with another instrument that began almost the

same air, and then with a third and a fourth; and they all blended into

one and again became separate and again blended, now into solemn church

music, now into something dazzlingly brilliant and triumphant.

"Oh--why, that was in a dream!" Petya said to himself, as he lurched

forward. "It's in my ears. But perhaps it's music of my own. Well, go

on, my music! Now!..."

He closed his eyes, and, from all sides as if from a distance, sounds

fluttered, grew into harmonies, separated, blended, and again all

mingled into the same sweet and solemn hymn. "Oh, this is delightful! As

much as I like and as I like!" said Petya to himself. He tried to

conduct that enormous orchestra.

"Now softly, softly die away!" and the sounds obeyed him. "Now fuller,

more joyful. Still more and more joyful!" And from an unknown depth rose

increasingly triumphant sounds. "Now voices join in!" ordered Petya. And

at first from afar he heard men's voices and then women's. The voices

grew in harmonious triumphant strength, and Petya listened to their

surpassing beauty in awe and joy.

With a solemn triumphal march there mingled a song, the drip from the

trees, and the hissing of the saber, "Ozheg-zheg-zheg..." and again the

horses jostled one another and neighed, not disturbing the choir but

joining in it.

Petya did not know how long this lasted: he enjoyed himself all the

time, wondered at his enjoyment and regretted that there was no one to

share it. He was awakened by Likhachev's kindly voice.

"It's ready, your honor; you can split a Frenchman in half with it!"

Petya woke up.

"It's getting light, it's really getting light!" he exclaimed.

The horses that had previously been invisible could now be seen to their

very tails, and a watery light showed itself through the bare branches.

Petya shook himself, jumped up, took a ruble from his pocket and gave it

to Likhachev; then he flourished the saber, tested it, and sheathed it.

The Cossacks were untying their horses and tightening their saddle

girths.

"And here's the commander," said Likhachev.

Denisov came out of the watchman's hut and, having called Petya, gave

orders to get ready.

CHAPTER XI

The men rapidly picked out their horses in the semidarkness, tightened

their saddle girths, and formed companies. Denisov stood by the

watchman's hut giving final orders. The infantry of the detachment

passed along the road and quickly disappeared amid the trees in the mist

of early dawn, hundreds of feet splashing through the mud. The esaul

gave some orders to his men. Petya held his horse by the bridle,

impatiently awaiting the order to mount. His face, having been bathed in

cold water, was all aglow, and his eyes were particularly brilliant.

Cold shivers ran down his spine and his whole body pulsed rhythmically.

"Well, is ev'wything weady?" asked Denisov. "Bwing the horses."

The horses were brought. Denisov was angry with the Cossack because the

saddle girths were too slack, reproved him, and mounted. Petya put his

foot in the stirrup. His horse by habit made as if to nip his leg, but

Petya leaped quickly into the saddle unconscious of his own weight and,

turning to look at the hussars starting in the darkness behind him, rode

up to Denisov.

"Vasili Dmitrich, entrust me with some commission! Please... for God's

sake...!" said he.

Denisov seemed to have forgotten Petya's very existence. He turned to

glance at him.

"I ask one thing of you," he said sternly, "to obey me and not shove

yourself forward anywhere."

He did not say another word to Petya but rode in silence all the way.

When they had come to the edge of the forest it was noticeably growing

light over the field. Denisov talked in whispers with the esaul and the

Cossacks rode past Petya and Denisov. When they had all ridden by,

Denisov touched his horse and rode down the hill. Slipping onto their

haunches and sliding, the horses descended with their riders into the

ravine. Petya rode beside Denisov, the pulsation of his body constantly

increasing. It was getting lighter and lighter, but the mist still hid

distant objects. Having reached the valley, Denisov looked back and

nodded to a Cossack beside him.

"The signal!" said he.

The Cossack raised his arm and a shot rang out. In an instant the tramp

of horses galloping forward was heard, shouts came from various sides,

and then more shots.

At the first sound of trampling hoofs and shouting, Petya lashed his

horse and loosening his rein galloped forward, not heeding Denisov who

shouted at him. It seemed to Petya that at the moment the shot was fired

it suddenly became as bright as noon. He galloped to the bridge.

Cossacks were galloping along the road in front of him. On the bridge he

collided with a Cossack who had fallen behind, but he galloped on. In

front of him soldiers, probably Frenchmen, were running from right to

left across the road. One of them fell in the mud under his horse's

feet.

Cossacks were crowding about a hut, busy with something. From the midst

of that crowd terrible screams arose. Petya galloped up, and the first

thing he saw was the pale face and trembling jaw of a Frenchman,

clutching the handle of a lance that had been aimed at him.

"Hurrah!... Lads!... ours!" shouted Petya, and giving rein to his

excited horse he galloped forward along the village street.

He could hear shooting ahead of him. Cossacks, hussars, and ragged

Russian prisoners, who had come running from both sides of the road,

were shouting something loudly and incoherently. A gallant-looking

Frenchman, in a blue overcoat, capless, and with a frowning red face,

had been defending himself against the hussars. When Petya galloped up

the Frenchman had already fallen. "Too late again!" flashed through

Petya's mind and he galloped on to the place from which the rapid firing

could be heard. The shots came from the yard of the landowner's house he

had visited the night before with Dolokhov. The French were making a

stand there behind a wattle fence in a garden thickly overgrown with

bushes and were firing at the Cossacks who crowded at the gateway.

Through the smoke, as he approached the gate, Petya saw Dolokhov, whose

face was of a pale-greenish tint, shouting to his men. "Go round! Wait

for the infantry!" he exclaimed as Petya rode up to him.

"Wait?... Hurrah-ah-ah!" shouted Petya, and without pausing a moment

galloped to the place whence came the sounds of firing and where the

smoke was thickest.

A volley was heard, and some bullets whistled past, while others plashed

against something. The Cossacks and Dolokhov galloped after Petya into

the gateway of the courtyard. In the dense wavering smoke some of the

French threw down their arms and ran out of the bushes to meet the

Cossacks, while others ran down the hill toward the pond. Petya was

galloping along the courtyard, but instead of holding the reins he waved

both his arms about rapidly and strangely, slipping farther and farther

to one side in his saddle. His horse, having galloped up to a campfire

that was smoldering in the morning light, stopped suddenly, and Petya

fell heavily on to the wet ground. The Cossacks saw that his arms and

legs jerked rapidly though his head was quite motionless. A bullet had

pierced his skull.

After speaking to the senior French officer, who came out of the house

with a white handkerchief tied to his sword and announced that they

surrendered, Dolokhov dismounted and went up to Petya, who lay

motionless with outstretched arms.

"Done for!" he said with a frown, and went to the gate to meet Denisov

who was riding toward him.

"Killed?" cried Denisov, recognizing from a distance the unmistakably

lifeless attitude--very familiar to him--in which Petya's body was

lying.

"Done for!" repeated Dolokhov as if the utterance of these words

afforded him pleasure, and he went quickly up to the prisoners, who were

surrounded by Cossacks who had hurried up. "We won't take them!" he

called out to Denisov.

Denisov did not reply; he rode up to Petya, dismounted, and with

trembling hands turned toward himself the bloodstained, mud-bespattered

face which had already gone white.

"I am used to something sweet. Raisins, fine ones... take them all!" he

recalled Petya's words. And the Cossacks looked round in surprise at the

sound, like the yelp of a dog, with which Denisov turned away, walked to

the wattle fence, and seized hold of it.

Among the Russian prisoners rescued by Denisov and Dolokhov was Pierre

Bezukhov.

CHAPTER XII

During the whole of their march from Moscow no fresh orders had been

issued by the French authorities concerning the party of prisoners among

whom was Pierre. On the twenty-second of October that party was no

longer with the same troops and baggage trains with which it had left

Moscow. Half the wagons laden with hardtack that had traveled the first

stages with them had been captured by Cossacks, the other half had gone

on ahead. Not one of those dismounted cavalrymen who had marched in

front of the prisoners was left; they had all disappeared. The artillery

the prisoners had seen in front of them during the first days was now

replaced by Marshal Junot's enormous baggage train, convoyed by

Westphalians. Behind the prisoners came a cavalry baggage train.

From Vyazma onwards the French army, which had till then moved in three

columns, went on as a single group. The symptoms of disorder that Pierre

had noticed at their first halting place after leaving Moscow had now

reached the utmost limit.

The road along which they moved was bordered on both sides by dead

horses; ragged men who had fallen behind from various regiments

continually changed about, now joining the moving column, now again

lagging behind it.

Several times during the march false alarms had been given and the

soldiers of the escort had raised their muskets, fired, and run

headlong, crushing one another, but had afterwards reassembled and

abused each other for their causeless panic.

These three groups traveling together--the cavalry stores, the convoy of

prisoners, and Junot's baggage train--still constituted a separate and

united whole, though each of the groups was rapidly melting away.

Of the artillery baggage train which had consisted of a hundred and

twenty wagons, not more than sixty now remained; the rest had been

captured or left behind. Some of Junot's wagons also had been captured

or abandoned. Three wagons had been raided and robbed by stragglers from

Davout's corps. From the talk of the Germans Pierre learned that a

larger guard had been allotted to that baggage train than to the

prisoners, and that one of their comrades, a German soldier, had been

shot by the marshal's own order because a silver spoon belonging to the

marshal had been found in his possession.

The group of prisoners had melted away most of all. Of the three hundred

and thirty men who had set out from Moscow fewer than a hundred now

remained. The prisoners were more burdensome to the escort than even the

cavalry saddles or Junot's baggage. They understood that the saddles and

Junot's spoon might be of some use, but that cold and hungry soldiers

should have to stand and guard equally cold and hungry Russians who

froze and lagged behind on the road (in which case the order was to

shoot them) was not merely incomprehensible but revolting. And the

escort, as if afraid, in the grievous condition they themselves were in,

of giving way to the pity they felt for the prisoners and so rendering

their own plight still worse, treated them with particular moroseness

and severity.

At Dorogobuzh while the soldiers of the convoy, after locking the

prisoners in a stable, had gone off to pillage their own stores, several

of the soldier prisoners tunneled under the wall and ran away, but were

recaptured by the French and shot.

The arrangement adopted when they started, that the officer prisoners

should be kept separate from the rest, had long since been abandoned.

All who could walk went together, and after the third stage Pierre had

rejoined Karataev and the gray-blue bandy-legged dog that had chosen

Karataev for its master.

On the third day after leaving Moscow Karataev again fell ill with the

fever he had suffered from in the hospital in Moscow, and as he grew

gradually weaker Pierre kept away from him. Pierre did not know why, but

since Karataev had begun to grow weaker it had cost him an effort to go

near him. When he did so and heard the subdued moaning with which

Karataev generally lay down at the halting places, and when he smelled

the odor emanating from him which was now stronger than before, Pierre

moved farther away and did not think about him.

While imprisoned in the shed Pierre had learned not with his intellect

but with his whole being, by life itself, that man is created for

happiness, that happiness is within him, in the satisfaction of simple

human needs, and that all unhappiness arises not from privation but from

superfluity. And now during these last three weeks of the march he had

learned still another new, consolatory truth--that nothing in this world

is terrible. He had learned that as there is no condition in which man

can be happy and entirely free, so there is no condition in which he

need be unhappy and lack freedom. He learned that suffering and freedom

have their limits and that those limits are very near together; that the

person in a bed of roses with one crumpled petal suffered as keenly as

he now, sleeping on the bare damp earth with one side growing chilled

while the other was warming; and that when he had put on tight dancing

shoes he had suffered just as he did now when he walked with bare feet

that were covered with sores--his footgear having long since fallen to

pieces. He discovered that when he had married his wife--of his own free

will as it had seemed to him--he had been no more free than now when

they locked him up at night in a stable. Of all that he himself

subsequently termed his sufferings, but which at the time he scarcely

felt, the worst was the state of his bare, raw, and scab-covered feet.

(The horseflesh was appetizing and nourishing, the saltpeter flavor of

the gunpowder they used instead of salt was even pleasant; there was no

great cold, it was always warm walking in the daytime, and at night

there were the campfires; the lice that devoured him warmed his body.)

The one thing that was at first hard to bear was his feet.

After the second day's march Pierre, having examined his feet by the

campfire, thought it would be impossible to walk on them; but when

everybody got up he went along, limping, and, when he had warmed up,

walked without feeling the pain, though at night his feet were more

terrible to look at than before. However, he did not look at them now,

but thought of other things.

Only now did Pierre realize the full strength of life in man and the

saving power he has of transferring his attention from one thing to

another, which is like the safety valve of a boiler that allows

superfluous steam to blow off when the pressure exceeds a certain limit.

He did not see and did not hear how they shot the prisoners who lagged

behind, though more than a hundred perished in that way. He did not

think of Karataev who grew weaker every day and evidently would soon

have to share that fate. Still less did Pierre think about himself. The

harder his position became and the more terrible the future, the more

independent of that position in which he found himself were the joyful

and comforting thoughts, memories, and imaginings that came to him.

CHAPTER XIII

At midday on the twenty-second of October Pierre was going uphill along

the muddy, slippery road, looking at his feet and at the roughness of

the way. Occasionally he glanced at the familiar crowd around him and

then again at his feet. The former and the latter were alike familiar

and his own. The blue-gray bandy legged dog ran merrily along the side

of the road, sometimes in proof of its agility and self-satisfaction

lifting one hind leg and hopping along on three, and then again going on

all four and rushing to bark at the crows that sat on the carrion. The

dog was merrier and sleeker than it had been in Moscow. All around lay

the flesh of different animals--from men to horses--in various stages of

decomposition; and as the wolves were kept off by the passing men the

dog could eat all it wanted.

It had been raining since morning and had seemed as if at any moment it

might cease and the sky clear, but after a short break it began raining

harder than before. The saturated road no longer absorbed the water,

which ran along the ruts in streams.

Pierre walked along, looking from side to side, counting his steps in

threes, and reckoning them off on his fingers. Mentally addressing the

rain, he repeated: "Now then, now then, go on! Pelt harder!"

It seemed to him that he was thinking of nothing, but far down and deep

within him his soul was occupied with something important and

comforting. This something was a most subtle spiritual deduction from a

conversation with Karataev the day before.

At their yesterday's halting place, feeling chilly by a dying campfire,

Pierre had got up and gone to the next one, which was burning better.

There Platon Karataev was sitting covered up--head and all--with his

greatcoat as if it were a vestment, telling the soldiers in his

effective and pleasant though now feeble voice a story Pierre knew. It

was already past midnight, the hour when Karataev was usually free of

his fever and particularly lively. When Pierre reached the fire and

heard Platon's voice enfeebled by illness, and saw his pathetic face

brightly lit up by the blaze, he felt a painful prick at his heart. His

feeling of pity for this man frightened him and he wished to go away,

but there was no other fire, and Pierre sat down, trying not to look at

Platon.

"Well, how are you?" he asked.

"How am I? If we grumble at sickness, God won't grant us death," replied

Platon, and at once resumed the story he had begun.

"And so, brother," he continued, with a smile on his pale emaciated face

and a particularly happy light in his eyes, "you see, brother..."

Pierre had long been familiar with that story. Karataev had told it to

him alone some half-dozen times and always with a specially joyful

emotion. But well as he knew it, Pierre now listened to that tale as to

something new, and the quiet rapture Karataev evidently felt as he told

it communicated itself also to Pierre. The story was of an old merchant

who lived a good and God-fearing life with his family, and who went once

to the Nizhni fair with a companion--a rich merchant.

Having put up at an inn they both went to sleep, and next morning his

companion was found robbed and with his throat cut. A bloodstained knife

was found under the old merchant's pillow. He was tried, knouted, and

his nostrils having been torn off, "all in due form" as Karataev put it,

he was sent to hard labor in Siberia.

"And so, brother" (it was at this point that Pierre came up), "ten years

or more passed by. The old man was living as a convict, submitting as he

should and doing no wrong. Only he prayed to God for death. Well, one

night the convicts were gathered just as we are, with the old man among

them. And they began telling what each was suffering for, and how they

had sinned against God. One told how he had taken a life, another had

taken two, a third had set a house on fire, while another had simply

been a vagrant and had done nothing. So they asked the old man: 'What

are you being punished for, Daddy?'--'I, my dear brothers,' said he, 'am

being punished for my own and other men's sins. But I have not killed

anyone or taken anything that was not mine, but have only helped my

poorer brothers. I was a merchant, my dear brothers, and had much

property. 'And he went on to tell them all about it in due order. 'I

don't grieve for myself,' he says, 'God, it seems, has chastened me.

Only I am sorry for my old wife and the children,' and the old man began

to weep. Now it happened that in the group was the very man who had

killed the other merchant. 'Where did it happen, Daddy?' he said. 'When,

and in what month?' He asked all about it and his heart began to ache.

So he comes up to the old man like this, and falls down at his feet!

'You are perishing because of me, Daddy,' he says. 'It's quite true,

lads, that this man,' he says, 'is being tortured innocently and for

nothing! I,' he says, 'did that deed, and I put the knife under your

head while you were asleep. Forgive me, Daddy,' he says, 'for Christ's

sake!'"

Karataev paused, smiling joyously as he gazed into the fire, and he drew

the logs together.

"And the old man said, 'God will forgive you, we are all sinners in His

sight. I suffer for my own sins,' and he wept bitter tears. Well, and

what do you think, dear friends?" Karataev continued, his face

brightening more and more with a rapturous smile as if what he now had

to tell contained the chief charm and the whole meaning of his story:

"What do you think, dear fellows? That murderer confessed to the

authorities. 'I have taken six lives,' he says (he was a great sinner),

'but what I am most sorry for is this old man. Don't let him suffer

because of me.' So he confessed and it was all written down and the

papers sent off in due form. The place was a long way off, and while

they were judging, what with one thing and another, filling in the

papers all in due form--the authorities I mean--time passed. The affair

reached the Tsar. After a while the Tsar's decree came: to set the

merchant free and give him a compensation that had been awarded. The

paper arrived and they began to look for the old man. 'Where is the old

man who has been suffering innocently and in vain? A paper has come from

the Tsar!' so they began looking for him," here Karataev's lower jaw

trembled, "but God had already forgiven him--he was dead! That's how it

was, dear fellows!" Karataev concluded and sat for a long time silent,

gazing before him with a smile.

And Pierre's soul was dimly but joyfully filled not by the story itself

but by its mysterious significance: by the rapturous joy that lit up

Karataev's face as he told it, and the mystic significance of that joy.

CHAPTER XIV

"A vos places!" \* suddenly cried a voice.

\* "To your places."

A pleasant feeling of excitement and an expectation of something joyful

and solemn was aroused among the soldiers of the convoy and the

prisoners. From all sides came shouts of command, and from the left came

smartly dressed cavalrymen on good horses, passing the prisoners at a

trot. The expression on all faces showed the tension people feel at the

approach of those in authority. The prisoners thronged together and were

pushed off the road. The convoy formed up.

"The Emperor! The Emperor! The Marshal! The Duke!" and hardly had the

sleek cavalry passed, before a carriage drawn by six gray horses rattled

by. Pierre caught a glimpse of a man in a three-cornered hat with a

tranquil look on his handsome, plump, white face. It was one of the

marshals. His eye fell on Pierre's large and striking figure, and in the

expression with which he frowned and looked away Pierre thought he

detected sympathy and a desire to conceal that sympathy.

The general in charge of the stores galloped after the carriage with a

red and frightened face, whipping up his skinny horse. Several officers

formed a group and some soldiers crowded round them. Their faces all

looked excited and worried.

"What did he say? What did he say?" Pierre heard them ask.

While the marshal was passing, the prisoners had huddled together in a

crowd, and Pierre saw Karataev whom he had not yet seen that morning. He

sat in his short overcoat leaning against a birch tree. On his face,

besides the look of joyful emotion it had worn yesterday while telling

the tale of the merchant who suffered innocently, there was now an

expression of quiet solemnity.

Karataev looked at Pierre with his kindly round eyes now filled with

tears, evidently wishing him to come near that he might say something to

him. But Pierre was not sufficiently sure of himself. He made as if he

did not notice that look and moved hastily away.

When the prisoners again went forward Pierre looked round. Karataev was

still sitting at the side of the road under the birch tree and two

Frenchmen were talking over his head. Pierre did not look round again

but went limping up the hill.

From behind, where Karataev had been sitting, came the sound of a shot.

Pierre heard it plainly, but at that moment he remembered that he had

not yet finished reckoning up how many stages still remained to

Smolensk--a calculation he had begun before the marshal went by. And he

again started reckoning. Two French soldiers ran past Pierre, one of

whom carried a lowered and smoking gun. They both looked pale, and in

the expression on their faces--one of them glanced timidly at Pierre--

there was something resembling what he had seen on the face of the young

soldier at the execution. Pierre looked at the soldier and remembered

that, two days before, that man had burned his shirt while drying it at

the fire and how they had laughed at him.

Behind him, where Karataev had been sitting, the dog began to howl.

"What a stupid beast! Why is it howling?" thought Pierre.

His comrades, the prisoner soldiers walking beside him, avoided looking

back at the place where the shot had been fired and the dog was howling,

just as Pierre did, but there was a set look on all their faces.

CHAPTER XV

The stores, the prisoners, and the marshal's baggage train stopped at

the village of Shamshevo. The men crowded together round the campfires.

Pierre went up to the fire, ate some roast horseflesh, lay down with his

back to the fire, and immediately fell asleep. He again slept as he had

done at Mozhaysk after the battle of Borodino.

Again real events mingled with dreams and again someone, he or another,

gave expression to his thoughts, and even to the same thoughts that had

been expressed in his dream at Mozhaysk.

"Life is everything. Life is God. Everything changes and moves and that

movement is God. And while there is life there is joy in consciousness

of the divine. To love life is to love God. Harder and more blessed than

all else is to love this life in one's sufferings, in innocent

sufferings."

"Karataev!" came to Pierre's mind.

And suddenly he saw vividly before him a long-forgotten, kindly old man

who had given him geography lessons in Switzerland. "Wait a bit," said

the old man, and showed Pierre a globe. This globe was alive--a

vibrating ball without fixed dimensions. Its whole surface consisted of

drops closely pressed together, and all these drops moved and changed

places, sometimes several of them merging into one, sometimes one

dividing into many. Each drop tried to spread out and occupy as much

space as possible, but others striving to do the same compressed it,

sometimes destroyed it, and sometimes merged with it.

"That is life," said the old teacher.

"How simple and clear it is," thought Pierre. "How is it I did not know

it before?"

"God is in the midst, and each drop tries to expand so as to reflect Him

to the greatest extent. And it grows, merges, disappears from the

surface, sinks to the depths, and again emerges. There now, Karataev has

spread out and disappeared. Do you understand, my child?" said the

teacher.

"Do you understand, damn you?" shouted a voice, and Pierre woke up.

He lifted himself and sat up. A Frenchman who had just pushed a Russian

soldier away was squatting by the fire, engaged in roasting a piece of

meat stuck on a ramrod. His sleeves were rolled up and his sinewy,

hairy, red hands with their short fingers deftly turned the ramrod. His

brown morose face with frowning brows was clearly visible by the glow of

the charcoal.

"It's all the same to him," he muttered, turning quickly to a soldier

who stood behind him. "Brigand! Get away!"

And twisting the ramrod he looked gloomily at Pierre, who turned away

and gazed into the darkness. A prisoner, the Russian soldier the

Frenchman had pushed away, was sitting near the fire patting something

with his hand. Looking more closely Pierre recognized the blue-gray dog,

sitting beside the soldier, wagging its tail.

"Ah, he's come?" said Pierre. "And Plat-" he began, but did not finish.

Suddenly and simultaneously a crowd of memories awoke in his fancy--of

the look Platon had given him as he sat under the tree, of the shot

heard from that spot, of the dog's howl, of the guilty faces of the two

Frenchmen as they ran past him, of the lowered and smoking gun, and of

Karataev's absence at this halt--and he was on the point of realizing

that Karataev had been killed, but just at that instant, he knew not

why, the recollection came to his mind of a summer evening he had spent

with a beautiful Polish lady on the veranda of his house in Kiev. And

without linking up the events of the day or drawing a conclusion from

them, Pierre closed his eyes, seeing a vision of the country in

summertime mingled with memories of bathing and of the liquid, vibrating

globe, and he sank into water so that it closed over his head.

Before sunrise he was awakened by shouts and loud and rapid firing.

French soldiers were running past him.

"The Cossacks!" one of them shouted, and a moment later a crowd of

Russians surrounded Pierre.

For a long time he could not understand what was happening to him. All

around he heard his comrades sobbing with joy.

"Brothers! Dear fellows! Darlings!" old soldiers exclaimed, weeping, as

they embraced Cossacks and hussars.

The hussars and Cossacks crowded round the prisoners; one offered them

clothes, another boots, and a third bread. Pierre sobbed as he sat among

them and could not utter a word. He hugged the first soldier who

approached him, and kissed him, weeping.

Dolokhov stood at the gate of the ruined house, letting a crowd of

disarmed Frenchmen pass by. The French, excited by all that had

happened, were talking loudly among themselves, but as they passed

Dolokhov who gently switched his boots with his whip and watched them

with cold glassy eyes that boded no good, they became silent. On the

opposite side stood Dolokhov's Cossack, counting the prisoners and

marking off each hundred with a chalk line on the gate.

"How many?" Dolokhov asked the Cossack.

"The second hundred," replied the Cossack.

"Filez, filez!" \* Dolokhov kept saying, having adopted this expression

from the French, and when his eyes met those of the prisoners they

flashed with a cruel light.

\* "Get along, get along!"

Denisov, bareheaded and with a gloomy face, walked behind some Cossacks

who were carrying the body of Petya Rostov to a hole that had been dug

in the garden.

CHAPTER XVI

After the twenty-eighth of October when the frosts began, the flight of

the French assumed a still more tragic character, with men freezing, or

roasting themselves to death at the campfires, while carriages with

people dressed in furs continued to drive past, carrying away the

property that had been stolen by the Emperor, kings, and dukes; but the

process of the flight and disintegration of the French army went on

essentially as before.

From Moscow to Vyazma the French army of seventy-three thousand men not

reckoning the Guards (who did nothing during the whole war but pillage)

was reduced to thirty-six thousand, though not more than five thousand

had fallen in battle. From this beginning the succeeding terms of the

progression could be determined mathematically. The French army melted

away and perished at the same rate from Moscow to Vyazma, from Vyazma to

Smolensk, from Smolensk to the Berezina, and from the Berezina to Vilna-

-independently of the greater or lesser intensity of the cold, the

pursuit, the barring of the way, or any other particular conditions.

Beyond Vyazma the French army instead of moving in three columns huddled

together into one mass, and so went on to the end. Berthier wrote to his

Emperor (we know how far commanding officers allow themselves to diverge

from the truth in describing the condition of an army) and this is what

he said:

I deem it my duty to report to Your Majesty the condition of the various

corps I have had occasion to observe during different stages of the last

two or three days' march. They are almost disbanded. Scarcely a quarter

of the soldiers remain with the standards of their regiments, the others

go off by themselves in different directions hoping to find food and

escape discipline. In general they regard Smolensk as the place where

they hope to recover. During the last few days many of the men have been

seen to throw away their cartridges and their arms. In such a state of

affairs, whatever your ultimate plans may be, the interest of Your

Majesty's service demands that the army should be rallied at Smolensk

and should first of all be freed from ineffectives, such as dismounted

cavalry, unnecessary baggage, and artillery material that is no longer

in proportion to the present forces. The soldiers, who are worn out with

hunger and fatigue, need these supplies as well as a few days' rest.

Many have died these last days on the road or at the bivouacs. This

state of things is continually becoming worse and makes one fear that

unless a prompt remedy is applied the troops will no longer be under

control in case of an engagement.

November 9: twenty miles from Smolensk.

After staggering into Smolensk which seemed to them a promised land, the

French, searching for food, killed one another, sacked their own stores,

and when everything had been plundered fled farther.

They all went without knowing whither or why they were going. Still less

did that genius, Napoleon, know it, for no one issued any orders to him.

But still he and those about him retained their old habits: wrote

commands, letters, reports, and orders of the day; called one another

sire, mon cousin, prince d'Eckmuhl, roi de Naples, and so on. But these

orders and reports were only on paper, nothing in them was acted upon

for they could not be carried out, and though they entitled one another

Majesties, Highnesses, or Cousins, they all felt that they were

miserable wretches who had done much evil for which they had now to pay.

And though they pretended to be concerned about the army, each was

thinking only of himself and of how to get away quickly and save

himself.

CHAPTER XVII

The movements of the Russian and French armies during the campaign from

Moscow back to the Niemen were like those in a game of Russian

blindman's bluff, in which two players are blindfolded and one of them

occasionally rings a little bell to inform the catcher of his

whereabouts. First he rings his bell fearlessly, but when he gets into a

tight place he runs away as quietly as he can, and often thinking to

escape runs straight into his opponent's arms.

At first while they were still moving along the Kaluga road, Napoleon's

armies made their presence known, but later when they reached the

Smolensk road they ran holding the clapper of their bell tight--and

often thinking they were escaping ran right into the Russians.

Owing to the rapidity of the French flight and the Russian pursuit and

the consequent exhaustion of the horses, the chief means of

approximately ascertaining the enemy's position--by cavalry scouting--

was not available. Besides, as a result of the frequent and rapid change

of position by each army, even what information was obtained could not

be delivered in time. If news was received one day that the enemy had

been in a certain position the day before, by the third day when

something could have been done, that army was already two days' march

farther on and in quite another position.

One army fled and the other pursued. Beyond Smolensk there were several

different roads available for the French, and one would have thought

that during their stay of four days they might have learned where the

enemy was, might have arranged some more advantageous plan and

undertaken something new. But after a four days' halt the mob, with no

maneuvers or plans, again began running along the beaten track, neither

to the right nor to the left but along the old--the worst--road, through

Krasnoe and Orsha.

Expecting the enemy from behind and not in front, the French separated

in their flight and spread out over a distance of twenty-four hours. In

front of them all fled the Emperor, then the kings, then the dukes. The

Russian army, expecting Napoleon to take the road to the right beyond

the Dnieper--which was the only reasonable thing for him to do--

themselves turned to the right and came out onto the highroad at

Krasnoe. And here as in a game of blindman's buff the French ran into

our vanguard. Seeing their enemy unexpectedly the French fell into

confusion and stopped short from the sudden fright, but then they

resumed their flight, abandoning their comrades who were farther behind.

Then for three days separate portions of the French army--first Murat's

(the vice-king's), then Davout's, and then Ney's--ran, as it were, the

gauntlet of the Russian army. They abandoned one another, abandoned all

their heavy baggage, their artillery, and half their men, and fled,

getting past the Russians by night by making semicircles to the right.

Ney, who came last, had been busying himself blowing up the walls of

Smolensk which were in nobody's way, because despite the unfortunate

plight of the French or because of it, they wished to punish the floor

against which they had hurt themselves. Ney, who had had a corps of ten

thousand men, reached Napoleon at Orsha with only one thousand men left,

having abandoned all the rest and all his cannon, and having crossed the

Dnieper at night by stealth at a wooded spot.

From Orsha they fled farther along the road to Vilna, still playing at

blindman's buff with the pursuing army. At the Berezina they again

became disorganized, many were drowned and many surrendered, but those

who got across the river fled farther. Their supreme chief donned a fur

coat and, having seated himself in a sleigh, galloped on alone,

abandoning his companions. The others who could do so drove away too,

leaving those who could not to surrender or die.

CHAPTER XVIII

This campaign consisted in a flight of the French during which they did

all they could to destroy themselves. From the time they turned onto the

Kaluga road to the day their leader fled from the army, none of the

movements of the crowd had any sense. So one might have thought that

regarding this period of the campaign the historians, who attributed the

actions of the mass to the will of one man, would have found it

impossible to make the story of the retreat fit their theory. But no!

Mountains of books have been written by the historians about this

campaign, and everywhere are described Napoleon's arrangements, the

maneuvers, and his profound plans which guided the army, as well as the

military genius shown by his marshals.

The retreat from Malo-Yaroslavets when he had a free road into a well-

supplied district and the parallel road was open to him along which

Kutuzov afterwards pursued him--this unnecessary retreat along a

devastated road--is explained to us as being due to profound

considerations. Similarly profound considerations are given for his

retreat from Smolensk to Orsha. Then his heroism at Krasnoe is

described, where he is reported to have been prepared to accept battle

and take personal command, and to have walked about with a birch stick

and said:

"J'ai assez fait l'empereur; il est temps de faire le general," \* but

nevertheless immediately ran away again, abandoning to its fate the

scattered fragments of the army he left behind.

\* "I have acted the Emperor long enough; it is time to act the general."

Then we are told of the greatness of soul of the marshals, especially of

Ney--a greatness of soul consisting in this: that he made his way by

night around through the forest and across the Dnieper and escaped to

Orsha, abandoning standards, artillery, and nine tenths of his men.

And lastly, the final departure of the great Emperor from his heroic

army is presented to us by the historians as something great and

characteristic of genius. Even that final running away, described in

ordinary language as the lowest depth of baseness which every child is

taught to be ashamed of--even that act finds justification in the

historians' language.

When it is impossible to stretch the very elastic threads of historical

ratiocination any farther, when actions are clearly contrary to all that

humanity calls right or even just, the historians produce a saving

conception of "greatness." "Greatness," it seems, excludes the standards

of right and wrong. For the "great" man nothing is wrong, there is no

atrocity for which a "great" man can be blamed.

"C'est grand!" \* say the historians, and there no longer exists either

good or evil but only "grand" and "not grand." Grand is good, not grand

is bad. Grand is the characteristic, in their conception, of some

special animals called "heroes." And Napoleon, escaping home in a warm

fur coat and leaving to perish those who were not merely his comrades

but were (in his opinion) men he had brought there, feels que c'est

grand, \*(2) and his soul is tranquil.

\* "It is great."

\* (2) That it is great.

"Du sublime (he saw something sublime in himself) au ridicule il n'y a

qu'un pas," \* said he. And the whole world for fifty years has been

repeating: "Sublime! Grand! Napoleon le Grand!" Du sublime au ridicule

il n'y a qu'un pas.

\* "From the sublime to the ridiculous is but a step."

And it occurs to no one that to admit a greatness not commensurable with

the standard of right and wrong is merely to admit one's own nothingness

and immeasurable meanness.

For us with the standard of good and evil given us by Christ, no human

actions are incommensurable. And there is no greatness where simplicity,

goodness, and truth are absent.

CHAPTER XIX

What Russian, reading the account of the last part of the campaign of

1812, has not experienced an uncomfortable feeling of regret,

dissatisfaction, and perplexity? Who has not asked himself how it is

that the French were not all captured or destroyed when our three armies

surrounded them in superior numbers, when the disordered French, hungry

and freezing, surrendered in crowds, and when (as the historians relate)

the aim of the Russians was to stop the French, to cut them off, and

capture them all?

How was it that the Russian army, which when numerically weaker than the

French had given battle at Borodino, did not achieve its purpose when it

had surrounded the French on three sides and when its aim was to capture

them? Can the French be so enormously superior to us that when we had

surrounded them with superior forces we could not beat them? How could

that happen?

History (or what is called by that name) replying to these questions

says that this occurred because Kutuzov and Tormasov and Chichagov, and

this man and that man, did not execute such and such maneuvers...

But why did they not execute those maneuvers? And why if they were

guilty of not carrying out a prearranged plan were they not tried and

punished? But even if we admitted that Kutuzov, Chichagov, and others

were the cause of the Russian failures, it is still incomprehensible

why, the position of the Russian army being what it was at Krasnoe and

at the Berezina (in both cases we had superior forces), the French army

with its marshals, kings, and Emperor was not captured, if that was what

the Russians aimed at.

The explanation of this strange fact given by Russian military

historians (to the effect that Kutuzov hindered an attack) is unfounded,

for we know that he could not restrain the troops from attacking at

Vyazma and Tarutino.

Why was the Russian army--which with inferior forces had withstood the

enemy in full strength at Borodino--defeated at Krasnoe and the Berezina

by the disorganized crowds of the French when it was numerically

superior?

If the aim of the Russians consisted in cutting off and capturing

Napoleon and his marshals--and that aim was not merely frustrated but

all attempts to attain it were most shamefully baffled--then this last

period of the campaign is quite rightly considered by the French to be a

series of victories, and quite wrongly considered victorious by Russian

historians.

The Russian military historians in so far as they submit to claims of

logic must admit that conclusion, and in spite of their lyrical

rhapsodies about valor, devotion, and so forth, must reluctantly admit

that the French retreat from Moscow was a series of victories for

Napoleon and defeats for Kutuzov.

But putting national vanity entirely aside one feels that such a

conclusion involves a contradiction, since the series of French

victories brought the French complete destruction, while the series of

Russian defeats led to the total destruction of their enemy and the

liberation of their country.

The source of this contradiction lies in the fact that the historians

studying the events from the letters of the sovereigns and the generals,

from memoirs, reports, projects, and so forth, have attributed to this

last period of the war of 1812 an aim that never existed, namely that of

cutting off and capturing Napoleon with his marshals and his army.

There never was or could have been such an aim, for it would have been

senseless and its attainment quite impossible.

It would have been senseless, first because Napoleon's disorganized army

was flying from Russia with all possible speed, that is to say, was

doing just what every Russian desired. So what was the use of performing

various operations on the French who were running away as fast as they

possibly could?

Secondly, it would have been senseless to block the passage of men whose

whole energy was directed to flight.

Thirdly, it would have been senseless to sacrifice one's own troops in

order to destroy the French army, which without external interference

was destroying itself at such a rate that, though its path was not

blocked, it could not carry across the frontier more than it actually

did in December, namely a hundredth part of the original army.

Fourthly, it would have been senseless to wish to take captive the

Emperor, kings, and dukes--whose capture would have been in the highest

degree embarrassing for the Russians, as the most adroit diplomatists of

the time (Joseph de Maistre and others) recognized. Still more senseless

would have been the wish to capture army corps of the French, when our

own army had melted away to half before reaching Krasnoe and a whole

division would have been needed to convoy the corps of prisoners, and

when our men were not always getting full rations and the prisoners

already taken were perishing of hunger.

All the profound plans about cutting off and capturing Napoleon and his

army were like the plan of a market gardener who, when driving out of

his garden a cow that had trampled down the beds he had planted, should

run to the gate and hit the cow on the head. The only thing to be said

in excuse of that gardener would be that he was very angry. But not even

that could be said for those who drew up this project, for it was not

they who had suffered from the trampled beds.

But besides the fact that cutting off Napoleon with his army would have

been senseless, it was impossible.

It was impossible first because--as experience shows that a three-mile

movement of columns on a battlefield never coincides with the plans--the

probability of Chichagov, Kutuzov, and Wittgenstein effecting a junction

on time at an appointed place was so remote as to be tantamount to

impossibility, as in fact thought Kutuzov, who when he received the plan

remarked that diversions planned over great distances do not yield the

desired results.

Secondly it was impossible, because to paralyze the momentum with which

Napoleon's army was retiring, incomparably greater forces than the

Russians possessed would have been required.

Thirdly it was impossible, because the military term "to cut off" has no

meaning. One can cut off a slice of bread, but not an army. To cut off

an army--to bar its road--is quite impossible, for there is always

plenty of room to avoid capture and there is the night when nothing can

be seen, as the military scientists might convince themselves by the

example of Krasnoe and of the Berezina. It is only possible to capture

prisoners if they agree to be captured, just as it is only possible to

catch a swallow if it settles on one's hand. Men can only be taken

prisoners if they surrender according to the rules of strategy and

tactics, as the Germans did. But the French troops quite rightly did not

consider that this suited them, since death by hunger and cold awaited

them in flight or captivity alike.

Fourthly and chiefly it was impossible, because never since the world

began has a war been fought under such conditions as those that obtained

in 1812, and the Russian army in its pursuit of the French strained its

strength to the utmost and could not have done more without destroying

itself.

During the movement of the Russian army from Tarutino to Krasnoe it lost

fifty thousand sick or stragglers, that is a number equal to the

population of a large provincial town. Half the men fell out of the army

without a battle.

And it is of this period of the campaign--when the army lacked boots and

sheepskin coats, was short of provisions and without vodka, and was

camping out at night for months in the snow with fifteen degrees of

frost, when there were only seven or eight hours of daylight and the

rest was night in which the influence of discipline cannot be

maintained, when men were taken into that region of death where

discipline fails, not for a few hours only as in a battle, but for

months, where they were every moment fighting death from hunger and

cold, when half the army perished in a single month--it is of this

period of the campaign that the historians tell us how Miloradovich

should have made a flank march to such and such a place, Tormasov to

another place, and Chichagov should have crossed (more than knee-deep in

snow) to somewhere else, and how so-and-so "routed" and "cut off" the

French and so on and so on.

The Russians, half of whom died, did all that could and should have been

done to attain an end worthy of the nation, and they are not to blame

because other Russians, sitting in warm rooms, proposed that they should

do what was impossible.

All that strange contradiction now difficult to understand between the

facts and the historical accounts only arises because the historians

dealing with the matter have written the history of the beautiful words

and sentiments of various generals, and not the history of the events.

To them the words of Miloradovich seem very interesting, and so do their

surmises and the rewards this or that general received; but the question

of those fifty thousand men who were left in hospitals and in graves

does not even interest them, for it does not come within the range of

their investigation.

Yet one need only discard the study of the reports and general plans and

consider the movement of those hundreds of thousands of men who took a

direct part in the events, and all the questions that seemed insoluble

easily and simply receive an immediate and certain solution.

The aim of cutting off Napoleon and his army never existed except in the

imaginations of a dozen people. It could not exist because it was

senseless and unattainable.

The people had a single aim: to free their land from invasion. That aim

was attained in the first place of itself, as the French ran away, and

so it was only necessary not to stop their flight. Secondly it was

attained by the guerrilla warfare which was destroying the French, and

thirdly by the fact that a large Russian army was following the French,

ready to use its strength in case their movement stopped.

The Russian army had to act like a whip to a running animal. And the

experienced driver knew it was better to hold the whip raised as a

menace than to strike the running animal on the head.

BOOK FIFTEEN: 1812 - 13

CHAPTER I

When seeing a dying animal a man feels a sense of horror: substance

similar to his own is perishing before his eyes. But when it is a

beloved and intimate human being that is dying, besides this horror at

the extinction of life there is a severance, a spiritual wound, which

like a physical wound is sometimes fatal and sometimes heals, but always

aches and shrinks at any external irritating touch.

After Prince Andrew's death Natasha and Princess Mary alike felt this.

Drooping in spirit and closing their eyes before the menacing cloud of

death that overhung them, they dared not look life in the face. They

carefully guarded their open wounds from any rough and painful contact.

Everything: a carriage passing rapidly in the street, a summons to

dinner, the maid's inquiry what dress to prepare, or worse still any

word of insincere or feeble sympathy, seemed an insult, painfully

irritated the wound, interrupting that necessary quiet in which they

both tried to listen to the stern and dreadful choir that still

resounded in their imagination, and hindered their gazing into those

mysterious limitless vistas that for an instant had opened out before

them.

Only when alone together were they free from such outrage and pain. They

spoke little even to one another, and when they did it was of very

unimportant matters.

Both avoided any allusion to the future. To admit the possibility of a

future seemed to them to insult his memory. Still more carefully did

they avoid anything relating to him who was dead. It seemed to them that

what they had lived through and experienced could not be expressed in

words, and that any reference to the details of his life infringed the

majesty and sacredness of the mystery that had been accomplished before

their eyes.

Continued abstention from speech, and constant avoidance of everything

that might lead up to the subject--this halting on all sides at the

boundary of what they might not mention--brought before their minds with

still greater purity and clearness what they were both feeling.

But pure and complete sorrow is as impossible as pure and complete joy.

Princess Mary, in her position as absolute and independent arbiter of

her own fate and guardian and instructor of her nephew, was the first to

be called back to life from that realm of sorrow in which she had dwelt

for the first fortnight. She received letters from her relations to

which she had to reply; the room in which little Nicholas had been put

was damp and he began to cough; Alpatych came to Yaroslavl with reports

on the state of their affairs and with advice and suggestions that they

should return to Moscow to the house on the Vozdvizhenka Street, which

had remained uninjured and needed only slight repairs. Life did not

stand still and it was necessary to live. Hard as it was for Princess

Mary to emerge from the realm of secluded contemplation in which she had

lived till then, and sorry and almost ashamed as she felt to leave

Natasha alone, yet the cares of life demanded her attention and she

involuntarily yielded to them. She went through the accounts with

Alpatych, conferred with Dessalles about her nephew, and gave orders and

made preparations for the journey to Moscow.

Natasha remained alone and, from the time Princess Mary began making

preparations for departure, held aloof from her too.

Princess Mary asked the countess to let Natasha go with her to Moscow,

and both parents gladly accepted this offer, for they saw their daughter

losing strength every day and thought that a change of scene and the

advice of Moscow doctors would be good for her.

"I am not going anywhere," Natasha replied when this was proposed to

her. "Do please just leave me alone!" And she ran out of the room, with

difficulty refraining from tears of vexation and irritation rather than

of sorrow.

After she felt herself deserted by Princes Mary and alone in her grief,

Natasha spent most of the time in her room by herself, sitting huddled

up feet and all in the corner of the sofa, tearing and twisting

something with her slender nervous fingers and gazing intently and

fixedly at whatever her eyes chanced to fall on. This solitude exhausted

and tormented her but she was in absolute need of it. As soon as anyone

entered she got up quickly, changed her position and expression, and

picked up a book or some sewing, evidently waiting impatiently for the

intruder to go.

She felt all the time as if she might at any moment penetrate that on

which--with a terrible questioning too great for her strength--her

spiritual gaze was fixed.

One day toward the end of December Natasha, pale and thin, dressed in a

black woolen gown, her plaited hair negligently twisted into a knot, was

crouched feet and all in the corner of her sofa, nervously crumpling and

smoothing out the end of her sash while she looked at a corner of the

door.

She was gazing in the direction in which he had gone--to the other side

of life. And that other side of life, of which she had never before

thought and which had formerly seemed to her so far away and improbable,

was now nearer and more akin and more comprehensible than this side of

life, where everything was either emptiness and desolation or suffering

and indignity.

She was gazing where she knew him to be; but she could not imagine him

otherwise than as he had been here. She now saw him again as he had been

at Mytishchi, at Troitsa, and at Yaroslavl.

She saw his face, heard his voice, repeated his words and her own, and

sometimes devised other words they might have spoken.

There he is lying back in an armchair in his velvet cloak, leaning his

head on his thin pale hand. His chest is dreadfully hollow and his

shoulders raised. His lips are firmly closed, his eyes glitter, and a

wrinkle comes and goes on his pale forehead. One of his legs twitches

just perceptibly, but rapidly. Natasha knows that he is struggling with

terrible pain. "What is that pain like? Why does he have that pain? What

does he feel? How does it hurt him?" thought Natasha. He noticed her

watching him, raised his eyes, and began to speak seriously:

"One thing would be terrible," said he: "to bind oneself forever to a

suffering man. It would be continual torture." And he looked searchingly

at her. Natasha as usual answered before she had time to think what she

would say. She said: "This can't go on--it won't. You will get well--

quite well."

She now saw him from the commencement of that scene and relived what she

had then felt. She recalled his long sad and severe look at those words

and understood the meaning of the rebuke and despair in that protracted

gaze.

"I agreed," Natasha now said to herself, "that it would be dreadful if

he always continued to suffer. I said it then only because it would have

been dreadful for him, but he understood it differently. He thought it

would be dreadful for me. He then still wished to live and feared death.

And I said it so awkwardly and stupidly! I did not say what I meant. I

thought quite differently. Had I said what I thought, I should have

said: even if he had to go on dying, to die continually before my eyes,

I should have been happy compared with what I am now. Now there is

nothing... nobody. Did he know that? No, he did not and never will know

it. And now it will never, never be possible to put it right." And now

he again seemed to be saying the same words to her, only in her

imagination Natasha this time gave him a different answer. She stopped

him and said: "Terrible for you, but not for me! You know that for me

there is nothing in life but you, and to suffer with you is the greatest

happiness for me," and he took her hand and pressed it as he had pressed

it that terrible evening four days before his death. And in her

imagination she said other tender and loving words which she might have

said then but only spoke now: "I love thee!... thee! I love, love..."

she said, convulsively pressing her hands and setting her teeth with a

desperate effort...

She was overcome by sweet sorrow and tears were already rising in her

eyes; then she suddenly asked herself to whom she was saying this. Again

everything was shrouded in hard, dry perplexity, and again with a

strained frown she peered toward the world where he was. And now, now it

seemed to her she was penetrating the mystery.... But at the instant

when it seemed that the incomprehensible was revealing itself to her a

loud rattle of the door handle struck painfully on her ears. Dunyasha,

her maid, entered the room quickly and abruptly with a frightened look

on her face and showing no concern for her mistress.

"Come to your Papa at once, please!" said she with a strange, excited

look. "A misfortune... about Peter Ilynich... a letter," she finished

with a sob.

CHAPTER II

Besides a feeling of aloofness from everybody Natasha was feeling a

special estrangement from the members of her own family. All of them--

her father, mother, and Sonya--were so near to her, so familiar, so

commonplace, that all their words and feelings seemed an insult to the

world in which she had been living of late, and she felt not merely

indifferent to them but regarded them with hostility. She heard

Dunyasha's words about Peter Ilynich and a misfortune, but did not grasp

them.

"What misfortune? What misfortune can happen to them? They just live

their own old, quiet, and commonplace life," thought Natasha.

As she entered the ballroom her father was hurriedly coming out of her

mother's room. His face was puckered up and wet with tears. He had

evidently run out of that room to give vent to the sobs that were

choking him. When he saw Natasha he waved his arms despairingly and

burst into convulsively painful sobs that distorted his soft round face.

"Pe... Petya... Go, go, she... is calling..." and weeping like a child

and quickly shuffling on his feeble legs to a chair, he almost fell into

it, covering his face with his hands.

Suddenly an electric shock seemed to run through Natasha's whole being.

Terrible anguish struck her heart, she felt a dreadful ache as if

something was being torn inside her and she were dying. But the pain was

immediately followed by a feeling of release from the oppressive

constraint that had prevented her taking part in life. The sight of her

father, the terribly wild cries of her mother that she heard through the

door, made her immediately forget herself and her own grief.

She ran to her father, but he feebly waved his arm, pointing to her

mother's door. Princess Mary, pale and with quivering chin, came out

from that room and taking Natasha by the arm said something to her.

Natasha neither saw nor heard her. She went in with rapid steps, pausing

at the door for an instant as if struggling with herself, and then ran

to her mother.

The countess was lying in an armchair in a strange and awkward position,

stretching out and beating her head against the wall. Sonya and the

maids were holding her arms.

"Natasha! Natasha!..." cried the countess. "It's not true... it's not

true... He's lying... Natasha!" she shrieked, pushing those around her

away. "Go away, all of you; it's not true! Killed!... ha, ha, ha!...

It's not true!"

Natasha put one knee on the armchair, stooped over her mother, embraced

her, and with unexpected strength raised her, turned her face toward

herself, and clung to her.

"Mummy!... darling!... I am here, my dearest Mummy," she kept on

whispering, not pausing an instant.

She did not let go of her mother but struggled tenderly with her,

demanded a pillow and hot water, and unfastened and tore open her

mother's dress.

"My dearest darling... Mummy, my precious!..." she whispered

incessantly, kissing her head, her hands, her face, and feeling her own

irrepressible and streaming tears tickling her nose and cheeks.

The countess pressed her daughter's hand, closed her eyes, and became

quiet for a moment. Suddenly she sat up with unaccustomed swiftness,

glanced vacantly around her, and seeing Natasha began to press her

daughter's head with all her strength. Then she turned toward her

daughter's face which was wincing with pain and gazed long at it.

"Natasha, you love me?" she said in a soft trustful whisper. "Natasha,

you would not deceive me? You'll tell me the whole truth?"

Natasha looked at her with eyes full of tears and in her look there was

nothing but love and an entreaty for forgiveness.

"My darling Mummy!" she repeated, straining all the power of her love to

find some way of taking on herself the excess of grief that crushed her

mother.

And again in a futile struggle with reality her mother, refusing to

believe that she could live when her beloved boy was killed in the bloom

of life, escaped from reality into a world of delirium.

Natasha did not remember how that day passed nor that night, nor the

next day and night. She did not sleep and did not leave her mother. Her

persevering and patient love seemed completely to surround the countess

every moment, not explaining or consoling, but recalling her to life.

During the third night the countess kept very quiet for a few minutes,

and Natasha rested her head on the arm of her chair and closed her eyes,

but opened them again on hearing the bedstead creak. The countess was

sitting up in bed and speaking softly.

"How glad I am you have come. You are tired. Won't you have some tea?"

Natasha went up to her. "You have improved in looks and grown more

manly," continued the countess, taking her daughter's hand.

"Mamma! What are you saying..."

"Natasha, he is no more, no more!"

And embracing her daughter, the countess began to weep for the first

time.

CHAPTER III

Princess Mary postponed her departure. Sonya and the count tried to

replace Natasha but could not. They saw that she alone was able to

restrain her mother from unreasoning despair. For three weeks Natasha

remained constantly at her mother's side, sleeping on a lounge chair in

her room, making her eat and drink, and talking to her incessantly

because the mere sound of her tender, caressing tones soothed her

mother.

The mother's wounded spirit could not heal. Petya's death had torn from

her half her life. When the news of Petya's death had come she had been

a fresh and vigorous woman of fifty, but a month later she left her room

a listless old woman taking no interest in life. But the same blow that

almost killed the countess, this second blow, restored Natasha to life.

A spiritual wound produced by a rending of the spiritual body is like a

physical wound and, strange as it may seem, just as a deep wound may

heal and its edges join, physical and spiritual wounds alike can yet

heal completely only as the result of a vital force from within.

Natasha's wound healed in that way. She thought her life was ended, but

her love for her mother unexpectedly showed her that the essence of

life--love--was still active within her. Love awoke and so did life.

Prince Andrew's last days had bound Princess Mary and Natasha together;

this new sorrow brought them still closer to one another. Princess Mary

put off her departure, and for three weeks looked after Natasha as if

she had been a sick child. The last weeks passed in her mother's bedroom

had strained Natasha's physical strength.

One afternoon noticing Natasha shivering with fever, Princess Mary took

her to her own room and made her lie down on the bed. Natasha lay down,

but when Princess Mary had drawn the blinds and was going away she

called her back.

"I don't want to sleep, Mary, sit by me a little."

"You are tired--try to sleep."

"No, no. Why did you bring me away? She will be asking for me."

"She is much better. She spoke so well today," said Princess Mary.

Natasha lay on the bed and in the semidarkness of the room scanned

Princess Mary's face.

"Is she like him?" thought Natasha. "Yes, like and yet not like. But she

is quite original, strange, new, and unknown. And she loves me. What is

in her heart? All that is good. But how? What is her mind like? What

does she think about me? Yes, she is splendid!"

"Mary," she said timidly, drawing Princess Mary's hand to herself,

"Mary, you mustn't think me wicked. No? Mary darling, how I love you!

Let us be quite, quite friends."

And Natasha, embracing her, began kissing her face and hands, making

Princess Mary feel shy but happy by this demonstration of her feelings.

From that day a tender and passionate friendship such as exists only

between women was established between Princess Mary and Natasha. They

were continually kissing and saying tender things to one another and

spent most of their time together. When one went out the other became

restless and hastened to rejoin her. Together they felt more in harmony

with one another than either of them felt with herself when alone. A

feeling stronger than friendship sprang up between them; an exclusive

feeling of life being possible only in each other's presence.

Sometimes they were silent for hours; sometimes after they were already

in bed they would begin talking and go on till morning. They spoke most

of what was long past. Princess Mary spoke of her childhood, of her

mother, her father, and her daydreams; and Natasha, who with a passive

lack of understanding had formerly turned away from that life of

devotion, submission, and the poetry of Christian self-sacrifice, now

feeling herself bound to Princess Mary by affection, learned to love her

past too and to understand a side of life previously incomprehensible to

her. She did not think of applying submission and self-abnegation to her

own life, for she was accustomed to seek other joys, but she understood

and loved in another those previously incomprehensible virtues. For

Princess Mary, listening to Natasha's tales of childhood and early

youth, there also opened out a new and hitherto uncomprehended side of

life: belief in life and its enjoyment.

Just as before, they never mentioned him so as not to lower (as they

thought) their exalted feelings by words; but this silence about him had

the effect of making them gradually begin to forget him without being

conscious of it.

Natasha had grown thin and pale and physically so weak that they all

talked about her health, and this pleased her. But sometimes she was

suddenly overcome by fear not only of death but of sickness, weakness,

and loss of good looks, and involuntarily she examined her bare arm

carefully, surprised at its thinness, and in the morning noticed her

drawn and, as it seemed to her, piteous face in her glass. It seemed to

her that things must be so, and yet it was dreadfully sad.

One day she went quickly upstairs and found herself out of breath.

Unconsciously she immediately invented a reason for going down, and

then, testing her strength, ran upstairs again, observing the result.

Another time when she called Dunyasha her voice trembled, so she called

again--though she could hear Dunyasha coming--called her in the deep

chest tones in which she had been wont to sing, and listened attentively

to herself.

She did not know and would not have believed it, but beneath the layer

of slime that covered her soul and seemed to her impenetrable, delicate

young shoots of grass were already sprouting, which taking root would so

cover with their living verdure the grief that weighed her down that it

would soon no longer be seen or noticed. The wound had begun to heal

from within.

At the end of January Princess Mary left for Moscow, and the count

insisted on Natasha's going with her to consult the doctors.

CHAPTER IV

After the encounter at Vyazma, where Kutuzov had been unable to hold

back his troops in their anxiety to overwhelm and cut off the enemy and

so on, the farther movement of the fleeing French, and of the Russians

who pursued them, continued as far as Krasnoe without a battle. The

flight was so rapid that the Russian army pursuing the French could not

keep up with them; cavalry and artillery horses broke down, and the

information received of the movements of the French was never reliable.

The men in the Russian army were so worn out by this continuous marching

at the rate of twenty-seven miles a day that they could not go any

faster.

To realize the degree of exhaustion of the Russian army it is only

necessary to grasp clearly the meaning of the fact that, while not

losing more than five thousand killed and wounded after Tarutino and

less than a hundred prisoners, the Russian army which left that place a

hundred thousand strong reached Krasnoe with only fifty thousand.

The rapidity of the Russian pursuit was just as destructive to our army

as the flight of the French was to theirs. The only difference was that

the Russian army moved voluntarily, with no such threat of destruction

as hung over the French, and that the sick Frenchmen were left behind in

enemy hands while the sick Russians left behind were among their own

people. The chief cause of the wastage of Napoleon's army was the

rapidity of its movement, and a convincing proof of this is the

corresponding decrease of the Russian army.

Kutuzov as far as was in his power, instead of trying to check the

movement of the French as was desired in Petersburg and by the Russian

army generals, directed his whole activity here, as he had done at

Tarutino and Vyazma, to hastening it on while easing the movement of our

army.

But besides this, since the exhaustion and enormous diminution of the

army caused by the rapidity of the advance had become evident, another

reason for slackening the pace and delaying presented itself to Kutuzov.

The aim of the Russian army was to pursue the French. The road the

French would take was unknown, and so the closer our troops trod on

their heels the greater distance they had to cover. Only by following at

some distance could one cut across the zigzag path of the French. All

the artful maneuvers suggested by our generals meant fresh movements of

the army and a lengthening of its marches, whereas the only reasonable

aim was to shorten those marches. To that end Kutuzov's activity was

directed during the whole campaign from Moscow to Vilna--not casually or

intermittently but so consistently that he never once deviated from it.

Kutuzov felt and knew--not by reasoning or science but with the whole of

his Russian being--what every Russian soldier felt: that the French were

beaten, that the enemy was flying and must be driven out; but at the

same time he like the soldiers realized all the hardship of this march,

the rapidity of which was unparalleled for such a time of the year.

But to the generals, especially the foreign ones in the Russian army,

who wished to distinguish themselves, to astonish somebody, and for some

reason to capture a king or a duke--it seemed that now--when any battle

must be horrible and senseless--was the very time to fight and conquer

somebody. Kutuzov merely shrugged his shoulders when one after another

they presented projects of maneuvers to be made with those soldiers--

ill-shod, insufficiently clad, and half starved--who within a month and

without fighting a battle had dwindled to half their number, and who at

the best if the flight continued would have to go a greater distance

than they had already traversed, before they reached the frontier.

This longing to distinguish themselves, to maneuver, to overthrow, and

to cut off showed itself particularly whenever the Russians stumbled on

the French army.

So it was at Krasnoe, where they expected to find one of the three

French columns and stumbled instead on Napoleon himself with sixteen

thousand men. Despite all Kutuzov's efforts to avoid that ruinous

encounter and to preserve his troops, the massacre of the broken mob of

French soldiers by worn-out Russians continued at Krasnoe for three

days.

Toll wrote a disposition: "The first column will march to so and so,"

etc. And as usual nothing happened in accord with the disposition.

Prince Eugene of Wurttemberg fired from a hill over the French crowds

that were running past, and demanded reinforcements which did not

arrive. The French, avoiding the Russians, dispersed and hid themselves

in the forest by night, making their way round as best they could, and

continued their flight.

Miloradovich, who said he did not want to know anything about the

commissariat affairs of his detachment, and could never be found when he

was wanted--that chevalier sans peur et sans reproche \* as he styled

himself--who was fond of parleys with the French, sent envoys demanding

their surrender, wasted time, and did not do what he was ordered to do.

\* Knight without fear and without reproach.

"I give you that column, lads," he said, riding up to the troops and

pointing out the French to the cavalry.

And the cavalry, with spurs and sabers urging on horses that could

scarcely move, trotted with much effort to the column presented to them-

-that is to say, to a crowd of Frenchmen stark with cold, frost-bitten,

and starving--and the column that had been presented to them threw down

its arms and surrendered as it had long been anxious to do.

At Krasnoe they took twenty-six thousand prisoners, several hundred

cannon, and a stick called a "marshal's staff," and disputed as to who

had distinguished himself and were pleased with their achievement--

though they much regretted not having taken Napoleon, or at least a

marshal or a hero of some sort, and reproached one another and

especially Kutuzov for having failed to do so.

These men, carried away by their passions, were but blind tools of the

most melancholy law of necessity, but considered themselves heroes and

imagined that they were accomplishing a most noble and honorable deed.

They blamed Kutuzov and said that from the very beginning of the

campaign he had prevented their vanquishing Napoleon, that he thought of

nothing but satisfying his passions and would not advance from the Linen

Factories because he was comfortable there, that at Krasnoe he checked

the advance because on learning that Napoleon was there he had quite

lost his head, and that it was probable that he had an understanding

with Napoleon and had been bribed by him, and so on, and so on.

Not only did his contemporaries, carried away by their passions, talk in

this way, but posterity and history have acclaimed Napoleon as grand,

while Kutuzov is described by foreigners as a crafty, dissolute, weak

old courtier, and by Russians as something indefinite--a sort of puppet

useful only because he had a Russian name.

CHAPTER V

In 1812 and 1813 Kutuzov was openly accused of blundering. The Emperor

was dissatisfied with him. And in a history recently written by order of

the Highest Authorities it is said that Kutuzov was a cunning court

liar, frightened of the name of Napoleon, and that by his blunders at

Krasnoe and the Berezina he deprived the Russian army of the glory of

complete victory over the French. \*

\* History of the year 1812. The character of Kutuzov and reflections on

the unsatisfactory results of the battles at Krasnoe, by Bogdanovich.

Such is the fate not of great men (grands hommes) whom the Russian mind

does not acknowledge, but of those rare and always solitary individuals

who, discerning the will of Providence, submit their personal will to

it. The hatred and contempt of the crowd punish such men for discerning

the higher laws.

For Russian historians, strange and terrible to say, Napoleon--that most

insignificant tool of history who never anywhere, even in exile, showed

human dignity--Napoleon is the object of adulation and enthusiasm; he is

grand. But Kutuzov--the man who from the beginning to the end of his

activity in 1812, never once swerving by word or deed from Borodino to

Vilna, presented an example exceptional in history of self-sacrifice and

a present consciousness of the future importance of what was happening--

Kutuzov seems to them something indefinite and pitiful, and when

speaking of him and of the year 1812 they always seem a little ashamed.

And yet it is difficult to imagine an historical character whose

activity was so unswervingly directed to a single aim; and it would be

difficult to imagine any aim more worthy or more consonant with the will

of the whole people. Still more difficult would it be to find an

instance in history of the aim of an historical personage being so

completely accomplished as that to which all Kutuzov's efforts were

directed in 1812.

Kutuzov never talked of "forty centuries looking down from the

Pyramids," of the sacrifices he offered for the fatherland, or of what

he intended to accomplish or had accomplished; in general he said

nothing about himself, adopted no pose, always appeared to be the

simplest and most ordinary of men, and said the simplest and most

ordinary things. He wrote letters to his daughters and to Madame de

Stael, read novels, liked the society of pretty women, jested with

generals, officers, and soldiers, and never contradicted those who tried

to prove anything to him. When Count Rostopchin at the Yauza bridge

galloped up to Kutuzov with personal reproaches for having caused the

destruction of Moscow, and said: "How was it you promised not to abandon

Moscow without a battle?" Kutuzov replied: "And I shall not abandon

Moscow without a battle," though Moscow was then already abandoned. When

Arakcheev, coming to him from the Emperor, said that Ermolov ought to be

appointed chief of the artillery, Kutuzov replied: "Yes, I was just

saying so myself," though a moment before he had said quite the

contrary. What did it matter to him--who then alone amid a senseless

crowd understood the whole tremendous significance of what was

happening--what did it matter to him whether Rostopchin attributed the

calamities of Moscow to him or to himself? Still less could it matter to

him who was appointed chief of the artillery.

Not merely in these cases but continually did that old man--who by

experience of life had reached the conviction that thoughts and the

words serving as their expression are not what move people--use quite

meaningless words that happened to enter his head.

But that man, so heedless of his words, did not once during the whole

time of his activity utter one word inconsistent with the single aim

toward which he moved throughout the whole war. Obviously in spite of

himself, in very diverse circumstances, he repeatedly expressed his real

thoughts with the bitter conviction that he would not be understood.

Beginning with the battle of Borodino, from which time his disagreement

with those about him began, he alone said that the battle of Borodino

was a victory, and repeated this both verbally and in his dispatches and

reports up to the time of his death. He alone said that the loss of

Moscow is not the loss of Russia. In reply to Lauriston's proposal of

peace, he said: There can be no peace, for such is the people's will. He

alone during the retreat of the French said that all our maneuvers are

useless, everything is being accomplished of itself better than we could

desire; that the enemy must be offered "a golden bridge"; that neither

the Tarutino, the Vyazma, nor the Krasnoe battles were necessary; that

we must keep some force to reach the frontier with, and that he would

not sacrifice a single Russian for ten Frenchmen.

And this courtier, as he is described to us, who lies to Arakcheev to

please the Emperor, he alone--incurring thereby the Emperor's

displeasure--said in Vilna that to carry the war beyond the frontier is

useless and harmful.

Nor do words alone prove that only he understood the meaning of the

events. His actions--without the smallest deviation--were all directed

to one and the same threefold end: (1) to brace all his strength for

conflict with the French, (2) to defeat them, and (3) to drive them out

of Russia, minimizing as far as possible the sufferings of our people

and of our army.

This procrastinator Kutuzov, whose motto was "Patience and Time," this

enemy of decisive action, gave battle at Borodino, investing the

preparations for it with unparalleled solemnity. This Kutuzov who before

the battle of Austerlitz began said that it would be lost, he alone, in

contradiction to everyone else, declared till his death that Borodino

was a victory, despite the assurance of generals that the battle was

lost and despite the fact that for an army to have to retire after

winning a battle was unprecedented. He alone during the whole retreat

insisted that battles, which were useless then, should not be fought,

and that a new war should not be begun nor the frontiers of Russia

crossed.

It is easy now to understand the significance of these events--if only

we abstain from attributing to the activity of the mass aims that

existed only in the heads of a dozen individuals--for the events and

results now lie before us.

But how did that old man, alone, in opposition to the general opinion,

so truly discern the importance of the people's view of the events that

in all his activity he was never once untrue to it?

The source of that extraordinary power of penetrating the meaning of the

events then occuring lay in the national feeling which he possessed in

full purity and strength.

Only the recognition of the fact that he possessed this feeling caused

the people in so strange a manner, contrary to the Tsar's wish, to

select him--an old man in disfavor--to be their representative in the

national war. And only that feeling placed him on that highest human

pedestal from which he, the commander-in-chief, devoted all his powers

not to slaying and destroying men but to saving and showing pity on

them.

That simple, modest, and therefore truly great, figure could not be cast

in the false mold of a European hero--the supposed ruler of men--that

history has invented.

To a lackey no man can be great, for a lackey has his own conception of

greatness.

CHAPTER VI

The fifth of November was the first day of what is called the battle of

Krasnoe. Toward evening--after much disputing and many mistakes made by

generals who did not go to their proper places, and after adjutants had

been sent about with counterorders--when it had become plain that the

enemy was everywhere in flight and that there could and would be no

battle, Kutuzov left Krasnoe and went to Dobroe whither his headquarters

had that day been transferred.

The day was clear and frosty. Kutuzov rode to Dobroe on his plump little

white horse, followed by an enormous suite of discontented generals who

whispered among themselves behind his back. All along the road groups of

French prisoners captured that day (there were seven thousand of them)

were crowding to warm themselves at campfires. Near Dobroe an immense

crowd of tattered prisoners, buzzing with talk and wrapped and bandaged

in anything they had been able to get hold of, were standing in the road

beside a long row of unharnessed French guns. At the approach of the

commander-in-chief the buzz of talk ceased and all eyes were fixed on

Kutuzov who, wearing a white cap with a red band and a padded overcoat

that bulged on his round shoulders, moved slowly along the road on his

white horse. One of the generals was reporting to him where the guns and

prisoners had been captured.

Kutuzov seemed preoccupied and did not listen to what the general was

saying. He screwed up his eyes with a dissatisfied look as he gazed

attentively and fixedly at these prisoners, who presented a specially

wretched appearance. Most of them were disfigured by frost-bitten noses

and cheeks, and nearly all had red, swollen and festering eyes.

One group of the French stood close to the road, and two of them, one of

whom had his face covered with sores, were tearing a piece of raw flesh

with their hands. There was something horrible and bestial in the

fleeting glance they threw at the riders and in the malevolent

expression with which, after a glance at Kutuzov, the soldier with the

sores immediately turned away and went on with what he was doing.

Kutuzov looked long and intently at these two soldiers. He puckered his

face, screwed up his eyes, and pensively swayed his head. At another

spot he noticed a Russian soldier laughingly patting a Frenchman on the

shoulder, saying something to him in a friendly manner, and Kutuzov with

the same expression on his face again swayed his head.

"What were you saying?" he asked the general, who continuing his report

directed the commander-in-chief's attention to some standards captured

from the French and standing in front of the Preobrazhensk regiment.

"Ah, the standards!" said Kutuzov, evidently detaching himself with

difficulty from the thoughts that preoccupied him.

He looked about him absently. Thousands of eyes were looking at him from

all sides awaiting a word from him.

He stopped in front of the Preobrazhensk regiment, sighed deeply, and

closed his eyes. One of his suite beckoned to the soldiers carrying the

standards to advance and surround the commander-in-chief with them.

Kutuzov was silent for a few seconds and then, submitting with evident

reluctance to the duty imposed by his position, raised his head and

began to speak. A throng of officers surrounded him. He looked

attentively around at the circle of officers, recognizing several of

them.

"I thank you all!" he said, addressing the soldiers and then again the

officers. In the stillness around him his slowly uttered words were

distinctly heard. "I thank you all for your hard and faithful service.

The victory is complete and Russia will not forget you! Honor to you

forever."

He paused and looked around.

"Lower its head, lower it!" he said to a soldier who had accidentally

lowered the French eagle he was holding before the Preobrazhensk

standards. "Lower, lower, that's it. Hurrah lads!" he added, addressing

the men with a rapid movement of his chin.

"Hur-r-rah!" roared thousands of voices.

While the soldiers were shouting Kutuzov leaned forward in his saddle

and bowed his head, and his eye lit up with a mild and apparently ironic

gleam.

"You see, brothers..." said he when the shouts had ceased... and all at

once his voice and the expression of his face changed. It was no longer

the commander-in-chief speaking but an ordinary old man who wanted to

tell his comrades something very important.

There was a stir among the throng of officers and in the ranks of the

soldiers, who moved that they might hear better what he was going to

say.

"You see, brothers, I know it's hard for you, but it can't be helped!

Bear up; it won't be for long now! We'll see our visitors off and then

we'll rest. The Tsar won't forget your service. It is hard for you, but

still you are at home while they--you see what they have come to," said

he, pointing to the prisoners. "Worse off than our poorest beggars.

While they were strong we didn't spare ourselves, but now we may even

pity them. They are human beings too. Isn't it so, lads?"

He looked around, and in the direct, respectful, wondering gaze fixed

upon him he read sympathy with what he had said. His face grew brighter

and brighter with an old man's mild smile, which drew the corners of his

lips and eyes into a cluster of wrinkles. He ceased speaking and bowed

his head as if in perplexity.

"But after all who asked them here? Serves them right, the bloody

bastards!" he cried, suddenly lifting his head.

And flourishing his whip he rode off at a gallop for the first time

during the whole campaign, and left the broken ranks of the soldiers

laughing joyfully and shouting "Hurrah!"

Kutuzov's words were hardly understood by the troops. No one could have

repeated the field marshal's address, begun solemnly and then changing

into an old man's simplehearted talk; but the hearty sincerity of that

speech, the feeling of majestic triumph combined with pity for the foe

and consciousness of the justice of our cause, exactly expressed by that

old man's good-natured expletives, was not merely understood but lay in

the soul of every soldier and found expression in their joyous and long-

sustained shouts. Afterwards when one of the generals addressed Kutuzov

asking whether he wished his caleche to be sent for, Kutuzov in

answering unexpectedly gave a sob, being evidently greatly moved.

CHAPTER VII

When the troops reached their night's halting place on the eighth of

November, the last day of the Krasnoe battles, it was already growing

dusk. All day it had been calm and frosty with occasional lightly

falling snow and toward evening it began to clear. Through the falling

snow a purple-black and starry sky showed itself and the frost grew

keener.

An infantry regiment which had left Tarutino three thousand strong but

now numbered only nine hundred was one of the first to arrive that night

at its halting place--a village on the highroad. The quartermasters who

met the regiment announced that all the huts were full of sick and dead

Frenchmen, cavalrymen, and members of the staff. There was only one hut

available for the regimental commander.

The commander rode up to his hut. The regiment passed through the

village and stacked its arms in front of the last huts.

Like some huge many-limbed animal, the regiment began to prepare its

lair and its food. One part of it dispersed and waded knee-deep through

the snow into a birch forest to the right of the village, and

immediately the sound of axes and swords, the crashing of branches, and

merry voices could be heard from there. Another section amid the

regimental wagons and horses which were standing in a group was busy

getting out caldrons and rye biscuit, and feeding the horses. A third

section scattered through the village arranging quarters for the staff

officers, carrying out the French corpses that were in the huts, and

dragging away boards, dry wood, and thatch from the roofs, for the

campfires, or wattle fences to serve for shelter.

Some fifteen men with merry shouts were shaking down the high wattle

wall of a shed, the roof of which had already been removed.

"Now then, all together--shove!" cried the voices, and the huge surface

of the wall, sprinkled with snow and creaking with frost, was seen

swaying in the gloom of the night. The lower stakes cracked more and

more and at last the wall fell, and with it the men who had been pushing

it. Loud, coarse laughter and joyous shouts ensued.

"Now then, catch hold in twos! Hand up the lever! That's it... Where are

you shoving to?"

"Now, all together! But wait a moment, boys... With a song!"

All stood silent, and a soft, pleasant velvety voice began to sing. At

the end of the third verse as the last note died away, twenty voices

roared out at once: "Oo-oo-oo-oo! That's it. All together! Heave away,

boys!..." but despite their united efforts the wattle hardly moved, and

in the silence that followed the heavy breathing of the men was audible.

"Here, you of the Sixth Company! Devils that you are! Lend a hand...

will you? You may want us one of these days."

Some twenty men of the Sixth Company who were on their way into the

village joined the haulers, and the wattle wall, which was about thirty-

five feet long and seven feet high, moved forward along the village

street, swaying, pressing upon and cutting the shoulders of the gasping

men.

"Get along... Falling? What are you stopping for? There now..."

Merry senseless words of abuse flowed freely.

"What are you up to?" suddenly came the authoritative voice of a

sergeant major who came upon the men who were hauling their burden.

"There are gentry here; the general himself is in that hut, and you

foul-mouthed devils, you brutes, I'll give it to you!" shouted he,

hitting the first man who came in his way a swinging blow on the back.

"Can't you make less noise?"

The men became silent. The soldier who had been struck groaned and wiped

his face, which had been scratched till it bled by his falling against

the wattle.

"There, how that devil hits out! He's made my face all bloody," said he

in a frightened whisper when the sergeant major had passed on.

"Don't you like it?" said a laughing voice, and moderating their tones

the men moved forward.

When they were out of the village they began talking again as loud as

before, interlarding their talk with the same aimless expletives.

In the hut which the men had passed, the chief officers had gathered and

were in animated talk over their tea about the events of the day and the

maneuvers suggested for tomorrow. It was proposed to make a flank march

to the left, cut off the Vice-King (Murat) and capture him.

By the time the soldiers had dragged the wattle fence to its place the

campfires were blazing on all sides ready for cooking, the wood

crackled, the snow was melting, and black shadows of soldiers flitted to

and fro all over the occupied space where the snow had been trodden

down.

Axes and choppers were plied all around. Everything was done without any

orders being given. Stores of wood were brought for the night, shelters

were rigged up for the officers, caldrons were being boiled, and muskets

and accouterments put in order.

The wattle wall the men had brought was set up in a semicircle by the

Eighth Company as a shelter from the north, propped up by musket rests,

and a campfire was built before it. They beat the tattoo, called the

roll, had supper, and settled down round the fires for the night--some

repairing their footgear, some smoking pipes, and some stripping

themselves naked to steam the lice out of their shirts.

CHAPTER VIII

One would have thought that under the almost incredibly wretched

conditions the Russian soldiers were in at that time--lacking warm boots

and sheepskin coats, without a roof over their heads, in the snow with

eighteen degrees of frost, and without even full rations (the

commissariat did not always keep up with the troops)--they would have

presented a very sad and depressing spectacle.

On the contrary, the army had never under the best material conditions

presented a more cheerful and animated aspect. This was because all who

began to grow depressed or who lost strength were sifted out of the army

day by day. All the physically or morally weak had long since been left

behind and only the flower of the army--physically and mentally--

remained.

More men collected behind the wattle fence of the Eighth Company than

anywhere else. Two sergeants major were sitting with them and their

campfire blazed brighter than others. For leave to sit by their wattle

they demanded contributions of fuel.

"Eh, Makeev! What has become of you, you son of a bitch? Are you lost or

have the wolves eaten you? Fetch some more wood!" shouted a red-haired

and red-faced man, screwing up his eyes and blinking because of the

smoke but not moving back from the fire. "And you, Jackdaw, go and fetch

some wood!" said he to another soldier.

This red-haired man was neither a sergeant nor a corporal, but being

robust he ordered about those weaker than himself. The soldier they

called "Jackdaw," a thin little fellow with a sharp nose, rose

obediently and was about to go but at that instant there came into the

light of the fire the slender, handsome figure of a young soldier

carrying a load of wood.

"Bring it here--that's fine!"

They split up the wood, pressed it down on the fire, blew at it with

their mouths, and fanned it with the skirts of their greatcoats, making

the flames hiss and crackle. The men drew nearer and lit their pipes.

The handsome young soldier who had brought the wood, setting his arms

akimbo, began stamping his cold feet rapidly and deftly on the spot

where he stood.

"Mother! The dew is cold but clear.... It's well that I'm a

musketeer..." he sang, pretending to hiccough after each syllable.

"Look out, your soles will fly off!" shouted the red-haired man,

noticing that the sole of the dancer's boot was hanging loose. "What a

fellow you are for dancing!"

The dancer stopped, pulled off the loose piece of leather, and threw it

on the fire.

"Right enough, friend," said he, and, having sat down, took out of his

knapsack a scrap of blue French cloth, and wrapped it round his foot.

"It's the steam that spoils them," he added, stretching out his feet

toward the fire.

"They'll soon be issuing us new ones. They say that when we've finished

hammering them, we're to receive double kits!"

"And that son of a bitch Petrov has lagged behind after all, it seems,"

said one sergeant major.

"I've had an eye on him this long while," said the other.

"Well, he's a poor sort of soldier..."

"But in the Third Company they say nine men were missing yesterday."

"Yes, it's all very well, but when a man's feet are frozen how can he

walk?"

"Eh? Don't talk nonsense!" said a sergeant major.

"Do you want to be doing the same?" said an old soldier, turning

reproachfully to the man who had spoken of frozen feet.

"Well, you know," said the sharp-nosed man they called Jackdaw in a

squeaky and unsteady voice, raising himself at the other side of the

fire, "a plump man gets thin, but for a thin one it's death. Take me,

now! I've got no strength left," he added, with sudden resolution

turning to the sergeant major. "Tell them to send me to hospital; I'm

aching all over; anyway I shan't be able to keep up."

"That'll do, that'll do!" replied the sergeant major quietly.

The soldier said no more and the talk went on.

"What a lot of those Frenchies were taken today, and the fact is that

not one of them had what you might call real boots on," said a soldier,

starting a new theme. "They were no more than make-believes."

"The Cossacks have taken their boots. They were clearing the hut for the

colonel and carried them out. It was pitiful to see them, boys," put in

the dancer. "As they turned them over one seemed still alive and, would

you believe it, he jabbered something in their lingo."

"But they're a clean folk, lads," the first man went on; "he was white--

as white as birchbark--and some of them are such fine fellows, you might

think they were nobles."

"Well, what do you think? They make soldiers of all classes there."

"But they don't understand our talk at all," said the dancer with a

puzzled smile. "I asked him whose subject he was, and he jabbered in his

own way. A queer lot!"

"But it's strange, friends," continued the man who had wondered at their

whiteness, "the peasants at Mozhaysk were saying that when they began

burying the dead--where the battle was you know--well, those dead had

been lying there for nearly a month, and says the peasant, 'they lie as

white as paper, clean, and not as much smell as a puff of powder

smoke.'"

"Was it from the cold?" asked someone.

"You're a clever fellow! From the cold indeed! Why, it was hot. If it

had been from the cold, ours would not have rotted either. 'But,' he

says, 'go up to ours and they are all rotten and maggoty. So,' he says,

'we tie our faces up with kerchiefs and turn our heads away as we drag

them off: we can hardly do it. But theirs,' he says, 'are white as paper

and not so much smell as a whiff of gunpowder.'"

All were silent.

"It must be from their food," said the sergeant major. "They used to

gobble the same food as the gentry."

No one contradicted him.

"That peasant near Mozhaysk where the battle was said the men were all

called up from ten villages around and they carted for twenty days and

still didn't finish carting the dead away. And as for the wolves, he

says..."

"That was a real battle," said an old soldier. "It's the only one worth

remembering; but since that... it's only been tormenting folk."

"And do you know, Daddy, the day before yesterday we ran at them and, my

word, they didn't let us get near before they just threw down their

muskets and went on their knees. 'Pardon!' they say. That's only one

case. They say Platov took 'Poleon himself twice. But he didn't know the

right charm. He catches him and catches him--no good! He turns into a

bird in his hands and flies away. And there's no way of killing him

either."

"You're a first-class liar, Kiselev, when I come to look at you!"

"Liar, indeed! It's the real truth."

"If he fell into my hands, when I'd caught him I'd bury him in the

ground with an aspen stake to fix him down. What a lot of men he's

ruined!"

"Well, anyhow we're going to end it. He won't come here again," remarked

the old soldier, yawning.

The conversation flagged, and the soldiers began settling down to sleep.

"Look at the stars. It's wonderful how they shine! You would think the

women had spread out their linen," said one of the men, gazing with

admiration at the Milky Way.

"That's a sign of a good harvest next year."

"We shall want some more wood."

"You warm your back and your belly gets frozen. That's queer."

"O Lord!"

"What are you pushing for? Is the fire only for you? Look how he's

sprawling!"

In the silence that ensued, the snoring of those who had fallen asleep

could be heard. Others turned over and warmed themselves, now and again

exchanging a few words. From a campfire a hundred paces off came a sound

of general, merry laughter.

"Hark at them roaring there in the Fifth Company!" said one of the

soldiers, "and what a lot of them there are!"

One of the men got up and went over to the Fifth Company.

"They're having such fun," said he, coming back. "Two Frenchies have

turned up. One's quite frozen and the other's an awful swaggerer. He's

singing songs...."

"Oh, I'll go across and have a look...."

And several of the men went over to the Fifth Company.

CHAPTER IX

The fifth company was bivouacking at the very edge of the forest. A huge

campfire was blazing brightly in the midst of the snow, lighting up the

branches of trees heavy with hoarfrost.

About midnight they heard the sound of steps in the snow of the forest,

and the crackling of dry branches.

"A bear, lads," said one of the men.

They all raised their heads to listen, and out of the forest into the

bright firelight stepped two strangely clad human figures clinging to

one another.

These were two Frenchmen who had been hiding in the forest. They came up

to the fire, hoarsely uttering something in a language our soldiers did

not understand. One was taller than the other; he wore an officer's hat

and seemed quite exhausted. On approaching the fire he had been going to

sit down, but fell. The other, a short sturdy soldier with a shawl tied

round his head, was stronger. He raised his companion and said

something, pointing to his mouth. The soldiers surrounded the Frenchmen,

spread a greatcoat on the ground for the sick man, and brought some

buckwheat porridge and vodka for both of them.

The exhausted French officer was Ramballe and the man with his head

wrapped in the shawl was Morel, his orderly.

When Morel had drunk some vodka and finished his bowl of porridge he

suddenly became unnaturally merry and chattered incessantly to the

soldiers, who could not understand him. Ramballe refused food and

resting his head on his elbow lay silent beside the campfire, looking at

the Russian soldiers with red and vacant eyes. Occasionally he emitted a

long-drawn groan and then again became silent. Morel, pointing to his

shoulders, tried to impress on the soldiers the fact that Ramballe was

an officer and ought to be warmed. A Russian officer who had come up to

the fire sent to ask his colonel whether he would not take a French

officer into his hut to warm him, and when the messenger returned and

said that the colonel wished the officer to be brought to him, Ramballe

was told to go. He rose and tried to walk, but staggered and would have

fallen had not a soldier standing by held him up.

"You won't do it again, eh?" said one of the soldiers, winking and

turning mockingly to Ramballe.

"Oh, you fool! Why talk rubbish, lout that you are--a real peasant!"

came rebukes from all sides addressed to the jesting soldier.

They surrounded Ramballe, lifted him on the crossed arms of two

soldiers, and carried him to the hut. Ramballe put his arms around their

necks while they carried him and began wailing plaintively:

"Oh, you fine fellows, my kind, kind friends! These are men! Oh, my

brave, kind friends," and he leaned his head against the shoulder of one

of the men like a child.

Meanwhile Morel was sitting in the best place by the fire, surrounded by

the soldiers.

Morel, a short sturdy Frenchman with inflamed and streaming eyes, was

wearing a woman's cloak and had a shawl tied woman fashion round his

head over his cap. He was evidently tipsy, and was singing a French song

in a hoarse broken voice, with an arm thrown round the nearest soldier.

The soldiers simply held their sides as they watched him.

"Now then, now then, teach us how it goes! I'll soon pick it up. How is

it?" said the man--a singer and a wag--whom Morel was embracing.

"Vive Henri Quatre! Vive ce roi valiant!" sang Morel, winking. "Ce

diable a quatre..." \*

\* "Long live Henry the Fourth, that valiant king! That rowdy devil."

"Vivarika! Vif-seruvaru! Sedyablyaka!" repeated the soldier, flourishing

his arm and really catching the tune.

"Bravo! Ha, ha, ha!" rose their rough, joyous laughter from all sides.

Morel, wrinkling up his face, laughed too.

"Well, go on, go on!"

"Qui eut le triple talent, De boire, de battre, Et d'etre un vert

galant." \*

\* Who had a triple talent For drinking, for fighting, And for being a

gallant old boy...

"It goes smoothly, too. Well, now, Zaletaev!"

"Ke..." Zaletaev, brought out with effort: "ke-e-e-e," he drawled,

laboriously pursing his lips, "le-trip-ta-la-de-bu-de-ba, e de-tra-va-

ga-la" he sang.

"Fine! Just like the Frenchie! Oh, ho ho! Do you want some more to eat?"

"Give him some porridge: it takes a long time to get filled up after

starving."

They gave him some more porridge and Morel with a laugh set to work on

his third bowl. All the young soldiers smiled gaily as they watched him.

The older men, who thought it undignified to amuse themselves with such

nonsense, continued to lie at the opposite side of the fire, but one

would occasionally raise himself on an elbow and glance at Morel with a

smile.

"They are men too," said one of them as he wrapped himself up in his

coat. "Even wormwood grows on its own root."

"O Lord, O Lord! How starry it is! Tremendous! That means a hard

frost...."

They all grew silent. The stars, as if knowing that no one was looking

at them, began to disport themselves in the dark sky: now flaring up,

now vanishing, now trembling, they were busy whispering something

gladsome and mysterious to one another.

CHAPTER X

The French army melted away at the uniform rate of a mathematical

progression; and that crossing of the Berezina about which so much has

been written was only one intermediate stage in its destruction, and not

at all the decisive episode of the campaign. If so much has been and

still is written about the Berezina, on the French side this is only

because at the broken bridge across that river the calamities their army

had been previously enduring were suddenly concentrated at one moment

into a tragic spectacle that remained in every memory, and on the

Russian side merely because in Petersburg--far from the seat of war--a

plan (again one of Pfuel's) had been devised to catch Napoleon in a

strategic trap at the Berezina River. Everyone assured himself that all

would happen according to plan, and therefore insisted that it was just

the crossing of the Berezina that destroyed the French army. In reality

the results of the crossing were much less disastrous to the French--in

guns and men lost--than Krasnoe had been, as the figures show.

The sole importance of the crossing of the Berezina lies in the fact

that it plainly and indubitably proved the fallacy of all the plans for

cutting off the enemy's retreat and the soundness of the only possible

line of action--the one Kutuzov and the general mass of the army

demanded--namely, simply to follow the enemy up. The French crowd fled

at a continually increasing speed and all its energy was directed to

reaching its goal. It fled like a wounded animal and it was impossible

to block its path. This was shown not so much by the arrangements it

made for crossing as by what took place at the bridges. When the bridges

broke down, unarmed soldiers, people from Moscow and women with children

who were with the French transport, all--carried on by vis inertiae--

pressed forward into boats and into the ice-covered water and did not,

surrender.

That impulse was reasonable. The condition of fugitives and of pursuers

was equally bad. As long as they remained with their own people each

might hope for help from his fellows and the definite place he held

among them. But those who surrendered, while remaining in the same

pitiful plight, would be on a lower level to claim a share in the

necessities of life. The French did not need to be informed of the fact

that half the prisoners--with whom the Russians did not know what to do-

-perished of cold and hunger despite their captors' desire to save them;

they felt that it could not be otherwise. The most compassionate Russian

commanders, those favorable to the French--and even the Frenchmen in the

Russian service--could do nothing for the prisoners. The French perished

from the conditions to which the Russian army was itself exposed. It was

impossible to take bread and clothes from our hungry and indispensable

soldiers to give to the French who, though not harmful, or hated, or

guilty, were simply unnecessary. Some Russians even did that, but they

were exceptions.

Certain destruction lay behind the French but in front there was hope.

Their ships had been burned, there was no salvation save in collective

flight, and on that the whole strength of the French was concentrated.

The farther they fled the more wretched became the plight of the

remnant, especially after the Berezina, on which (in consequence of the

Petersburg plan) special hopes had been placed by the Russians, and the

keener grew the passions of the Russian commanders, who blamed one

another and Kutuzov most of all. Anticipation that the failure of the

Petersburg Berezina plan would be attributed to Kutuzov led to

dissatisfaction, contempt, and ridicule, more and more strongly

expressed. The ridicule and contempt were of course expressed in a

respectful form, making it impossible for him to ask wherein he was to

blame. They did not talk seriously to him; when reporting to him or

asking for his sanction they appeared to be fulfilling a regrettable

formality, but they winked behind his back and tried to mislead him at

every turn.

Because they could not understand him all these people assumed that it

was useless to talk to the old man; that he would never grasp the

profundity of their plans, that he would answer with his phrases (which

they thought were mere phrases) about a "golden bridge," about the

impossibility of crossing the frontier with a crowd of tatterdemalions,

and so forth. They had heard all that before. And all he said--that it

was necessary to await provisions, or that the men had no boots--was so

simple, while what they proposed was so complicated and clever, that it

was evident that he was old and stupid and that they, though not in

power, were commanders of genius.

After the junction with the army of the brilliant admiral and Petersburg

hero Wittgenstein, this mood and the gossip of the staff reached their

maximum. Kutuzov saw this and merely sighed and shrugged his shoulders.

Only once, after the affair of the Berezina, did he get angry and write

to Bennigsen (who reported separately to the Emperor) the following

letter:

"On account of your spells of ill health, will your excellency please be

so good as to set off for Kaluga on receipt of this, and there await

further commands and appointments from His Imperial Majesty."

But after Bennigsen's departure, the Grand Duke Tsarevich Constantine

Pavlovich joined the army. He had taken part in the beginning of the

campaign but had subsequently been removed from the army by Kutuzov. Now

having come to the army, he informed Kutuzov of the Emperor's

displeasure at the poor success of our forces and the slowness of their

advance. The Emperor intended to join the army personally in a few days'

time.

The old man, experienced in court as well as in military affairs--this

same Kutuzov who in August had been chosen commander-in-chief against

the sovereign's wishes and who had removed the Grand Duke and heir--

apparent from the army--who on his own authority and contrary to the

Emperor's will had decided on the abandonment of Moscow, now realized at

once that his day was over, that his part was played, and that the power

he was supposed to hold was no longer his. And he understood this not

merely from the attitude of the court. He saw on the one hand that the

military business in which he had played his part was ended and felt

that his mission was accomplished; and at the same time he began to be

conscious of the physical weariness of his aged body and of the

necessity of physical rest.

On the twenty-ninth of November Kutuzov entered Vilna--his "dear Vilna"

as he called it. Twice during his career Kutuzov had been governor of

Vilna. In that wealthy town, which had not been injured, he found old

friends and associations, besides the comforts of life of which he had

so long been deprived. And he suddenly turned from the cares of army and

state and, as far as the passions that seethed around him allowed,

immersed himself in the quiet life to which he had formerly been

accustomed, as if all that was taking place and all that had still to be

done in the realm of history did not concern him at all.

Chichagov, one of the most zealous "cutters-off" and "breakers-up," who

had first wanted to effect a diversion in Greece and then in Warsaw but

never wished to go where he was sent: Chichagov, noted for the boldness

with which he spoke to the Emperor, and who considered Kutuzov to be

under an obligation to him because when he was sent to make peace with

Turkey in 1811 independently of Kutuzov, and found that peace had

already been concluded, he admitted to the Emperor that the merit of

securing that peace was really Kutuzov's; this Chichagov was the first

to meet Kutuzov at the castle where the latter was to stay. In undress

naval uniform, with a dirk, and holding his cap under his arm, he handed

Kutuzov a garrison report and the keys of the town. The contemptuously

respectful attitude of the younger men to the old man in his dotage was

expressed in the highest degree by the behavior of Chichagov, who knew

of the accusations that were being directed against Kutuzov.

When speaking to Chichagov, Kutuzov incidentally mentioned that the

vehicles packed with china that had been captured from him at Borisov

had been recovered and would be restored to him.

"You mean to imply that I have nothing to eat out of.... On the

contrary, I can supply you with everything even if you want to give

dinner parties," warmly replied Chichagov, who tried by every word he

spoke to prove his own rectitude and therefore imagined Kutuzov to be

animated by the same desire.

Kutuzov, shrugging his shoulders, replied with his subtle penetrating

smile: "I meant merely to say what I said."

Contrary to the Emperor's wish Kutuzov detained the greater part of the

army at Vilna. Those about him said that he became extraordinarily slack

and physically feeble during his stay in that town. He attended to army

affairs reluctantly, left everything to his generals, and while awaiting

the Emperor's arrival led a dissipated life.

Having left Petersburg on the seventh of December with his suite--Count

Tolstoy, Prince Volkonski, Arakcheev, and others--the Emperor reached

Vilna on the eleventh, and in his traveling sleigh drove straight to the

castle. In spite of the severe frost some hundred generals and staff

officers in full parade uniform stood in front of the castle, as well as

a guard of honor of the Semenov regiment.

A courier who galloped to the castle in advance, in a troyka with three

foam-flecked horses, shouted "Coming!" and Konovnitsyn rushed into the

vestibule to inform Kutuzov, who was waiting in the hall porter's little

lodge.

A minute later the old man's large stout figure in full-dress uniform,

his chest covered with orders and a scarf drawn round his stomach,

waddled out into the porch. He put on his hat with its peaks to the

sides and, holding his gloves in his hand and walking with an effort

sideways down the steps to the level of the street, took in his hand the

report he had prepared for the Emperor.

There was running to and fro and whispering; another troyka flew

furiously up, and then all eyes were turned on an approaching sleigh in

which the figures of the Emperor and Volkonski could already be

descried.

From the habit of fifty years all this had a physically agitating effect

on the old general. He carefully and hastily felt himself all over,

readjusted his hat, and pulling himself together drew himself up and, at

the very moment when the Emperor, having alighted from the sleigh,

lifted his eyes to him, handed him the report and began speaking in his

smooth, ingratiating voice.

The Emperor with a rapid glance scanned Kutuzov from head to foot,

frowned for an instant, but immediately mastering himself went up to the

old man, extended his arms and embraced him. And this embrace too, owing

to a long-standing impression related to his innermost feelings, had its

usual effect on Kutuzov and he gave a sob.

The Emperor greeted the officers and the Semenov guard, and again

pressing the old man's hand went with him into the castle.

When alone with the field marshal the Emperor expressed his

dissatisfaction at the slowness of the pursuit and at the mistakes made

at Krasnoe and the Berezina, and informed him of his intentions for a

future campaign abroad. Kutuzov made no rejoinder or remark. The same

submissive, expressionless look with which he had listened to the

Emperor's commands on the field of Austerlitz seven years before settled

on his face now.

When Kutuzov came out of the study and with lowered head was crossing

the ballroom with his heavy waddling gait, he was arrested by someone's

voice saying:

"Your Serene Highness!"

Kutuzov raised his head and looked for a long while into the eyes of

Count Tolstoy, who stood before him holding a silver salver on which lay

a small object. Kutuzov seemed not to understand what was expected of

him.

Suddenly he seemed to remember; a scarcely perceptible smile flashed

across his puffy face, and bowing low and respectfully he took the

object that lay on the salver. It was the Order of St. George of the

First Class.

CHAPTER XI

Next day the field marshal gave a dinner and ball which the Emperor

honored by his presence. Kutuzov had received the Order of St. George of

the First Class and the Emperor showed him the highest honors, but

everyone knew of the imperial dissatisfaction with him. The proprieties

were observed and the Emperor was the first to set that example, but

everybody understood that the old man was blameworthy and good-for-

nothing. When Kutuzov, conforming to a custom of Catherine's day,

ordered the standards that had been captured to be lowered at the

Emperor's feet on his entering the ballroom, the Emperor made a wry face

and muttered something in which some people caught the words, "the old

comedian."

The Emperor's displeasure with Kutuzov was specially increased at Vilna

by the fact that Kutuzov evidently could not or would not understand the

importance of the coming campaign.

When on the following morning the Emperor said to the officers assembled

about him: "You have not only saved Russia, you have saved Europe!" they

all understood that the war was not ended.

Kutuzov alone would not see this and openly expressed his opinion that

no fresh war could improve the position or add to the glory of Russia,

but could only spoil and lower the glorious position that Russia had

gained. He tried to prove to the Emperor the impossibility of levying

fresh troops, spoke of the hardships already endured by the people, of

the possibility of failure and so forth.

This being the field marshal's frame of mind he was naturally regarded

as merely a hindrance and obstacle to the impending war.

To avoid unpleasant encounters with the old man, the natural method was

to do what had been done with him at Austerlitz and with Barclay at the

beginning of the Russian campaign--to transfer the authority to the

Emperor himself, thus cutting the ground from under the commander in

chief's feet without upsetting the old man by informing him of the

change.

With this object his staff was gradually reconstructed and its real

strength removed and transferred to the Emperor. Toll, Konovnitsyn, and

Ermolov received fresh appointments. Everyone spoke loudly of the field

marshal's great weakness and failing health.

His health had to be bad for his place to be taken away and given to

another. And in fact his health was poor.

So naturally, simply, and gradually--just as he had come from Turkey to

the Treasury in Petersburg to recruit the militia, and then to the army

when he was needed there--now when his part was played out, Kutuzov's

place was taken by a new and necessary performer.

The war of 1812, besides its national significance dear to every Russian

heart, was now to assume another, a European, significance.

The movement of peoples from west to east was to be succeeded by a

movement of peoples from east to west, and for this fresh war another

leader was necessary, having qualities and views differing from

Kutuzov's and animated by different motives.

Alexander I was as necessary for the movement of the peoples from east

to west and for the refixing of national frontiers as Kutuzov had been

for the salvation and glory of Russia.

Kutuzov did not understand what Europe, the balance of power, or

Napoleon meant. He could not understand it. For the representative of

the Russian people, after the enemy had been destroyed and Russia had

been liberated and raised to the summit of her glory, there was nothing

left to do as a Russian. Nothing remained for the representative of the

national war but to die, and Kutuzov died.

CHAPTER XII

As generally happens, Pierre did not feel the full effects of the

physical privation and strain he had suffered as prisoner until after

they were over. After his liberation he reached Orel, and on the third

day there, when preparing to go to Kiev, he fell ill and was laid up for

three months. He had what the doctors termed "bilious fever." But

despite the fact that the doctors treated him, bled him, and gave him

medicines to drink, he recovered.

Scarcely any impression was left on Pierre's mind by all that happened

to him from the time of his rescue till his illness. He remembered only

the dull gray weather now rainy and now snowy, internal physical

distress, and pains in his feet and side. He remembered a general

impression of the misfortunes and sufferings of people and of being

worried by the curiosity of officers and generals who questioned him, he

also remembered his difficulty in procuring a conveyance and horses, and

above all he remembered his incapacity to think and feel all that time.

On the day of his rescue he had seen the body of Petya Rostov. That same

day he had learned that Prince Andrew, after surviving the battle of

Borodino for more than a month had recently died in the Rostovs' house

at Yaroslavl, and Denisov who told him this news also mentioned Helene's

death, supposing that Pierre had heard of it long before. All this at

the time seemed merely strange to Pierre: he felt he could not grasp its

significance. Just then he was only anxious to get away as quickly as

possible from places where people were killing one another, to some

peaceful refuge where he could recover himself, rest, and think over all

the strange new facts he had learned; but on reaching Orel he

immediately fell ill. When he came to himself after his illness he saw

in attendance on him two of his servants, Terenty and Vaska, who had

come from Moscow; and also his cousin the eldest princess, who had been

living on his estate at Elets and hearing of his rescue and illness had

come to look after him.

It was only gradually during his convalescence that Pierre lost the

impressions he had become accustomed to during the last few months and

got used to the idea that no one would oblige him to go anywhere

tomorrow, that no one would deprive him of his warm bed, and that he

would be sure to get his dinner, tea, and supper. But for a long time in

his dreams he still saw himself in the conditions of captivity. In the

same way little by little he came to understand the news he had been

told after his rescue, about the death of Prince Andrew, the death of

his wife, and the destruction of the French.

A joyous feeling of freedom--that complete inalienable freedom natural

to man which he had first experienced at the first halt outside Moscow--

filled Pierre's soul during his convalescence. He was surprised to find

that this inner freedom, which was independent of external conditions,

now had as it were an additional setting of external liberty. He was

alone in a strange town, without acquaintances. No one demanded anything

of him or sent him anywhere. He had all he wanted: the thought of his

wife which had been a continual torment to him was no longer there,

since she was no more.

"Oh, how good! How splendid!" said he to himself when a cleanly laid

table was moved up to him with savory beef tea, or when he lay down for

the night on a soft clean bed, or when he remembered that the French had

gone and that his wife was no more. "Oh, how good, how splendid!"

And by old habit he asked himself the question: "Well, and what then?

What am I going to do?" And he immediately gave himself the answer:

"Well, I shall live. Ah, how splendid!"

The very question that had formerly tormented him, the thing he had

continually sought to find--the aim of life--no longer existed for him

now. That search for the aim of life had not merely disappeared

temporarily--he felt that it no longer existed for him and could not

present itself again. And this very absence of an aim gave him the

complete, joyous sense of freedom which constituted his happiness at

this time.

He could not see an aim, for he now had faith--not faith in any kind of

rule, or words, or ideas, but faith in an ever-living, ever-manifest

God. Formerly he had sought Him in aims he set himself. That search for

an aim had been simply a search for God, and suddenly in his captivity

he had learned not by words or reasoning but by direct feeling what his

nurse had told him long ago: that God is here and everywhere. In his

captivity he had learned that in Karataev God was greater, more infinite

and unfathomable than in the Architect of the Universe recognized by the

Freemasons. He felt like a man who after straining his eyes to see into

the far distance finds what he sought at his very feet. All his life he

had looked over the heads of the men around him, when he should have

merely looked in front of him without straining his eyes.

In the past he had never been able to find that great inscrutable

infinite something. He had only felt that it must exist somewhere and

had looked for it. In everything near and comprehensible he had only

what was limited, petty, commonplace, and senseless. He had equipped

himself with a mental telescope and looked into remote space, where

petty worldliness hiding itself in misty distance had seemed to him

great and infinite merely because it was not clearly seen. And such had

European life, politics, Freemasonry, philosophy, and philanthropy

seemed to him. But even then, at moments of weakness as he had accounted

them, his mind had penetrated to those distances and he had there seen

the same pettiness, worldliness, and senselessness. Now, however, he had

learned to see the great, eternal, and infinite in everything, and

therefore--to see it and enjoy its contemplation--he naturally threw

away the telescope through which he had till now gazed over men's heads,

and gladly regarded the ever-changing, eternally great, unfathomable,

and infinite life around him. And the closer he looked the more tranquil

and happy he became. That dreadful question, "What for?" which had

formerly destroyed all his mental edifices, no longer existed for him.

To that question, "What for?" a simple answer was now always ready in

his soul: "Because there is a God, that God without whose will not one

hair falls from a man's head."

CHAPTER XIII

In external ways Pierre had hardly changed at all. In appearance he was

just what he used to be. As before he was absent-minded and seemed

occupied not with what was before his eyes but with something special of

his own. The difference between his former and present self was that

formerly when he did not grasp what lay before him or was said to him,

he had puckered his forehead painfully as if vainly seeking to

distinguish something at a distance. At present he still forgot what was

said to him and still did not see what was before his eyes, but he now

looked with a scarcely perceptible and seemingly ironic smile at what

was before him and listened to what was said, though evidently seeing

and hearing something quite different. Formerly he had appeared to be a

kindhearted but unhappy man, and so people had been inclined to avoid

him. Now a smile at the joy of life always played round his lips, and

sympathy for others, shone in his eyes with a questioning look as to

whether they were as contented as he was, and people felt pleased by his

presence.

Previously he had talked a great deal, grew excited when he talked, and

seldom listened; now he was seldom carried away in conversation and knew

how to listen so that people readily told him their most intimate

secrets.

The princess, who had never liked Pierre and had been particularly

hostile to him since she had felt herself under obligations to him after

the old count's death, now after staying a short time in Orel--where she

had come intending to show Pierre that in spite of his ingratitude she

considered it her duty to nurse him--felt to her surprise and vexation

that she had become fond of him. Pierre did not in any way seek her

approval, he merely studied her with interest. Formerly she had felt

that he regarded her with indifference and irony, and so had shrunk into

herself as she did with others and had shown him only the combative side

of her nature; but now he seemed to be trying to understand the most

intimate places of her heart, and, mistrustfully at first but afterwards

gratefully, she let him see the hidden, kindly sides of her character.

The most cunning man could not have crept into her confidence more

successfully, evoking memories of the best times of her youth and

showing sympathy with them. Yet Pierre's cunning consisted simply in

finding pleasure in drawing out the human qualities of the embittered,

hard, and (in her own way) proud princess.

"Yes, he is a very, very kind man when he is not under the influence of

bad people but of people such as myself," thought she.

His servants too--Terenty and Vaska--in their own way noticed the change

that had taken place in Pierre. They considered that he had become much

"simpler." Terenty, when he had helped him undress and wished him good

night, often lingered with his master's boots in his hands and clothes

over his arm, to see whether he would not start a talk. And Pierre,

noticing that Terenty wanted a chat, generally kept him there.

"Well, tell me... now, how did you get food?" he would ask.

And Terenty would begin talking of the destruction of Moscow, and of the

old count, and would stand for a long time holding the clothes and

talking, or sometimes listening to Pierre's stories, and then would go

out into the hall with a pleasant sense of intimacy with his master and

affection for him.

The doctor who attended Pierre and visited him every day, though he

considered it his duty as a doctor to pose as a man whose every moment

was of value to suffering humanity, would sit for hours with Pierre

telling him his favorite anecdotes and his observations on the

characters of his patients in general, and especially of the ladies.

"It's a pleasure to talk to a man like that; he is not like our

provincials," he would say.

There were several prisoners from the French army in Orel, and the

doctor brought one of them, a young Italian, to see Pierre.

This officer began visiting Pierre, and the princess used to make fun of

the tenderness the Italian expressed for him.

The Italian seemed happy only when he could come to see Pierre, talk

with him, tell him about his past, his life at home, and his love, and

pour out to him his indignation against the French and especially

against Napoleon.

"If all Russians are in the least like you, it is sacrilege to fight

such a nation," he said to Pierre. "You, who have suffered so from the

French, do not even feel animosity toward them."

Pierre had evoked the passionate affection of the Italian merely by

evoking the best side of his nature and taking a pleasure in so doing.

During the last days of Pierre's stay in Orel his old masonic

acquaintance Count Willarski, who had introduced him to the lodge in

1807, came to see him. Willarski was married to a Russian heiress who

had a large estate in Orel province, and he occupied a temporary post in

the commissariat department in that town.

Hearing that Bezukhov was in Orel, Willarski, though they had never been

intimate, came to him with the professions of friendship and intimacy

that people who meet in a desert generally express for one another.

Willarski felt dull in Orel and was pleased to meet a man of his own

circle and, as he supposed, of similar interests.

But to his surprise Willarski soon noticed that Pierre had lagged much

behind the times, and had sunk, as he expressed it to himself, into

apathy and egotism.

"You are letting yourself go, my dear fellow," he said.

But for all that Willarski found it pleasanter now than it had been

formerly to be with Pierre, and came to see him every day. To Pierre as

he looked at and listened to Willarski, it seemed strange to think that

he had been like that himself but a short time before.

Willarski was a married man with a family, busy with his family affairs,

his wife's affairs, and his official duties. He regarded all these

occupations as hindrances to life, and considered that they were all

contemptible because their aim was the welfare of himself and his

family. Military, administrative, political, and masonic interests

continually absorbed his attention. And Pierre, without trying to change

the other's views and without condemning him, but with the quiet,

joyful, and amused smile now habitual to him, was interested in this

strange though very familiar phenomenon.

There was a new feature in Pierre's relations with Willarski, with the

princess, with the doctor, and with all the people he now met, which

gained for him the general good will. This was his acknowledgment of the

impossibility of changing a man's convictions by words, and his

recognition of the possibility of everyone thinking, feeling, and seeing

things each from his own point of view. This legitimate peculiarity of

each individual which used to excite and irritate Pierre now became a

basis of the sympathy he felt for, and the interest he took in, other

people. The difference, and sometimes complete contradiction, between

men's opinions and their lives, and between one man and another, pleased

him and drew from him an amused and gentle smile.

In practical matters Pierre unexpectedly felt within himself a center of

gravity he had previously lacked. Formerly all pecuniary questions,

especially requests for money to which, as an extremely wealthy man, he

was very exposed, produced in him a state of hopeless agitation and

perplexity. "To give or not to give?" he had asked himself. "I have it

and he needs it. But someone else needs it still more. Who needs it

most? And perhaps they are both impostors?" In the old days he had been

unable to find a way out of all these surmises and had given to all who

asked as long as he had anything to give. Formerly he had been in a

similar state of perplexity with regard to every question concerning his

property, when one person advised one thing and another something else.

Now to his surprise he found that he no longer felt either doubt or

perplexity about these questions. There was now within him a judge who

by some rule unknown to him decided what should or should not be done.

He was as indifferent as heretofore to money matters, but now he felt

certain of what ought and what ought not to be done. The first time he

had recourse to his new judge was when a French prisoner, a colonel,

came to him and, after talking a great deal about his exploits,

concluded by making what amounted to a demand that Pierre should give

him four thousand francs to send to his wife and children. Pierre

refused without the least difficulty or effort, and was afterwards

surprised how simple and easy had been what used to appear so

insurmountably difficult. At the same time that he refused the colonel's

demand he made up his mind that he must have recourse to artifice when

leaving Orel, to induce the Italian officer to accept some money of

which he was evidently in need. A further proof to Pierre of his own

more settled outlook on practical matters was furnished by his decision

with regard to his wife's debts and to the rebuilding of his houses in

and near Moscow.

His head steward came to him at Orel and Pierre reckoned up with him his

diminished income. The burning of Moscow had cost him, according to the

head steward's calculation, about two million rubles.

To console Pierre for these losses the head steward gave him an estimate

showing that despite these losses his income would not be diminished but

would even be increased if he refused to pay his wife's debts which he

was under no obligation to meet, and did not rebuild his Moscow house

and the country house on his Moscow estate, which had cost him eighty

thousand rubles a year and brought in nothing.

"Yes, of course that's true," said Pierre with a cheerful smile. "I

don't need all that at all. By being ruined I have become much richer."

But in January Savelich came from Moscow and gave him an account of the

state of things there, and spoke of the estimate an architect had made

of the cost of rebuilding the town and country houses, speaking of this

as of a settled matter. About the same time he received letters from

Prince Vasili and other Petersburg acquaintances speaking of his wife's

debts. And Pierre decided that the steward's proposals which had so

pleased him were wrong and that he must go to Petersburg and settle his

wife's affairs and must rebuild in Moscow. Why this was necessary he did

not know, but he knew for certain that it was necessary. His income

would be reduced by three fourths, but he felt it must be done.

Willarski was going to Moscow and they agreed to travel together.

During the whole time of his convalescence in Orel Pierre had

experienced a feeling of joy, freedom, and life; but when during his

journey he found himself in the open world and saw hundreds of new

faces, that feeling was intensified. Throughout his journey he felt like

a schoolboy on holiday. Everyone--the stagecoach driver, the post-house

overseers, the peasants on the roads and in the villages--had a new

significance for him. The presence and remarks of Willarski who

continually deplored the ignorance and poverty of Russia and its

backwardness compared with Europe only heightened Pierre's pleasure.

Where Willarski saw deadness Pierre saw an extraordinary strength and

vitality--the strength which in that vast space amid the snows

maintained the life of this original, peculiar, and unique people. He

did not contradict Willarski and even seemed to agree with him--an

apparent agreement being the simplest way to avoid discussions that

could lead to nothing--and he smiled joyfully as he listened to him.

CHAPTER XIV

It would be difficult to explain why and whither ants whose heap has

been destroyed are hurrying: some from the heap dragging bits of

rubbish, larvae, and corpses, others back to the heap, or why they

jostle, overtake one another, and fight, and it would be equally

difficult to explain what caused the Russians after the departure of the

French to throng to the place that had formerly been Moscow. But when we

watch the ants round their ruined heap, the tenacity, energy, and

immense number of the delving insects prove that despite the destruction

of the heap, something indestructible, which though intangible is the

real strength of the colony, still exists; and similarly, though in

Moscow in the month of October there was no government and no churches,

shrines, riches, or houses--it was still the Moscow it had been in

August. All was destroyed, except something intangible yet powerful and

indestructible.

The motives of those who thronged from all sides to Moscow after it had

been cleared of the enemy were most diverse and personal, and at first

for the most part savage and brutal. One motive only they all had in

common: a desire to get to the place that had been called Moscow, to

apply their activities there.

Within a week Moscow already had fifteen thousand inhabitants, in a

fortnight twenty-five thousand, and so on. By the autumn of 1813 the

number, ever increasing and increasing, exceeded what it had been in

1812.

The first Russians to enter Moscow were the Cossacks of Wintzingerode's

detachment, peasants from the adjacent villages, and residents who had

fled from Moscow and had been hiding in its vicinity. The Russians who

entered Moscow, finding it plundered, plundered it in their turn. They

continued what the French had begun. Trains of peasant carts came to

Moscow to carry off to the villages what had been abandoned in the

ruined houses and the streets. The Cossacks carried off what they could

to their camps, and the householders seized all they could find in other

houses and moved it to their own, pretending that it was their property.

But the first plunderers were followed by a second and a third

contingent, and with increasing numbers plundering became more and more

difficult and assumed more definite forms.

The French found Moscow abandoned but with all the organizations of

regular life, with diverse branches of commerce and craftsmanship, with

luxury, and governmental and religious institutions. These forms were

lifeless but still existed. There were bazaars, shops, warehouses,

market stalls, granaries--for the most part still stocked with goods--

and there were factories and workshops, palaces and wealthy houses

filled with luxuries, hospitals, prisons, government offices, churches,

and cathedrals. The longer the French remained the more these forms of

town life perished, until finally all was merged into one confused,

lifeless scene of plunder.

The more the plundering by the French continued, the more both the

wealth of Moscow and the strength of its plunderers was destroyed. But

plundering by the Russians, with which the reoccupation of the city

began, had an opposite effect: the longer it continued and the greater

the number of people taking part in it the more rapidly was the wealth

of the city and its regular life restored.

Besides the plunderers, very various people, some drawn by curiosity,

some by official duties, some by self-interest--house owners, clergy,

officials of all kinds, tradesmen, artisans, and peasants--streamed into

Moscow as blood flows to the heart.

Within a week the peasants who came with empty carts to carry off

plunder were stopped by the authorities and made to cart the corpses out

of the town. Other peasants, having heard of their comrades'

discomfiture, came to town bringing rye, oats, and hay, and beat down

one another's prices to below what they had been in former days. Gangs

of carpenters hoping for high pay arrived in Moscow every day, and on

all sides logs were being hewn, new houses built, and old, charred ones

repaired. Tradesmen began trading in booths. Cookshops and taverns were

opened in partially burned houses. The clergy resumed the services in

many churches that had not been burned. Donors contributed Church

property that had been stolen. Government clerks set up their baize-

covered tables and their pigeonholes of documents in small rooms. The

higher authorities and the police organized the distribution of goods

left behind by the French. The owners of houses in which much property

had been left, brought there from other houses, complained of the

injustice of taking everything to the Faceted Palace in the Kremlin;

others insisted that as the French had gathered things from different

houses into this or that house, it would be unfair to allow its owner to

keep all that was found there. They abused the police and bribed them,

made out estimates at ten times their value for government stores that

had perished in the fire, and demanded relief. And Count Rostopchin

wrote proclamations.

CHAPTER XV

At the end of January Pierre went to Moscow and stayed in an annex of

his house which had not been burned. He called on Count Rostopchin and

on some acquaintances who were back in Moscow, and he intended to leave

for Petersburg two days later. Everybody was celebrating the victory,

everything was bubbling with life in the ruined but reviving city.

Everyone was pleased to see Pierre, everyone wished to meet him, and

everyone questioned him about what he had seen. Pierre felt particularly

well disposed toward them all, but was now instinctively on his guard

for fear of binding himself in any way. To all questions put to him--

whether important or quite trifling--such as: Where would he live? Was

he going to rebuild? When was he going to Petersburg and would he mind

taking a parcel for someone?--he replied: "Yes, perhaps," or, "I think

so," and so on.

He had heard that the Rostovs were at Kostroma but the thought of

Natasha seldom occurred to him. If it did it was only as a pleasant

memory of the distant past. He felt himself not only free from social

obligations but also from that feeling which, it seemed to him, he had

aroused in himself.

On the third day after his arrival he heard from the Drubetskoys that

Princess Mary was in Moscow. The death, sufferings, and last days of

Prince Andrew had often occupied Pierre's thoughts and now recurred to

him with fresh vividness. Having heard at dinner that Princess Mary was

in Moscow and living in her house--which had not been burned--in

Vozdvizhenka Street, he drove that same evening to see her.

On his way to the house Pierre kept thinking of Prince Andrew, of their

friendship, of his various meetings with him, and especially of the last

one at Borodino.

"Is it possible that he died in the bitter frame of mind he was then in?

Is it possible that the meaning of life was not disclosed to him before

he died?" thought Pierre. He recalled Karataev and his death and

involuntarily began to compare these two men, so different, and yet so

similar in that they had both lived and both died and in the love he

felt for both of them.

Pierre drove up to the house of the old prince in a most serious mood.

The house had escaped the fire; it showed signs of damage but its

general aspect was unchanged. The old footman, who met Pierre with a

stern face as if wishing to make the visitor feel that the absence of

the old prince had not disturbed the order of things in the house,

informed him that the princess had gone to her own apartments, and that

she received on Sundays.

"Announce me. Perhaps she will see me," said Pierre.

"Yes, sir," said the man. "Please step into the portrait gallery."

A few minutes later the footman returned with Dessalles, who brought

word from the princess that she would be very glad to see Pierre if he

would excuse her want of ceremony and come upstairs to her apartment.

In a rather low room lit by one candle sat the princess and with her

another person dressed in black. Pierre remembered that the princess

always had lady companions, but who they were and what they were like he

never knew or remembered. "This must be one of her companions," he

thought, glancing at the lady in the black dress.

The princess rose quickly to meet him and held out her hand.

"Yes," she said, looking at his altered face after he had kissed her

hand, "so this is how we meet again. He spoke of you even at the very

last," she went on, turning her eyes from Pierre to her companion with a

shyness that surprised him for an instant.

"I was so glad to hear of your safety. It was the first piece of good

news we had received for a long time."

Again the princess glanced round at her companion with even more

uneasiness in her manner and was about to add something, but Pierre

interrupted her.

"Just imagine--I knew nothing about him!" said he. "I thought he had

been killed. All I know I heard at second hand from others. I only know

that he fell in with the Rostovs.... What a strange coincidence!"

Pierre spoke rapidly and with animation. He glanced once at the

companion's face, saw her attentive and kindly gaze fixed on him, and,

as often happens when one is talking, felt somehow that this companion

in the black dress was a good, kind, excellent creature who would not

hinder his conversing freely with Princess Mary.

But when he mentioned the Rostovs, Princess Mary's face expressed still

greater embarrassment. She again glanced rapidly from Pierre's face to

that of the lady in the black dress and said:

"Do you really not recognize her?"

Pierre looked again at the companion's pale, delicate face with its

black eyes and peculiar mouth, and something near to him, long forgotten

and more than sweet, looked at him from those attentive eyes.

"But no, it can't be!" he thought. "This stern, thin, pale face that

looks so much older! It cannot be she. It merely reminds me of her." But

at that moment Princess Mary said, "Natasha!" And with difficulty,

effort, and stress, like the opening of a door grown rusty on its

hinges, a smile appeared on the face with the attentive eyes, and from

that opening door came a breath of fragrance which suffused Pierre with

a happiness he had long forgotten and of which he had not even been

thinking--especially at that moment. It suffused him, seized him, and

enveloped him completely. When she smiled doubt was no longer possible,

it was Natasha and he loved her.

At that moment Pierre involuntarily betrayed to her, to Princess Mary,

and above all to himself, a secret of which he himself had been unaware.

He flushed joyfully yet with painful distress. He tried to hide his

agitation. But the more he tried to hide it the more clearly--clearer

than any words could have done--did he betray to himself, to her, and to

Princess Mary that he loved her.

"No, it's only the unexpectedness of it," thought Pierre. But as soon as

he tried to continue the conversation he had begun with Princess Mary he

again glanced at Natasha, and a still-deeper flush suffused his face and

a still-stronger agitation of mingled joy and fear seized his soul. He

became confused in his speech and stopped in the middle of what he was

saying.

Pierre had failed to notice Natasha because he did not at all expect to

see her there, but he had failed to recognize her because the change in

her since he last saw her was immense. She had grown thin and pale, but

that was not what made her unrecognizable; she was unrecognizable at the

moment he entered because on that face whose eyes had always shone with

a suppressed smile of the joy of life, now when he first entered and

glanced at her there was not the least shadow of a smile: only her eyes

were kindly attentive and sadly interrogative.

Pierre's confusion was not reflected by any confusion on Natasha's part,

but only by the pleasure that just perceptibly lit up her whole face.

CHAPTER XVI

"She has come to stay with me," said Princess Mary. "The count and

countess will be here in a few days. The countess is in a dreadful

state; but it was necessary for Natasha herself to see a doctor. They

insisted on her coming with me."

"Yes, is there a family free from sorrow now?" said Pierre, addressing

Natasha. "You know it happened the very day we were rescued. I saw him.

What a delightful boy he was!"

Natasha looked at him, and by way of answer to his words her eyes

widened and lit up.

"What can one say or think of as a consolation?" said Pierre. "Nothing!

Why had such a splendid boy, so full of life, to die?"

"Yes, in these days it would be hard to live without faith..." remarked

Princess Mary.

"Yes, yes, that is really true," Pierre hastily interrupted her.

"Why is it true?" Natasha asked, looking attentively into Pierre's eyes.

"How can you ask why?" said Princess Mary. "The thought alone of what

awaits..."

Natasha without waiting for Princess Mary to finish again looked

inquiringly at Pierre.

"And because," Pierre continued, "only one who believes that there is a

God ruling us can bear a loss such as hers and... yours."

Natasha had already opened her mouth to speak but suddenly stopped.

Pierre hurriedly turned away from her and again addressed Princess Mary,

asking about his friend's last days.

Pierre's confusion had now almost vanished, but at the same time he felt

that his freedom had also completely gone. He felt that there was now a

judge of his every word and action whose judgment mattered more to him

than that of all the rest of the world. As he spoke now he was

considering what impression his words would make on Natasha. He did not

purposely say things to please her, but whatever he was saying he

regarded from her standpoint.

Princess Mary--reluctantly as is usual in such cases--began telling of

the condition in which she had found Prince Andrew. But Pierre's face

quivering with emotion, his questions and his eager restless expression,

gradually compelled her to go into details which she feared to recall

for her own sake.

"Yes, yes, and so...?" Pierre kept saying as he leaned toward her with

his whole body and eagerly listened to her story. "Yes, yes... so he

grew tranquil and softened? With all his soul he had always sought one

thing--to be perfectly good--so he could not be afraid of death. The

faults he had--if he had any--were not of his making. So he did

soften?... What a happy thing that he saw you again," he added, suddenly

turning to Natasha and looking at her with eyes full of tears.

Natasha's face twitched. She frowned and lowered her eyes for a moment.

She hesitated for an instant whether to speak or not.

"Yes, that was happiness," she then said in her quiet voice with its

deep chest notes. "For me it certainly was happiness." She paused. "And

he... he... he said he was wishing for it at the very moment I entered

the room...."

Natasha's voice broke. She blushed, pressed her clasped hands on her

knees, and then controlling herself with an evident effort lifted her

head and began to speak rapidly.

"We knew nothing of it when we started from Moscow. I did not dare to

ask about him. Then suddenly Sonya told me he was traveling with us. I

had no idea and could not imagine what state he was in, all I wanted was

to see him and be with him," she said, trembling, and breathing quickly.

And not letting them interrupt her she went on to tell what she had

never yet mentioned to anyone--all she had lived through during those

three weeks of their journey and life at Yaroslavl.

Pierre listened to her with lips parted and eyes fixed upon her full of

tears. As he listened he did not think of Prince Andrew, nor of death,

nor of what she was telling. He listened to her and felt only pity for

her, for what she was suffering now while she was speaking.

Princess Mary, frowning in her effort to hold back her tears, sat beside

Natasha, and heard for the first time the story of those last days of

her brother's and Natasha's love.

Evidently Natasha needed to tell that painful yet joyful tale.

She spoke, mingling most trifling details with the intimate secrets of

her soul, and it seemed as if she could never finish. Several times she

repeated the same thing twice.

Dessalles' voice was heard outside the door asking whether little

Nicholas might come in to say good night.

"Well, that's all--everything," said Natasha.

She got up quickly just as Nicholas entered, almost ran to the door

which was hidden by curtains, struck her head against it, and rushed

from the room with a moan either of pain or sorrow.

Pierre gazed at the door through which she had disappeared and did not

understand why he suddenly felt all alone in the world.

Princess Mary roused him from his abstraction by drawing his attention

to her nephew who had entered the room.

At that moment of emotional tenderness young Nicholas' face, which

resembled his father's, affected Pierre so much that when he had kissed

the boy he got up quickly, took out his handkerchief, and went to the

window. He wished to take leave of Princess Mary, but she would not let

him go.

"No, Natasha and I sometimes don't go to sleep till after two, so please

don't go. I will order supper. Go downstairs, we will come immediately."

Before Pierre left the room Princess Mary told him: "This is the first

time she has talked of him like that."

CHAPTER XVII

Pierre was shown into the large, brightly lit dining room; a few minutes

later he heard footsteps and Princess Mary entered with Natasha. Natasha

was calm, though a severe and grave expression had again settled on her

face. They all three of them now experienced that feeling of awkwardness

which usually follows after a serious and heartfelt talk. It is

impossible to go back to the same conversation, to talk of trifles is

awkward, and yet the desire to speak is there and silence seems like

affectation. They went silently to table. The footmen drew back the

chairs and pushed them up again. Pierre unfolded his cold table napkin

and, resolving to break the silence, looked at Natasha and at Princess

Mary. They had evidently both formed the same resolution; the eyes of

both shone with satisfaction and a confession that besides sorrow life

also has joy.

"Do you take vodka, Count?" asked Princess Mary, and those words

suddenly banished the shadows of the past. "Now tell us about yourself,"

said she. "One hears such improbable wonders about you."

"Yes," replied Pierre with the smile of mild irony now habitual to him.

"They even tell me wonders I myself never dreamed of! Mary Abramovna

invited me to her house and kept telling me what had happened, or ought

to have happened, to me. Stepan Stepanych also instructed me how I ought

to tell of my experiences. In general I have noticed that it is very

easy to be an interesting man (I am an interesting man now); people

invite me out and tell me all about myself."

Natasha smiled and was on the point of speaking.

"We have been told," Princess Mary interrupted her, "that you lost two

millions in Moscow. Is that true?"

"But I am three times as rich as before," returned Pierre.

Though the position was now altered by his decision to pay his wife's

debts and to rebuild his houses, Pierre still maintained that he had

become three times as rich as before.

"What I have certainly gained is freedom," he began seriously, but did

not continue, noticing that this theme was too egotistic.

"And are you building?"

"Yes. Savelich says I must!"

"Tell me, you did not know of the countess' death when you decided to

remain in Moscow?" asked Princess Mary and immediately blushed, noticing

that her question, following his mention of freedom, ascribed to his

words a meaning he had perhaps not intended.

"No," answered Pierre, evidently not considering awkward the meaning

Princess Mary had given to his words. "I heard of it in Orel and you

cannot imagine how it shocked me. We were not an exemplary couple," he

added quickly, glancing at Natasha and noticing on her face curiosity as

to how he would speak of his wife, "but her death shocked me terribly.

When two people quarrel they are always both in fault, and one's own

guilt suddenly becomes terribly serious when the other is no longer

alive. And then such a death... without friends and without consolation!

I am very, very sorry for her," he concluded, and was pleased to notice

a look of glad approval on Natasha's face.

"Yes, and so you are once more an eligible bachelor," said Princess

Mary.

Pierre suddenly flushed crimson and for a long time tried not to look at

Natasha. When he ventured to glance her way again her face was cold,

stern, and he fancied even contemptuous.

"And did you really see and speak to Napoleon, as we have been told?"

said Princess Mary.

Pierre laughed.

"No, not once! Everybody seems to imagine that being taken prisoner

means being Napoleon's guest. Not only did I never see him but I heard

nothing about him--I was in much lower company!"

Supper was over, and Pierre who at first declined to speak about his

captivity was gradually led on to do so.

"But it's true that you remained in Moscow to kill Napoleon?" Natasha

asked with a slight smile. "I guessed it then when we met at the

Sukharev tower, do you remember?"

Pierre admitted that it was true, and from that was gradually led by

Princess Mary's questions and especially by Natasha's into giving a

detailed account of his adventures.

At first he spoke with the amused and mild irony now customary with him

toward everybody and especially toward himself, but when he came to

describe the horrors and sufferings he had witnessed he was

unconsciously carried away and began speaking with the suppressed

emotion of a man re-experiencing in recollection strong impressions he

has lived through.

Princess Mary with a gentle smile looked now at Pierre and now at

Natasha. In the whole narrative she saw only Pierre and his goodness.

Natasha, leaning on her elbow, the expression of her face constantly

changing with the narrative, watched Pierre with an attention that never

wandered--evidently herself experiencing all that he described. Not only

her look, but her exclamations and the brief questions she put, showed

Pierre that she understood just what he wished to convey. It was clear

that she understood not only what he said but also what he wished to,

but could not, express in words. The account Pierre gave of the incident

with the child and the woman for protecting whom he was arrested was

this: "It was an awful sight--children abandoned, some in the flames...

One was snatched out before my eyes... and there were women who had

their things snatched off and their earrings torn out..." he flushed and

grew confused. "Then a patrol arrived and all the men--all those who

were not looting, that is--were arrested, and I among them."

"I am sure you're not telling us everything; I am sure you did

something..." said Natasha and pausing added, "something fine?"

Pierre continued. When he spoke of the execution he wanted to pass over

the horrible details, but Natasha insisted that he should not omit

anything.

Pierre began to tell about Karataev, but paused. By this time he had

risen from the table and was pacing the room, Natasha following him with

her eyes. Then he added:

"No, you can't understand what I learned from that illiterate man--that

simple fellow."

"Yes, yes, go on!" said Natasha. "Where is he?"

"They killed him almost before my eyes."

And Pierre, his voice trembling continually, went on to tell of the last

days of their retreat, of Karataev's illness and his death.

He told of his adventures as he had never yet recalled them. He now, as

it were, saw a new meaning in all he had gone through. Now that he was

telling it all to Natasha he experienced that pleasure which a man has

when women listen to him--not clever women who when listening either try

to remember what they hear to enrich their minds and when opportunity

offers to retell it, or who wish to adopt it to some thought of their

own and promptly contribute their own clever comments prepared in their

little mental workshop--but the pleasure given by real women gifted with

a capacity to select and absorb the very best a man shows of himself.

Natasha without knowing it was all attention: she did not lose a word,

no single quiver in Pierre's voice, no look, no twitch of a muscle in

his face, nor a single gesture. She caught the unfinished word in its

flight and took it straight into her open heart, divining the secret

meaning of all Pierre's mental travail.

Princess Mary understood his story and sympathized with him, but she now

saw something else that absorbed all her attention. She saw the

possibility of love and happiness between Natasha and Pierre, and the

first thought of this filled her heart with gladness.

It was three o'clock in the morning. The footmen came in with sad and

stern faces to change the candles, but no one noticed them.

Pierre finished his story. Natasha continued to look at him intently

with bright, attentive, and animated eyes, as if trying to understand

something more which he had perhaps left untold. Pierre in shamefaced

and happy confusion glanced occasionally at her, and tried to think what

to say next to introduce a fresh subject. Princess Mary was silent. It

occurred to none of them that it was three o'clock and time to go to

bed.

"People speak of misfortunes and sufferings," remarked Pierre, "but if

at this moment I were asked: 'Would you rather be what you were before

you were taken prisoner, or go through all this again?' then for

heaven's sake let me again have captivity and horseflesh! We imagine

that when we are thrown out of our usual ruts all is lost, but it is

only then that what is new and good begins. While there is life there is

happiness. There is much, much before us. I say this to you," he added,

turning to Natasha.

"Yes, yes," she said, answering something quite different. "I too should

wish nothing but to relive it all from the beginning."

Pierre looked intently at her.

"Yes, and nothing more," said Natasha.

"It's not true, not true!" cried Pierre. "I am not to blame for being

alive and wishing to live--nor you either."

Suddenly Natasha bent her head, covered her face with her hands, and

began to cry.

"What is it, Natasha?" said Princess Mary.

"Nothing, nothing." She smiled at Pierre through her tears. "Good night!

It is time for bed."

Pierre rose and took his leave.

Princess Mary and Natasha met as usual in the bedroom. They talked of

what Pierre had told them. Princess Mary did not express her opinion of

Pierre nor did Natasha speak of him.

"Well, good night, Mary!" said Natasha. "Do you know, I am often afraid

that by not speaking of him" (she meant Prince Andrew) "for fear of not

doing justice to our feelings, we forget him."

Princess Mary sighed deeply and thereby acknowledged the justice of

Natasha's remark, but she did not express agreement in words.

"Is it possible to forget?" said she.

"It did me so much good to tell all about it today. It was hard and

painful, but good, very good!" said Natasha. "I am sure he really loved

him. That is why I told him... Was it all right?" she added, suddenly

blushing.

"To tell Pierre? Oh, yes. What a splendid man he is!" said Princess

Mary.

"Do you know, Mary..." Natasha suddenly said with a mischievous smile

such as Princess Mary had not seen on her face for a long time, "he has

somehow grown so clean, smooth, and fresh--as if he had just come out of

a Russian bath; do you understand? Out of a moral bath. Isn't it true?"

"Yes," replied Princess Mary. "He has greatly improved."

"With a short coat and his hair cropped; just as if, well, just as if he

had come straight from the bath... Papa used to..."

"I understand why he" (Prince Andrew) "liked no one so much as him,"

said Princess Mary.

"Yes, and yet he is quite different. They say men are friends when they

are quite different. That must be true. Really he is quite unlike him--

in everything."

"Yes, but he's wonderful."

"Well, good night," said Natasha.

And the same mischievous smile lingered for a long time on her face as

if it had been forgotten there.

CHAPTER XVIII

It was a long time before Pierre could fall asleep that night. He paced

up and down his room, now turning his thoughts on a difficult problem

and frowning, now suddenly shrugging his shoulders and wincing, and now

smiling happily.

He was thinking of Prince Andrew, of Natasha, and of their love, at one

moment jealous of her past, then reproaching himself for that feeling.

It was already six in the morning and he still paced up and down the

room.

"Well, what's to be done if it cannot be avoided? What's to be done?

Evidently it has to be so," said he to himself, and hastily undressing

he got into bed, happy and agitated but free from hesitation or

indecision.

"Strange and impossible as such happiness seems, I must do everything

that she and I may be man and wife," he told himself.

A few days previously Pierre had decided to go to Petersburg on the

Friday. When he awoke on the Thursday, Savelich came to ask him about

packing for the journey.

"What, to Petersburg? What is Petersburg? Who is there in Petersburg?"

he asked involuntarily, though only to himself. "Oh, yes, long ago

before this happened I did for some reason mean to go to Petersburg," he

reflected. "Why? But perhaps I shall go. What a good fellow he is and

how attentive, and how he remembers everything," he thought, looking at

Savelich's old face, "and what a pleasant smile he has!"

"Well, Savelich, do you still not wish to accept your freedom?" Pierre

asked him.

"What's the good of freedom to me, your excellency? We lived under the

late count--the kingdom of heaven be his!--and we have lived under you

too, without ever being wronged."

"And your children?"

"The children will live just the same. With such masters one can live."

"But what about my heirs?" said Pierre. "Supposing I suddenly marry...

it might happen," he added with an involuntary smile.

"If I may take the liberty, your excellency, it would be a good thing."

"How easy he thinks it," thought Pierre. "He doesn't know how terrible

it is and how dangerous. Too soon or too late... it is terrible!"

"So what are your orders? Are you starting tomorrow?" asked Savelich.

"No, I'll put it off for a bit. I'll tell you later. You must forgive

the trouble I have put you to," said Pierre, and seeing Savelich smile,

he thought: "But how strange it is that he should not know that now

there is no Petersburg for me, and that that must be settled first of

all! But probably he knows it well enough and is only pretending. Shall

I have a talk with him and see what he thinks?" Pierre reflected. "No,

another time."

At breakfast Pierre told the princess, his cousin, that he had been to

see Princess Mary the day before and had there met--"Whom do you think?

Natasha Rostova!"

The princess seemed to see nothing more extraordinary in that than if he

had seen Anna Semenovna.

"Do you know her?" asked Pierre.

"I have seen the princess," she replied. "I heard that they were

arranging a match for her with young Rostov. It would be a very good

thing for the Rostovs, they are said to be utterly ruined."

"No; I mean do you know Natasha Rostova?"

"I heard about that affair of hers at the time. It was a great pity."

"No, she either doesn't understand or is pretending," thought Pierre.

"Better not say anything to her either."

The princess too had prepared provisions for Pierre's journey.

"How kind they all are," thought Pierre. "What is surprising is that

they should trouble about these things now when it can no longer be of

interest to them. And all for me!"

On the same day the Chief of Police came to Pierre, inviting him to send

a representative to the Faceted Palace to recover things that were to be

returned to their owners that day.

"And this man too," thought Pierre, looking into the face of the Chief

of Police. "What a fine, good-looking officer and how kind. Fancy

bothering about such trifles now! And they actually say he is not honest

and takes bribes. What nonsense! Besides, why shouldn't he take bribes?

That's the way he was brought up, and everybody does it. But what a

kind, pleasant face and how he smiles as he looks at me."

Pierre went to Princess Mary's to dinner.

As he drove through the streets past the houses that had been burned

down, he was surprised by the beauty of those ruins. The picturesqueness

of the chimney stacks and tumble-down walls of the burned-out quarters

of the town, stretching out and concealing one another, reminded him of

the Rhine and the Colosseum. The cabmen he met and their passengers, the

carpenters cutting the timber for new houses with axes, the women

hawkers, and the shopkeepers, all looked at him with cheerful beaming

eyes that seemed to say: "Ah, there he is! Let's see what will come of

it!"

At the entrance to Princess Mary's house Pierre felt doubtful whether he

had really been there the night before and really seen Natasha and

talked to her. "Perhaps I imagined it; perhaps I shall go in and find no

one there." But he had hardly entered the room before he felt her

presence with his whole being by the loss of his sense of freedom. She

was in the same black dress with soft folds and her hair was done the

same way as the day before, yet she was quite different. Had she been

like this when he entered the day before he could not for a moment have

failed to recognize her.

She was as he had known her almost as a child and later on as Prince

Andrew's fiancee. A bright questioning light shone in her eyes, and on

her face was a friendly and strangely roguish expression.

Pierre dined with them and would have spent the whole evening there, but

Princess Mary was going to vespers and Pierre left the house with her.

Next day he came early, dined, and stayed the whole evening. Though

Princess Mary and Natasha were evidently glad to see their visitor and

though all Pierre's interest was now centered in that house, by the

evening they had talked over everything and the conversation passed from

one trivial topic to another and repeatedly broke off. He stayed so long

that Princess Mary and Natasha exchanged glances, evidently wondering

when he would go. Pierre noticed this but could not go. He felt uneasy

and embarrassed, but sat on because he simply could not get up and take

his leave.

Princess Mary, foreseeing no end to this, rose first, and complaining of

a headache began to say good night.

"So you are going to Petersburg tomorrow?" she asked.

"No, I am not going," Pierre replied hastily, in a surprised tone and as

though offended. "Yes... no... to Petersburg? Tomorrow--but I won't say

good-by yet. I will call round in case you have any commissions for me,"

said he, standing before Princess Mary and turning red, but not taking

his departure.

Natasha gave him her hand and went out. Princess Mary on the other hand

instead of going away sank into an armchair, and looked sternly and

intently at him with her deep, radiant eyes. The weariness she had

plainly shown before had now quite passed off. With a deep and long-

drawn sigh she seemed to be prepared for a lengthy talk.

When Natasha left the room Pierre's confusion and awkwardness

immediately vanished and were replaced by eager excitement. He quickly

moved an armchair toward Princess Mary.

"Yes, I wanted to tell you," said he, answering her look as if she had

spoken. "Princess, help me! What am I to do? Can I hope? Princess, my

dear friend, listen! I know it all. I know I am not worthy of her, I

know it's impossible to speak of it now. But I want to be a brother to

her. No, not that, I don't, I can't..."

He paused and rubbed his face and eyes with his hands.

"Well," he went on with an evident effort at self-control and coherence.

"I don't know when I began to love her, but I have loved her and her

alone all my life, and I love her so that I cannot imagine life without

her. I cannot propose to her at present, but the thought that perhaps

she might someday be my wife and that I may be missing that

possibility... that possibility... is terrible. Tell me, can I hope?

Tell me what I am to do, dear princess!" he added after a pause, and

touched her hand as she did not reply.

"I am thinking of what you have told me," answered Princess Mary. "This

is what I will say. You are right that to speak to her of love at

present..."

Princess Mary stopped. She was going to say that to speak of love was

impossible, but she stopped because she had seen by the sudden change in

Natasha two days before that she would not only not be hurt if Pierre

spoke of his love, but that it was the very thing she wished for.

"To speak to her now wouldn't do," said the princess all the same.

"But what am I to do?"

"Leave it to me," said Princess Mary. "I know..."

Pierre was looking into Princess Mary's eyes.

"Well?... Well?..." he said.

"I know that she loves... will love you," Princess Mary corrected

herself.

Before her words were out, Pierre had sprung up and with a frightened

expression seized Princess Mary's hand.

"What makes you think so? You think I may hope? You think...?"

"Yes, I think so," said Princess Mary with a smile. "Write to her

parents, and leave it to me. I will tell her when I can. I wish it to

happen and my heart tells me it will."

"No, it cannot be! How happy I am! But it can't be.... How happy I am!

No, it can't be!" Pierre kept saying as he kissed Princess Mary's hands.

"Go to Petersburg, that will be best. And I will write to you," she

said.

"To Petersburg? Go there? Very well, I'll go. But I may come again

tomorrow?"

Next day Pierre came to say good-by. Natasha was less animated than she

had been the day before; but that day as he looked at her Pierre

sometimes felt as if he was vanishing and that neither he nor she

existed any longer, that nothing existed but happiness. "Is it possible?

No, it can't be," he told himself at every look, gesture, and word that

filled his soul with joy.

When on saying good-by he took her thin, slender hand, he could not help

holding it a little longer in his own.

"Is it possible that this hand, that face, those eyes, all this treasure

of feminine charm so strange to me now, is it possible that it will one

day be mine forever, as familiar to me as I am to myself?... No, that's

impossible!..."

"Good-bye, Count," she said aloud. "I shall look forward very much to

your return," she added in a whisper.

And these simple words, her look, and the expression on her face which

accompanied them, formed for two months the subject of inexhaustible

memories, interpretations, and happy meditations for Pierre. "'I shall

look forward very much to your return....' Yes, yes, how did she say it?

Yes, 'I shall look forward very much to your return.' Oh, how happy I

am! What is happening to me? How happy I am!" said Pierre to himself.

CHAPTER XIX

There was nothing in Pierre's soul now at all like what had troubled it

during his courtship of Helene.

He did not repeat to himself with a sickening feeling of shame the words

he had spoken, or say: "Oh, why did I not say that?" and, "Whatever made

me say 'Je vous aime'?" On the contrary, he now repeated in imagination

every word that he or Natasha had spoken and pictured every detail of

her face and smile, and did not wish to diminish or add anything, but

only to repeat it again and again. There was now not a shadow of doubt

in his mind as to whether what he had undertaken was right or wrong.

Only one terrible doubt sometimes crossed his mind: "Wasn't it all a

dream? Isn't Princess Mary mistaken? Am I not too conceited and self-

confident? I believe all this--and suddenly Princess Mary will tell her,

and she will be sure to smile and say: 'How strange! He must be deluding

himself. Doesn't he know that he is a man, just a man, while I...? I am

something altogether different and higher.'"

That was the only doubt often troubling Pierre. He did not now make any

plans. The happiness before him appeared so inconceivable that if only

he could attain it, it would be the end of all things. Everything ended

with that.

A joyful, unexpected frenzy, of which he had thought himself incapable,

possessed him. The whole meaning of life--not for him alone but for the

whole world--seemed to him centered in his love and the possibility of

being loved by her. At times everybody seemed to him to be occupied with

one thing only--his future happiness. Sometimes it seemed to him that

other people were all as pleased as he was himself and merely tried to

hide that pleasure by pretending to be busy with other interests. In

every word and gesture he saw allusions to his happiness. He often

surprised those he met by his significantly happy looks and smiles which

seemed to express a secret understanding between him and them. And when

he realized that people might not be aware of his happiness, he pitied

them with his whole heart and felt a desire somehow to explain to them

that all that occupied them was a mere frivolous trifle unworthy of

attention.

When it was suggested to him that he should enter the civil service, or

when the war or any general political affairs were discussed on the

assumption that everybody's welfare depended on this or that issue of

events, he would listen with a mild and pitying smile and surprise

people by his strange comments. But at this time he saw everybody--both

those who, as he imagined, understood the real meaning of life (that is,

what he was feeling) and those unfortunates who evidently did not

understand it--in the bright light of the emotion that shone within

himself, and at once without any effort saw in everyone he met

everything that was good and worthy of being loved.

When dealing with the affairs and papers of his dead wife, her memory

aroused in him no feeling but pity that she had not known the bliss he

now knew. Prince Vasili, who having obtained a new post and some fresh

decorations was particularly proud at this time, seemed to him a

pathetic, kindly old man much to be pitied.

Often in afterlife Pierre recalled this period of blissful insanity. All

the views he formed of men and circumstances at this time remained true

for him always. He not only did not renounce them subsequently, but when

he was in doubt or inwardly at variance, he referred to the views he had

held at this time of his madness and they always proved correct.

"I may have appeared strange and queer then," he thought, "but I was not

so mad as I seemed. On the contrary I was then wiser and had more

insight than at any other time, and understood all that is worth

understanding in life, because... because I was happy."

Pierre's insanity consisted in not waiting, as he used to do, to

discover personal attributes which he termed "good qualities" in people

before loving them; his heart was now overflowing with love, and by

loving people without cause he discovered indubitable causes for loving

them.

CHAPTER XX

After Pierre's departure that first evening, when Natasha had said to

Princess Mary with a gaily mocking smile: "He looks just, yes, just as

if he had come out of a Russian bath--in a short coat and with his hair

cropped," something hidden and unknown to herself, but irrepressible,

awoke in Natasha's soul.

Everything: her face, walk, look, and voice, was suddenly altered. To

her own surprise a power of life and hope of happiness rose to the

surface and demanded satisfaction. From that evening she seemed to have

forgotten all that had happened to her. She no longer complained of her

position, did not say a word about the past, and no longer feared to

make happy plans for the future. She spoke little of Pierre, but when

Princess Mary mentioned him a long-extinguished light once more kindled

in her eyes and her lips curved with a strange smile.

The change that took place in Natasha at first surprised Princess Mary;

but when she understood its meaning it grieved her. "Can she have loved

my brother so little as to be able to forget him so soon?" she thought

when she reflected on the change. But when she was with Natasha she was

not vexed with her and did not reproach her. The reawakened power of

life that had seized Natasha was so evidently irrepressible and

unexpected by her that in her presence Princess Mary felt that she had

no right to reproach her even in her heart.

Natasha gave herself up so fully and frankly to this new feeling that

she did not try to hide the fact that she was no longer sad, but bright

and cheerful.

When Princess Mary returned to her room after her nocturnal talk with

Pierre, Natasha met her on the threshold.

"He has spoken? Yes? He has spoken?" she repeated.

And a joyful yet pathetic expression which seemed to beg forgiveness for

her joy settled on Natasha's face.

"I wanted to listen at the door, but I knew you would tell me."

Understandable and touching as the look with which Natasha gazed at her

seemed to Princess Mary, and sorry as she was to see her agitation,

these words pained her for a moment. She remembered her brother and his

love.

"But what's to be done? She can't help it," thought the princess.

And with a sad and rather stern look she told Natasha all that Pierre

had said. On hearing that he was going to Petersburg Natasha was

astounded.

"To Petersburg!" she repeated as if unable to understand.

But noticing the grieved expression on Princess Mary's face she guessed

the reason of that sadness and suddenly began to cry.

"Mary," said she, "tell me what I should do! I am afraid of being bad.

Whatever you tell me, I will do. Tell me...."

"You love him?"

"Yes," whispered Natasha.

"Then why are you crying? I am happy for your sake," said Princess Mary,

who because of those tears quite forgave Natasha's joy.

"It won't be just yet--someday. Think what fun it will be when I am his

wife and you marry Nicholas!"

"Natasha, I have asked you not to speak of that. Let us talk about you."

They were silent awhile.

"But why go to Petersburg?" Natasha suddenly asked, and hastily replied

to her own question. "But no, no, he must... Yes, Mary, He must...."

FIRST EPILOGUE: 1813 - 20

CHAPTER I

Seven years had passed. The storm-tossed sea of European history had

subsided within its shores and seemed to have become calm. But the

mysterious forces that move humanity (mysterious because the laws of

their motion are unknown to us) continued to operate.

Though the surface of the sea of history seemed motionless, the movement

of humanity went on as unceasingly as the flow of time. Various groups

of people formed and dissolved, the coming formation and dissolution of

kingdoms and displacement of peoples was in course of preparation.

The sea of history was not driven spasmodically from shore to shore as

previously. It was seething in its depths. Historic figures were not

borne by the waves from one shore to another as before. They now seemed

to rotate on one spot. The historical figures at the head of armies, who

formerly reflected the movement of the masses by ordering wars,

campaigns, and battles, now reflected the restless movement by political

and diplomatic combinations, laws, and treaties.

The historians call this activity of the historical figures "the

reaction."

In dealing with this period they sternly condemn the historical

personages who, in their opinion, caused what they describe as the

reaction. All the well-known people of that period, from Alexander and

Napoleon to Madame de Stael, Photius, Schelling, Fichte, Chateaubriand,

and the rest, pass before their stern judgment seat and are acquitted or

condemned according to whether they conduced to progress or to reaction.

According to their accounts a reaction took place at that time in Russia

also, and the chief culprit was Alexander I, the same man who according

to them was the chief cause of the liberal movement at the commencement

of his reign, being the savior of Russia.

There is no one in Russian literature now, from schoolboy essayist to

learned historian, who does not throw his little stone at Alexander for

things he did wrong at this period of his reign.

"He ought to have acted in this way and in that way. In this case he did

well and in that case badly. He behaved admirably at the beginning of

his reign and during 1812, but acted badly by giving a constitution to

Poland, forming the Holy Alliance, entrusting power to Arakcheev,

favoring Golitsyn and mysticism, and afterwards Shishkov and Photius. He

also acted badly by concerning himself with the active army and

disbanding the Semenov regiment."

It would take a dozen pages to enumerate all the reproaches the

historians address to him, based on their knowledge of what is good for

humanity.

What do these reproaches mean?

Do not the very actions for which the historians praise Alexander I (the

liberal attempts at the beginning of his reign, his struggle with

Napoleon, the firmness he displayed in 1812 and the campaign of 1813)

flow from the same sources--the circumstances of his birth, education,

and life--that made his personality what it was and from which the

actions for which they blame him (the Holy Alliance, the restoration of

Poland, and the reaction of 1820 and later) also flowed?

In what does the substance of those reproaches lie?

It lies in the fact that an historic character like Alexander I,

standing on the highest possible pinnacle of human power with the

blinding light of history focused upon him; a character exposed to those

strongest of all influences: the intrigues, flattery, and self-deception

inseparable from power; a character who at every moment of his life felt

a responsibility for all that was happening in Europe; and not a

fictitious but a live character who like every man had his personal

habits, passions, and impulses toward goodness, beauty, and truth--that

this character--though not lacking in virtue (the historians do not

accuse him of that)--had not the same conception of the welfare of

humanity fifty years ago as a present-day professor who from his youth

upwards has been occupied with learning: that is, with books and

lectures and with taking notes from them.

But even if we assume that fifty years ago Alexander I was mistaken in

his view of what was good for the people, we must inevitably assume that

the historian who judges Alexander will also after the lapse of some

time turn out to be mistaken in his view of what is good for humanity.

This assumption is all the more natural and inevitable because, watching

the movement of history, we see that every year and with each new

writer, opinion as to what is good for mankind changes; so that what

once seemed good, ten years later seems bad, and vice versa. And what is

more, we find at one and the same time quite contradictory views as to

what is bad and what is good in history: some people regard giving a

constitution to Poland and forming the Holy Alliance as praiseworthy in

Alexander, while others regard it as blameworthy.

The activity of Alexander or of Napoleon cannot be called useful or

harmful, for it is impossible to say for what it was useful or harmful.

If that activity displeases somebody, this is only because it does not

agree with his limited understanding of what is good. Whether the

preservation of my father's house in Moscow, or the glory of the Russian

arms, or the prosperity of the Petersburg and other universities, or the

freedom of Poland or the greatness of Russia, or the balance of power in

Europe, or a certain kind of European culture called "progress" appear

to me to be good or bad, I must admit that besides these things the

action of every historic character has other more general purposes

inaccessible to me.

But let us assume that what is called science can harmonize all

contradictions and possesses an unchanging standard of good and bad by

which to try historic characters and events; let us say that Alexander

could have done everything differently; let us say that with guidance

from those who blame him and who profess to know the ultimate aim of the

movement of humanity, he might have arranged matters according to the

program his present accusers would have given him--of nationality,

freedom, equality, and progress (these, I think, cover the ground). Let

us assume that this program was possible and had then been formulated,

and that Alexander had acted on it. What would then have become of the

activity of all those who opposed the tendency that then prevailed in

the government--an activity that in the opinion of the historians was

good and beneficent? Their activity would not have existed: there would

have been no life, there would have been nothing.

If we admit that human life can be ruled by reason, the possibility of

life is destroyed.

CHAPTER II

If we assume as the historians do that great men lead humanity to the

attainment of certain ends--the greatness of Russia or of France, the

balance of power in Europe, the diffusion of the ideas of the

Revolution, general progress, or anything else--then it is impossible to

explain the facts of history without introducing the conceptions of

chance and genius.

If the aim of the European wars at the beginning of the nineteenth

century had been the aggrandizement of Russia, that aim might have been

accomplished without all the preceding wars and without the invasion. If

the aim was the aggrandizement of France, that might have been attained

without the Revolution and without the Empire. If the aim was the

dissemination of ideas, the printing press could have accomplished that

much better than warfare. If the aim was the progress of civilization,

it is easy to see that there are other ways of diffusing civilization

more expedient than by the destruction of wealth and of human lives.

Why did it happen in this and not in some other way?

Because it happened so! "Chance created the situation; genius utilized

it," says history.

But what is chance? What is genius?

The words chance and genius do not denote any really existing thing and

therefore cannot be defined. Those words only denote a certain stage of

understanding of phenomena. I do not know why a certain event occurs; I

think that I cannot know it; so I do not try to know it and I talk about

chance. I see a force producing effects beyond the scope of ordinary

human agencies; I do not understand why this occurs and I talk of

genius.

To a herd of rams, the ram the herdsman drives each evening into a

special enclosure to feed and that becomes twice as fat as the others

must seem to be a genius. And it must appear an astonishing conjunction

of genius with a whole series of extraordinary chances that this ram,

who instead of getting into the general fold every evening goes into a

special enclosure where there are oats--that this very ram, swelling

with fat, is killed for meat.

But the rams need only cease to suppose that all that happens to them

happens solely for the attainment of their sheepish aims; they need only

admit that what happens to them may also have purposes beyond their ken,

and they will at once perceive a unity and coherence in what happened to

the ram that was fattened. Even if they do not know for what purpose

they are fattened, they will at least know that all that happened to the

ram did not happen accidentally, and will no longer need the conceptions

of chance or genius.

Only by renouncing our claim to discern a purpose immediately

intelligible to us, and admitting the ultimate purpose to be beyond our

ken, may we discern the sequence of experiences in the lives of historic

characters and perceive the cause of the effect they produce

(incommensurable with ordinary human capabilities), and then the words

chance and genius become superfluous.

We need only confess that we do not know the purpose of the European

convulsions and that we know only the facts--that is, the murders, first

in France, then in Italy, in Africa, in Prussia, in Austria, in Spain,

and in Russia--and that the movements from the west to the east and from

the east to the west form the essence and purpose of these events, and

not only shall we have no need to see exceptional ability and genius in

Napoleon and Alexander, but we shall be unable to consider them to be

anything but like other men, and we shall not be obliged to have

recourse to chance for an explanation of those small events which made

these people what they were, but it will be clear that all those small

events were inevitable.

By discarding a claim to knowledge of the ultimate purpose, we shall

clearly perceive that just as one cannot imagine a blossom or seed for

any single plant better suited to it than those it produces, so it is

impossible to imagine any two people more completely adapted down to the

smallest detail for the purpose they had to fulfill, than Napoleon and

Alexander with all their antecedents.

CHAPTER III

The fundamental and essential significance of the European events of the

beginning of the nineteenth century lies in the movement of the mass of

the European peoples from west to east and afterwards from east to west.

The commencement of that movement was the movement from west to east.

For the peoples of the west to be able to make their warlike movement to

Moscow it was necessary: (1) that they should form themselves into a

military group of a size able to endure a collision with the warlike

military group of the east, (2) that they should abandon all established

traditions and customs, and (3) that during their military movement they

should have at their head a man who could justify to himself and to them

the deceptions, robberies, and murders which would have to be committed

during that movement.

And beginning with the French Revolution the old inadequately large

group was destroyed, as well as the old habits and traditions, and step

by step a group was formed of larger dimensions with new customs and

traditions, and a man was produced who would stand at the head of the

coming movement and bear the responsibility for all that had to be done.

A man without convictions, without habits, without traditions, without a

name, and not even a Frenchman, emerges--by what seem the strangest

chances--from among all the seething French parties, and without joining

any one of them is borne forward to a prominent position.

The ignorance of his colleagues, the weakness and insignificance of his

opponents, the frankness of his falsehoods, and the dazzling and self-

confident limitations of this man raise him to the head of the army. The

brilliant qualities of the soldiers of the army sent to Italy, his

opponents' reluctance to fight, and his own childish audacity and self-

confidence secure him military fame. Innumerable so-called chances

accompany him everywhere. The disfavor into which he falls with the

rulers of France turns to his advantage. His attempts to avoid his

predestined path are unsuccessful: he is not received into the Russian

service, and the appointment he seeks in Turkey comes to nothing. During

the war in Italy he is several times on the verge of destruction and

each time is saved in an unexpected manner. Owing to various diplomatic

considerations the Russian armies--just those which might have destroyed

his prestige--do not appear upon the scene till he is no longer there.

On his return from Italy he finds the government in Paris in a process

of dissolution in which all those who are in it are inevitably wiped out

and destroyed. And by chance an escape from this dangerous position

presents itself in the form of an aimless and senseless expedition to

Africa. Again so-called chance accompanies him. Impregnable Malta

surrenders without a shot; his most reckless schemes are crowned with

success. The enemy's fleet, which subsequently did not let a single boat

pass, allows his entire army to elude it. In Africa a whole series of

outrages are committed against the almost unarmed inhabitants. And the

men who commit these crimes, especially their leader, assure themselves

that this is admirable, this is glory--it resembles Caesar and Alexander

the Great and is therefore good.

This ideal of glory and grandeur--which consists not merely in

considering nothing wrong that one does but in priding oneself on every

crime one commits, ascribing to it an incomprehensible supernatural

significance--that ideal, destined to guide this man and his associates,

had scope for its development in Africa. Whatever he does succeeds. The

plague does not touch him. The cruelty of murdering prisoners is not

imputed to him as a fault. His childishly rash, uncalled-for, and

ignoble departure from Africa, leaving his comrades in distress, is set

down to his credit, and again the enemy's fleet twice lets him slip

past. When, intoxicated by the crimes he has committed so successfully,

he reaches Paris, the dissolution of the republican government, which a

year earlier might have ruined him, has reached its extreme limit, and

his presence there now as a newcomer free from party entanglements can

only serve to exalt him--and though he himself has no plan, he is quite

ready for his new role.

He had no plan, he was afraid of everything, but the parties snatched at

him and demanded his participation.

He alone--with his ideal of glory and grandeur developed in Italy and

Egypt, his insane self-adulation, his boldness in crime and frankness in

lying--he alone could justify what had to be done.

He is needed for the place that awaits him, and so almost apart from his

will and despite his indecision, his lack of a plan, and all his

mistakes, he is drawn into a conspiracy that aims at seizing power and

the conspiracy is crowned with success.

He is pushed into a meeting of the legislature. In alarm he wishes to

flee, considering himself lost. He pretends to fall into a swoon and

says senseless things that should have ruined him. But the once proud

and shrewd rulers of France, feeling that their part is played out, are

even more bewildered than he, and do not say the words they should have

said to destroy him and retain their power.

Chance, millions of chances, give him power, and all men as if by

agreement co-operate to confirm that power. Chance forms the characters

of the rulers of France, who submit to him; chance forms the character

of Paul I of Russia who recognizes his government; chance contrives a

plot against him which not only fails to harm him but confirms his

power. Chance puts the Duc d'Enghien in his hands and unexpectedly

causes him to kill him--thereby convincing the mob more forcibly than in

any other way that he had the right, since he had the might. Chance

contrives that though he directs all his efforts to prepare an

expedition against England (which would inevitably have ruined him) he

never carries out that intention, but unexpectedly falls upon Mack and

the Austrians, who surrender without a battle. Chance and genius give

him the victory at Austerlitz; and by chance all men, not only the

French but all Europe--except England which does not take part in the

events about to happen--despite their former horror and detestation of

his crimes, now recognize his authority, the title he has given himself,

and his ideal of grandeur and glory, which seems excellent and

reasonable to them all.

As if measuring themselves and preparing for the coming movement, the

western forces push toward the east several times in 1805, 1806, 1807,

and 1809, gaining strength and growing. In 1811 the group of people that

had formed in France unites into one group with the peoples of Central

Europe. The strength of the justification of the man who stands at the

head of the movement grows with the increased size of the group. During

the ten-year preparatory period this man had formed relations with all

the crowned heads of Europe. The discredited rulers of the world can

oppose no reasonable ideal to the insensate Napoleonic ideal of glory

and grandeur. One after another they hasten to display their

insignificance before him. The King of Prussia sends his wife to seek

the great man's mercy; the Emperor of Austria considers it a favor that

this man receives a daughter of the Caesars into his bed; the Pope, the

guardian of all that the nations hold sacred, utilizes religion for the

aggrandizement of the great man. It is not Napoleon who prepares himself

for the accomplishment of his role, so much as all those round him who

prepare him to take on himself the whole responsibility for what is

happening and has to happen. There is no step, no crime or petty fraud

he commits, which in the mouths of those around him is not at once

represented as a great deed. The most suitable fete the Germans can

devise for him is a celebration of Jena and Auerstadt. Not only is he

great, but so are his ancestors, his brothers, his stepsons, and his

brothers-in-law. Everything is done to deprive him of the remains of his

reason and to prepare him for his terrible part. And when he is ready so

too are the forces.

The invasion pushes eastward and reaches its final goal--Moscow. That

city is taken; the Russian army suffers heavier losses than the opposing

armies had suffered in the former war from Austerlitz to Wagram. But

suddenly instead of those chances and that genius which hitherto had so

consistently led him by an uninterrupted series of successes to the

predestined goal, an innumerable sequence of inverse chances occur--from

the cold in his head at Borodino to the sparks which set Moscow on fire,

and the frosts--and instead of genius, stupidity and immeasurable

baseness become evident.

The invaders flee, turn back, flee again, and all the chances are now

not for Napoleon but always against him.

A countermovement is then accomplished from east to west with a

remarkable resemblance to the preceding movement from west to east.

Attempted drives from east to west--similar to the contrary movements of

1805, 1807, and 1809--precede the great westward movement; there is the

same coalescence into a group of enormous dimensions; the same adhesion

of the people of Central Europe to the movement; the same hesitation

midway, and the same increasing rapidity as the goal is approached.

Paris, the ultimate goal, is reached. The Napoleonic government and army

are destroyed. Napoleon himself is no longer of any account; all his

actions are evidently pitiful and mean, but again an inexplicable chance

occurs. The allies detest Napoleon whom they regard as the cause of

their sufferings. Deprived of power and authority, his crimes and his

craft exposed, he should have appeared to them what he appeared ten

years previously and one year later--an outlawed brigand. But by some

strange chance no one perceives this. His part is not yet ended. The man

who ten years before and a year later was considered an outlawed brigand

is sent to an island two days' sail from France, which for some reason

is presented to him as his dominion, and guards are given to him and

millions of money are paid him.

CHAPTER IV

The flood of nations begins to subside into its normal channels. The

waves of the great movement abate, and on the calm surface eddies are

formed in which float the diplomatists, who imagine that they have

caused the floods to abate.

But the smooth sea again suddenly becomes disturbed. The diplomatists

think that their disagreements are the cause of this fresh pressure of

natural forces; they anticipate war between their sovereigns; the

position seems to them insoluble. But the wave they feel to be rising

does not come from the quarter they expect. It rises again from the same

point as before--Paris. The last backwash of the movement from the west

occurs: a backwash which serves to solve the apparently insuperable

diplomatic difficulties and ends the military movement of that period of

history.

The man who had devastated France returns to France alone, without any

conspiracy and without soldiers. Any guard might arrest him, but by

strange chance no one does so and all rapturously greet the man they

cursed the day before and will curse again a month later.

This man is still needed to justify the final collective act.

That act is performed.

The last role is played. The actor is bidden to disrobe and wash off his

powder and paint: he will not be wanted any more.

And some years pass during which he plays a pitiful comedy to himself in

solitude on his island, justifying his actions by intrigues and lies

when the justification is no longer needed, and displaying to the whole

world what it was that people had mistaken for strength as long as an

unseen hand directed his actions.

The manager having brought the drama to a close and stripped the actor

shows him to us.

"See what you believed in! This is he! Do you now see that it was not he

but I who moved you?"

But dazed by the force of the movement, it was long before people

understood this.

Still greater coherence and inevitability is seen in the life of

Alexander I, the man who stood at the head of the countermovement from

east to west.

What was needed for him who, overshadowing others, stood at the head of

that movement from east to west?

What was needed was a sense of justice and a sympathy with European

affairs, but a remote sympathy not dulled by petty interests; a moral

superiority over those sovereigns of the day who co-operated with him; a

mild and attractive personality; and a personal grievance against

Napoleon. And all this was found in Alexander I; all this had been

prepared by innumerable so-called chances in his life: his education,

his early liberalism, the advisers who surrounded him, and by

Austerlitz, and Tilsit, and Erfurt.

During the national war he was inactive because he was not needed. But

as soon as the necessity for a general European war presented itself he

appeared in his place at the given moment and, uniting the nations of

Europe, led them to the goal.

The goal is reached. After the final war of 1815 Alexander possesses all

possible power. How does he use it?

Alexander I--the pacifier of Europe, the man who from his early years

had striven only for his people's welfare, the originator of the liberal

innovations in his fatherland--now that he seemed to possess the utmost

power and therefore to have the possibility of bringing about the

welfare of his peoples--at the time when Napoleon in exile was drawing

up childish and mendacious plans of how he would have made mankind happy

had he retained power--Alexander I, having fulfilled his mission and

feeling the hand of God upon him, suddenly recognizes the insignificance

of that supposed power, turns away from it, and gives it into the hands

of contemptible men whom he despises, saying only:

"Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thy Name!... I too am a man like the

rest of you. Let me live like a man and think of my soul and of God."

As the sun and each atom of ether is a sphere complete in itself, and

yet at the same time only a part of a whole too immense for man to

comprehend, so each individual has within himself his own aims and yet

has them to serve a general purpose incomprehensible to man.

A bee settling on a flower has stung a child. And the child is afraid of

bees and declares that bees exist to sting people. A poet admires the

bee sucking from the chalice of a flower and says it exists to suck the

fragrance of flowers. A beekeeper, seeing the bee collect pollen from

flowers and carry it to the hive, says that it exists to gather honey.

Another beekeeper who has studied the life of the hive more closely says

that the bee gathers pollen dust to feed the young bees and rear a

queen, and that it exists to perpetuate its race. A botanist notices

that the bee flying with the pollen of a male flower to a pistil

fertilizes the latter, and sees in this the purpose of the bee's

existence. Another, observing the migration of plants, notices that the

bee helps in this work, and may say that in this lies the purpose of the

bee. But the ultimate purpose of the bee is not exhausted by the first,

the second, or any of the processes the human mind can discern. The

higher the human intellect rises in the discovery of these purposes, the

more obvious it becomes, that the ultimate purpose is beyond our

comprehension.

All that is accessible to man is the relation of the life of the bee to

other manifestations of life. And so it is with the purpose of historic

characters and nations.

CHAPTER V

Natasha's wedding to Bezukhov, which took place in 1813, was the last

happy event in the family of the old Rostovs. Count Ilya Rostov died

that same year and, as always happens, after the father's death the

family group broke up.

The events of the previous year: the burning of Moscow and the flight

from it, the death of Prince Andrew, Natasha's despair, Petya's death,

and the old countess' grief fell blow after blow on the old count's

head. He seemed to be unable to understand the meaning of all these

events, and bowed his old head in a spiritual sense as if expecting and

inviting further blows which would finish him. He seemed now frightened

and distraught and now unnaturally animated and enterprising.

The arrangements for Natasha's marriage occupied him for a while. He

ordered dinners and suppers and obviously tried to appear cheerful, but

his cheerfulness was not infectious as it used to be: on the contrary it

evoked the compassion of those who knew and liked him.

When Pierre and his wife had left, he grew very quiet and began to

complain of depression. A few days later he fell ill and took to his

bed. He realized from the first that he would not get up again, despite

the doctor's encouragement. The countess passed a fortnight in an

armchair by his pillow without undressing. Every time she gave him his

medicine he sobbed and silently kissed her hand. On his last day,

sobbing, he asked her and his absent son to forgive him for having

dissipated their property--that being the chief fault of which he was

conscious. After receiving communion and unction he quietly died; and

next day a throng of acquaintances who came to pay their last respects

to the deceased filled the house rented by the Rostovs. All these

acquaintances, who had so often dined and danced at his house and had so

often laughed at him, now said, with a common feeling of self-reproach

and emotion, as if justifying themselves: "Well, whatever he may have

been he was a most worthy man. You don't meet such men nowadays.... And

which of us has not weaknesses of his own?"

It was just when the count's affairs had become so involved that it was

impossible to say what would happen if he lived another year that he

unexpectedly died.

Nicholas was with the Russian army in Paris when the news of his

father's death reached him. He at once resigned his commission, and

without waiting for it to be accepted took leave of absence and went to

Moscow. The state of the count's affairs became quite obvious a month

after his death, surprising everyone by the immense total of small debts

the existence of which no one had suspected. The debts amounted to

double the value of the property.

Friends and relations advised Nicholas to decline the inheritance. But

he regarded such a refusal as a slur on his father's memory, which he

held sacred, and therefore would not hear of refusing and accepted the

inheritance together with the obligation to pay the debts.

The creditors who had so long been silent, restrained by a vague but

powerful influence exerted on them while he lived by the count's

careless good nature, all proceeded to enforce their claims at once. As

always happens in such cases rivalry sprang up as to which should get

paid first, and those who like Mitenka held promissory notes given them

as presents now became the most exacting of the creditors. Nicholas was

allowed no respite and no peace, and those who had seemed to pity the

old man--the cause of their losses (if they were losses)--now

remorselessly pursued the young heir who had voluntarily undertaken the

debts and was obviously not guilty of contracting them.

Not one of the plans Nicholas tried succeeded; the estate was sold by

auction for half its value, and half the debts still remained unpaid.

Nicholas accepted thirty thousand rubles offered him by his brother-in-

law Bezukhov to pay off debts he regarded as genuinely due for value

received. And to avoid being imprisoned for the remainder, as the

creditors threatened, he re-entered the government service.

He could not rejoin the army where he would have been made colonel at

the next vacancy, for his mother now clung to him as her one hold on

life; and so despite his reluctance to remain in Moscow among people who

had known him before, and despite his abhorrence of the civil service,

he accepted a post in Moscow in that service, doffed the uniform of

which he was so fond, and moved with his mother and Sonya to a small

house on the Sivtsev Vrazhek.

Natasha and Pierre were living in Petersburg at the time and had no

clear idea of Nicholas' circumstances. Having borrowed money from his

brother-in-law, Nicholas tried to hide his wretched condition from him.

His position was the more difficult because with his salary of twelve

hundred rubles he had not only to keep himself, his mother, and Sonya,

but had to shield his mother from knowledge of their poverty. The

countess could not conceive of life without the luxurious conditions she

had been used to from childhood and, unable to realize how hard it was

for her son, kept demanding now a carriage (which they did not keep) to

send for a friend, now some expensive article of food for herself, or

wine for her son, or money to buy a present as a surprise for Natasha or

Sonya, or for Nicholas himself.

Sonya kept house, attended on her aunt, read to her, put up with her

whims and secret ill-will, and helped Nicholas to conceal their poverty

from the old countess. Nicholas felt himself irredeemably indebted to

Sonya for all she was doing for his mother and greatly admired her

patience and devotion, but tried to keep aloof from her.

He seemed in his heart to reproach her for being too perfect, and

because there was nothing to reproach her with. She had all that people

are valued for, but little that could have made him love her. He felt

that the more he valued her the less he loved her. He had taken her at

her word when she wrote giving him his freedom and now behaved as if all

that had passed between them had been long forgotten and could never in

any case be renewed.

Nicholas' position became worse and worse. The idea of putting something

aside out of his salary proved a dream. Not only did he not save

anything, but to comply with his mother's demands he even incurred some

small debts. He could see no way out of this situation. The idea of

marrying some rich woman, which was suggested to him by his female

relations, was repugnant to him. The other way out--his mother's death--

never entered his head. He wished for nothing and hoped for nothing, and

deep in his heart experienced a gloomy and stern satisfaction in an

uncomplaining endurance of his position. He tried to avoid his old

acquaintances with their commiseration and offensive offers of

assistance; he avoided all distraction and recreation, and even at home

did nothing but play cards with his mother, pace silently up and down

the room, and smoke one pipe after another. He seemed carefully to

cherish within himself the gloomy mood which alone enabled him to endure

his position.

CHAPTER VI

At the beginning of winter Princess Mary came to Moscow. From reports

current in town she learned how the Rostovs were situated, and how "the

son has sacrificed himself for his mother," as people were saying.

"I never expected anything else of him," said Princess Mary to herself,

feeling a joyous sense of her love for him. Remembering her friendly

relations with all the Rostovs which had made her almost a member of the

family, she thought it her duty to go to see them. But remembering her

relations with Nicholas in Voronezh she was shy about doing so. Making a

great effort she did however go to call on them a few weeks after her

arrival in Moscow.

Nicholas was the first to meet her, as the countess' room could only be

reached through his. But instead of being greeted with pleasure as she

had expected, at his first glance at her his face assumed a cold, stiff,

proud expression she had not seen on it before. He inquired about her

health, led the way to his mother, and having sat there for five minutes

left the room.

When the princess came out of the countess' room Nicholas met her again,

and with marked solemnity and stiffness accompanied her to the anteroom.

To her remarks about his mother's health he made no reply. "What's that

to you? Leave me in peace," his looks seemed to say.

"Why does she come prowling here? What does she want? I can't bear these

ladies and all these civilities!" said he aloud in Sonya's presence,

evidently unable to repress his vexation, after the princess' carriage

had disappeared.

"Oh, Nicholas, how can you talk like that?" cried Sonya, hardly able to

conceal her delight. "She is so kind and Mamma is so fond of her!"

Nicholas did not reply and tried to avoid speaking of the princess any

more. But after her visit the old countess spoke of her several times a

day.

She sang her praises, insisted that her son must call on her, expressed

a wish to see her often, but yet always became ill-humored when she

began to talk about her.

Nicholas tried to keep silence when his mother spoke of the princess,

but his silence irritated her.

"She is a very admirable and excellent young woman," said she, "and you

must go and call on her. You would at least be seeing somebody, and I

think it must be dull for you only seeing us."

"But I don't in the least want to, Mamma."

"You used to want to, and now you don't. Really I don't understand you,

my dear. One day you are dull, and the next you refuse to see anyone."

"But I never said I was dull."

"Why, you said yourself you don't want even to see her. She is a very

admirable young woman and you always liked her, but now suddenly you

have got some notion or other in your head. You hide everything from

me."

"Not at all, Mamma."

"If I were asking you to do something disagreeable now--but I only ask

you to return a call. One would think mere politeness required it....

Well, I have asked you, and now I won't interfere any more since you

have secrets from your mother."

"Well, then, I'll go if you wish it."

"It doesn't matter to me. I only wish it for your sake."

Nicholas sighed, bit his mustache, and laid out the cards for a

patience, trying to divert his mother's attention to another topic.

The same conversation was repeated next day and the day after, and the

day after that.

After her visit to the Rostovs and her unexpectedly chilly reception by

Nicholas, Princess Mary confessed to herself that she had been right in

not wishing to be the first to call.

"I expected nothing else," she told herself, calling her pride to her

aid. "I have nothing to do with him and I only wanted to see the old

lady, who was always kind to me and to whom I am under many

obligations."

But she could not pacify herself with these reflections; a feeling akin

to remorse troubled her when she thought of her visit. Though she had

firmly resolved not to call on the Rostovs again and to forget the whole

matter, she felt herself all the time in an awkward position. And when

she asked herself what distressed her, she had to admit that it was her

relation to Rostov. His cold, polite manner did not express his feeling

for her (she knew that) but it concealed something, and until she could

discover what that something was, she felt that she could not be at

ease.

One day in midwinter when sitting in the schoolroom attending to her

nephew's lessons, she was informed that Rostov had called. With a firm

resolution not to betray herself and not show her agitation, she sent

for Mademoiselle Bourienne and went with her to the drawing room.

Her first glance at Nicholas' face told her that he had only come to

fulfill the demands of politeness, and she firmly resolved to maintain

the tone in which he addressed her.

They spoke of the countess' health, of their mutual friends, of the

latest war news, and when the ten minutes required by propriety had

elapsed after which a visitor may rise, Nicholas got up to say good-by.

With Mademoiselle Bourienne's help the princess had maintained the

conversation very well, but at the very last moment, just when he rose,

she was so tired of talking of what did not interest her, and her mind

was so full of the question why she alone was granted so little

happiness in life, that in a fit of absent-mindedness she sat still, her

luminous eyes gazing fixedly before her, not noticing that he had risen.

Nicholas glanced at her and, wishing to appear not to notice her

abstraction, made some remark to Mademoiselle Bourienne and then again

looked at the princess. She still sat motionless with a look of

suffering on her gentle face. He suddenly felt sorry for her and was

vaguely conscious that he might be the cause of the sadness her face

expressed. He wished to help her and say something pleasant, but could

think of nothing to say.

"Good-bye, Princess!" said he.

She started, flushed, and sighed deeply.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," she said as if waking up. "Are you going

already, Count? Well then, good-by! Oh, but the cushion for the

countess!"

"Wait a moment, I'll fetch it," said Mademoiselle Bourienne, and she

left the room.

They both sat silent, with an occasional glance at one another.

"Yes, Princess," said Nicholas at last with a sad smile, "it doesn't

seem long ago since we first met at Bogucharovo, but how much water has

flowed since then! In what distress we all seemed to be then, yet I

would give much to bring back that time... but there's no bringing it

back."

Princess Mary gazed intently into his eyes with her own luminous ones as

he said this. She seemed to be trying to fathom the hidden meaning of

his words which would explain his feeling for her.

"Yes, yes," said she, "but you have no reason to regret the past, Count.

As I understand your present life, I think you will always recall it

with satisfaction, because the self-sacrifice that fills it now..."

"I cannot accept your praise," he interrupted her hurriedly. "On the

contrary I continually reproach myself.... But this is not at all an

interesting or cheerful subject."

His face again resumed its former stiff and cold expression. But the

princess had caught a glimpse of the man she had known and loved, and it

was to him that she now spoke.

"I thought you would allow me to tell you this," she said. "I had come

so near to you... and to all your family that I thought you would not

consider my sympathy misplaced, but I was mistaken," and suddenly her

voice trembled. "I don't know why," she continued, recovering herself,

"but you used to be different, and..."

"There are a thousand reasons why," laying special emphasis on the why.

"Thank you, Princess," he added softly. "Sometimes it is hard."

"So that's why! That's why!" a voice whispered in Princess Mary's soul.

"No, it was not only that gay, kind, and frank look, not only that

handsome exterior, that I loved in him. I divined his noble, resolute,

self-sacrificing spirit too," she said to herself. "Yes, he is poor now

and I am rich.... Yes, that's the only reason.... Yes, were it not for

that..." And remembering his former tenderness, and looking now at his

kind, sorrowful face, she suddenly understood the cause of his coldness.

"But why, Count, why?" she almost cried, unconsciously moving closer to

him. "Why? Tell me. You must tell me!"

He was silent.

"I don't understand your why, Count," she continued, "but it's hard for

me... I confess it. For some reason you wish to deprive me of our former

friendship. And that hurts me." There were tears in her eyes and in her

voice. "I have had so little happiness in life that every loss is hard

for me to bear.... Excuse me, good-by!" and suddenly she began to cry

and was hurrying from the room.

"Princess, for God's sake!" he exclaimed, trying to stop her.

"Princess!"

She turned round. For a few seconds they gazed silently into one

another's eyes--and what had seemed impossible and remote suddenly

became possible, inevitable, and very near.

CHAPTER VII

In the winter of 1813 Nicholas married Princess Mary and moved to Bald

Hills with his wife, his mother, and Sonya.

Within four years he had paid off all his remaining debts without

selling any of his wife's property, and having received a small

inheritance on the death of a cousin he paid his debt to Pierre as well.

In another three years, by 1820, he had so managed his affairs that he

was able to buy a small estate adjoining Bald Hills and was negotiating

to buy back Otradnoe--that being his pet dream.

Having started farming from necessity, he soon grew so devoted to it

that it became his favorite and almost his sole occupation. Nicholas was

a plain farmer: he did not like innovations, especially the English ones

then coming into vogue. He laughed at theoretical treatises on estate

management, disliked factories, the raising of expensive products, and

the buying of expensive seed corn, and did not make a hobby of any

particular part of the work on his estate. He always had before his

mind's eye the estate as a whole and not any particular part of it. The

chief thing in his eyes was not the nitrogen in the soil, nor the oxygen

in the air, nor manures, nor special plows, but that most important

agent by which nitrogen, oxygen, manure, and plow were made effective--

the peasant laborer. When Nicholas first began farming and began to

understand its different branches, it was the serf who especially

attracted his attention. The peasant seemed to him not merely a tool,

but also a judge of farming and an end in himself. At first he watched

the serfs, trying to understand their aims and what they considered good

and bad, and only pretended to direct them and give orders while in

reality learning from them their methods, their manner of speech, and

their judgment of what was good and bad. Only when he had understood the

peasants' tastes and aspirations, had learned to talk their language, to

grasp the hidden meaning of their words, and felt akin to them did he

begin boldly to manage his serfs, that is, to perform toward them the

duties demanded of him. And Nicholas' management produced very brilliant

results.

Guided by some gift of insight, on taking up the management of the

estates he at once unerringly appointed as bailiff, village elder, and

delegate, the very men the serfs would themselves have chosen had they

had the right to choose, and these posts never changed hands. Before

analyzing the properties of manure, before entering into the debit and

credit (as he ironically called it), he found out how many cattle the

peasants had and increased the number by all possible means. He kept the

peasant families together in the largest groups possible, not allowing

the family groups to divide into separate households. He was hard alike

on the lazy, the depraved, and the weak, and tried to get them expelled

from the commune.

He was as careful of the sowing and reaping of the peasants' hay and

corn as of his own, and few landowners had their crops sown and

harvested so early and so well, or got so good a return, as did

Nicholas.

He disliked having anything to do with the domestic serfs--the "drones"

as he called them--and everyone said he spoiled them by his laxity. When

a decision had to be taken regarding a domestic serf, especially if one

had to be punished, he always felt undecided and consulted everybody in

the house; but when it was possible to have a domestic serf conscripted

instead of a land worker he did so without the least hesitation. He

never felt any hesitation in dealing with the peasants. He knew that his

every decision would be approved by them all with very few exceptions.

He did not allow himself either to be hard on or punish a man, or to

make things easy for or reward anyone, merely because he felt inclined

to do so. He could not have said by what standard he judged what he

should or should not do, but the standard was quite firm and definite in

his own mind.

Often, speaking with vexation of some failure or irregularity, he would

say: "What can one do with our Russian peasants?" and imagined that he

could not bear them.

Yet he loved "our Russian peasants" and their way of life with his whole

soul, and for that very reason had understood and assimilated the one

way and manner of farming which produced good results.

Countess Mary was jealous of this passion of her husband's and regretted

that she could not share it; but she could not understand the joys and

vexations he derived from that world, to her so remote and alien. She

could not understand why he was so particularly animated and happy when,

after getting up at daybreak and spending the whole morning in the

fields or on the threshing floor, he returned from the sowing or mowing

or reaping to have tea with her. She did not understand why he spoke

with such admiration and delight of the farming of the thrifty and well-

to-do peasant Matthew Ermishin, who with his family had carted corn all

night; or of the fact that his (Nicholas') sheaves were already stacked

before anyone else had his harvest in. She did not understand why he

stepped out from the window to the veranda and smiled under his mustache

and winked so joyfully, when warm steady rain began to fall on the dry

and thirsty shoots of the young oats, or why when the wind carried away

a threatening cloud during the hay harvest he would return from the

barn, flushed, sunburned, and perspiring, with a smell of wormwood and

gentian in his hair and, gleefully rubbing his hands, would say: "Well,

one more day and my grain and the peasants' will all be under cover."

Still less did she understand why he, kindhearted and always ready to

anticipate her wishes, should become almost desperate when she brought

him a petition from some peasant men or women who had appealed to her to

be excused some work; why he, that kind Nicholas, should obstinately

refuse her, angrily asking her not to interfere in what was not her

business. She felt he had a world apart, which he loved passionately and

which had laws she had not fathomed.

Sometimes when, trying to understand him, she spoke of the good work he

was doing for his serfs, he would be vexed and reply: "Not in the least;

it never entered my head and I wouldn't do that for their good! That's

all poetry and old wives' talk--all that doing good to one's neighbor!

What I want is that our children should not have to go begging. I must

put our affairs in order while I am alive, that's all. And to do that,

order and strictness are essential.... That's all about it!" said he,

clenching his vigorous fist. "And fairness, of course," he added, "for

if the peasant is naked and hungry and has only one miserable horse, he

can do no good either for himself or for me."

And all Nicholas did was fruitful--probably just because he refused to

allow himself to think that he was doing good to others for virtue's

sake. His means increased rapidly; serfs from neighboring estates came

to beg him to buy them, and long after his death the memory of his

administration was devoutly preserved among the serfs. "He was a

master... the peasants' affairs first and then his own. Of course he was

not to be trifled with either--in a word, he was a real master!"

CHAPTER VIII

One matter connected with his management sometimes worried Nicholas, and

that was his quick temper together with his old hussar habit of making

free use of his fists. At first he saw nothing reprehensible in this,

but in the second year of his marriage his view of that form of

punishment suddenly changed.

Once in summer he had sent for the village elder from Bogucharovo, a man

who had succeeded to the post when Dron died and who was accused of

dishonesty and various irregularities. Nicholas went out into the porch

to question him, and immediately after the elder had given a few replies

the sound of cries and blows were heard. On returning to lunch Nicholas

went up to his wife, who sat with her head bent low over her embroidery

frame, and as usual began to tell her what he had been doing that

morning. Among other things he spoke of the Bogucharovo elder. Countess

Mary turned red and then pale, but continued to sit with head bowed and

lips compressed and gave her husband no reply.

"Such an insolent scoundrel!" he cried, growing hot again at the mere

recollection of him. "If he had told me he was drunk and did not see...

But what is the matter with you, Mary?" he suddenly asked.

Countess Mary raised her head and tried to speak, but hastily looked

down again and her lips puckered.

"Why, whatever is the matter, my dearest?"

The looks of the plain Countess Mary always improved when she was in

tears. She never cried from pain or vexation, but always from sorrow or

pity, and when she wept her radiant eyes acquired an irresistible charm.

The moment Nicholas took her hand she could no longer restrain herself

and began to cry.

"Nicholas, I saw it... he was to blame, but why do you... Nicholas!" and

she covered her face with her hands.

Nicholas said nothing. He flushed crimson, left her side, and paced up

and down the room. He understood what she was weeping about, but could

not in his heart at once agree with her that what he had regarded from

childhood as quite an everyday event was wrong. "Is it just

sentimentality, old wives' tales, or is she right?" he asked himself.

Before he had solved that point he glanced again at her face filled with

love and pain, and he suddenly realized that she was right and that he

had long been sinning against himself.

"Mary," he said softly, going up to her, "it will never happen again; I

give you my word. Never," he repeated in a trembling voice like a boy

asking for forgiveness.

The tears flowed faster still from the countess' eyes. She took his hand

and kissed it.

"Nicholas, when did you break your cameo?" she asked to change the

subject, looking at his finger on which he wore a ring with a cameo of

Laocoon's head.

"Today--it was the same affair. Oh, Mary, don't remind me of it!" and

again he flushed. "I give you my word of honor it shan't occur again,

and let this always be a reminder to me," and he pointed to the broken

ring.

After that, when in discussions with his village elders or stewards the

blood rushed to his face and his fists began to clench, Nicholas would

turn the broken ring on his finger and would drop his eyes before the

man who was making him angry. But he did forget himself once or twice

within a twelvemonth, and then he would go and confess to his wife, and

would again promise that this should really be the very last time.

"Mary, you must despise me!" he would say. "I deserve it."

"You should go, go away at once, if you don't feel strong enough to

control yourself," she would reply sadly, trying to comfort her husband.

Among the gentry of the province Nicholas was respected but not liked.

He did not concern himself with the interests of his own class, and

consequently some thought him proud and others thought him stupid. The

whole summer, from spring sowing to harvest, he was busy with the work

on his farm. In autumn he gave himself up to hunting with the same

business-like seriousness--leaving home for a month, or even two, with

his hunt. In winter he visited his other villages or spent his time

reading. The books he read were chiefly historical, and on these he

spent a certain sum every year. He was collecting, as he said, a serious

library, and he made it a rule to read through all the books he bought.

He would sit in his study with a grave air, reading--a task he first

imposed upon himself as a duty, but which afterwards became a habit

affording him a special kind of pleasure and a consciousness of being

occupied with serious matters. In winter, except for business

excursions, he spent most of his time at home making himself one with

his family and entering into all the details of his children's relations

with their mother. The harmony between him and his wife grew closer and

closer and he daily discovered fresh spiritual treasures in her.

From the time of his marriage Sonya had lived in his house. Before that,

Nicholas had told his wife all that had passed between himself and

Sonya, blaming himself and commending her. He had asked Princess Mary to

be gentle and kind to his cousin. She thoroughly realized the wrong he

had done Sonya, felt herself to blame toward her, and imagined that her

wealth had influenced Nicholas' choice. She could not find fault with

Sonya in any way and tried to be fond of her, but often felt ill-will

toward her which she could not overcome.

Once she had a talk with her friend Natasha about Sonya and about her

own injustice toward her.

"You know," said Natasha, "you have read the Gospels a great deal--there

is a passage in them that just fits Sonya."

"What?" asked Countess Mary, surprised.

"'To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be

taken away.' You remember? She is one that hath not; why, I don't know.

Perhaps she lacks egotism, I don't know, but from her is taken away, and

everything has been taken away. Sometimes I am dreadfully sorry for her.

Formerly I very much wanted Nicholas to marry her, but I always had a

sort of presentiment that it would not come off. She is a sterile

flower, you know--like some strawberry blossoms. Sometimes I am sorry

for her, and sometimes I think she doesn't feel it as you or I would."

Though Countess Mary told Natasha that those words in the Gospel must be

understood differently, yet looking at Sonya she agreed with Natasha's

explanation. It really seemed that Sonya did not feel her position

trying, and had grown quite reconciled to her lot as a sterile flower.

She seemed to be fond not so much of individuals as of the family as a

whole. Like a cat, she had attached herself not to the people but to the

home. She waited on the old countess, petted and spoiled the children,

was always ready to render the small services for which she had a gift,

and all this was unconsciously accepted from her with insufficient

gratitude.

The country seat at Bald Hills had been rebuilt, though not on the same

scale as under the old prince.

The buildings, begun under straitened circumstances, were more than

simple. The immense house on the old stone foundations was of wood,

plastered only inside. It had bare deal floors and was furnished with

very simple hard sofas, armchairs, tables, and chairs made by their own

serf carpenters out of their own birchwood. The house was spacious and

had rooms for the house serfs and apartments for visitors. Whole

families of the Rostovs' and Bolkonskis' relations sometimes came to

Bald Hills with sixteen horses and dozens of servants and stayed for

months. Besides that, four times a year, on the name days and birthdays

of the hosts, as many as a hundred visitors would gather there for a day

or two. The rest of the year life pursued its unbroken routine with its

ordinary occupations, and its breakfasts, lunches, dinners, and suppers,

provided out of the produce of the estate.

CHAPTER IX

It was the eve of St. Nicholas, the fifth of December, 1820. Natasha had

been staying at her brother's with her husband and children since early

autumn. Pierre had gone to Petersburg on business of his own for three

weeks as he said, but had remained there nearly seven weeks and was

expected back every minute.

Besides the Bezukhov family, Nicholas' old friend the retired General

Vasili Dmitrich Denisov was staying with the Rostovs this fifth of

December.

On the sixth, which was his name day when the house would be full of

visitors, Nicholas knew he would have to exchange his Tartar tunic for a

tail coat, and put on narrow boots with pointed toes, and drive to the

new church he had built, and then receive visitors who would come to

congratulate him, offer them refreshments, and talk about the elections

of the nobility; but he considered himself entitled to spend the eve of

that day in his usual way. He examined the bailiff's accounts of the

village in Ryazan which belonged to his wife's nephew, wrote two

business letters, and walked over to the granaries, cattle yards and

stables before dinner. Having taken precautions against the general

drunkenness to be expected on the morrow because it was a great saint's

day, he returned to dinner, and without having time for a private talk

with his wife sat down at the long table laid for twenty persons, at

which the whole household had assembled. At that table were his mother,

his mother's old lady companion Belova, his wife, their three children

with their governess and tutor, his wife's nephew with his tutor, Sonya,

Denisov, Natasha, her three children, their governess, and old Michael

Ivanovich, the late prince's architect, who was living on in retirement

at Bald Hills.

Countess Mary sat at the other end of the table. When her husband took

his place she concluded, from the rapid manner in which after taking up

his table napkin he pushed back the tumbler and wineglass standing

before him, that he was out of humor, as was sometimes the case when he

came in to dinner straight from the farm--especially before the soup.

Countess Mary well knew that mood of his, and when she herself was in a

good frame of mind quietly waited till he had had his soup and then

began to talk to him and make him admit that there was no cause for his

ill-humor. But today she quite forgot that and was hurt that he should

be angry with her without any reason, and she felt unhappy. She asked

him where he had been. He replied. She again inquired whether everything

was going well on the farm. Her unnatural tone made him wince

unpleasantly and he replied hastily.

"Then I'm not mistaken," thought Countess Mary. "Why is he cross with

me?" She concluded from his tone that he was vexed with her and wished

to end the conversation. She knew her remarks sounded unnatural, but

could not refrain from asking some more questions.

Thanks to Denisov the conversation at table soon became general and

lively, and she did not talk to her husband. When they left the table

and went as usual to thank the old countess, Countess Mary held out her

hand and kissed her husband, and asked him why he was angry with her.

"You always have such strange fancies! I didn't even think of being

angry," he replied.

But the word always seemed to her to imply: "Yes, I am angry but I won't

tell you why."

Nicholas and his wife lived together so happily that even Sonya and the

old countess, who felt jealous and would have liked them to disagree,

could find nothing to reproach them with; but even they had their

moments of antagonism. Occasionally, and it was always just after they

had been happiest together, they suddenly had a feeling of estrangement

and hostility, which occurred most frequently during Countess Mary's

pregnancies, and this was such a time.

"Well, messieurs et mesdames," said Nicholas loudly and with apparent

cheerfulness (it seemed to Countess Mary that he did it on purpose to

vex her), "I have been on my feet since six this morning. Tomorrow I

shall have to suffer, so today I'll go and rest."

And without a word to his wife he went to the little sitting room and

lay down on the sofa.

"That's always the way," thought Countess Mary. "He talks to everyone

except me. I see... I see that I am repulsive to him, especially when I

am in this condition." She looked down at her expanded figure and in the

glass at her pale, sallow, emaciated face in which her eyes now looked

larger than ever.

And everything annoyed her--Denisov's shouting and laughter, Natasha's

talk, and especially a quick glance Sonya gave her.

Sonya was always the first excuse Countess Mary found for feeling

irritated.

Having sat awhile with her visitors without understanding anything of

what they were saying, she softly left the room and went to the nursery.

The children were playing at "going to Moscow" in a carriage made of

chairs and invited her to go with them. She sat down and played with

them a little, but the thought of her husband and his unreasonable

crossness worried her. She got up and, walking on tiptoe with

difficulty, went to the small sitting room.

"Perhaps he is not asleep; I'll have an explanation with him," she said

to herself. Little Andrew, her eldest boy, imitating his mother,

followed her on tiptoe. She did not notice him.

"Mary, dear, I think he is asleep--he was so tired," said Sonya, meeting

her in the large sitting room (it seemed to Countess Mary that she

crossed her path everywhere). "Andrew may wake him."

Countess Mary looked round, saw little Andrew following her, felt that

Sonya was right, and for that very reason flushed and with evident

difficulty refrained from saying something harsh. She made no reply, but

to avoid obeying Sonya beckoned to Andrew to follow her quietly and went

to the door. Sonya went away by another door. From the room in which

Nicholas was sleeping came the sound of his even breathing, every

slightest tone of which was familiar to his wife. As she listened to it

she saw before her his smooth handsome forehead, his mustache, and his

whole face, as she had so often seen it in the stillness of the night

when he slept. Nicholas suddenly moved and cleared his throat. And at

that moment little Andrew shouted from outside the door: "Papa! Mamma's

standing here!" Countess Mary turned pale with fright and made signs to

the boy. He grew silent, and quiet ensued for a moment, terrible to

Countess Mary. She knew how Nicholas disliked being waked. Then through

the door she heard Nicholas clearing his throat again and stirring, and

his voice said crossly:

"I can't get a moment's peace.... Mary, is that you? Why did you bring

him here?"

"I only came in to look and did not notice... forgive me..."

Nicholas coughed and said no more. Countess Mary moved away from the

door and took the boy back to the nursery. Five minutes later little

black-eyed three-year-old Natasha, her father's pet, having learned from

her brother that Papa was asleep and Mamma was in the sitting room, ran

to her father unobserved by her mother. The dark-eyed little girl boldly

opened the creaking door, went up to the sofa with energetic steps of

her sturdy little legs, and having examined the position of her father,

who was asleep with his back to her, rose on tiptoe and kissed the hand

which lay under his head. Nicholas turned with a tender smile on his

face.

"Natasha, Natasha!" came Countess Mary's frightened whisper from the

door. "Papa wants to sleep."

"No, Mamma, he doesn't want to sleep," said little Natasha with

conviction. "He's laughing."

Nicholas lowered his legs, rose, and took his daughter in his arms.

"Come in, Mary," he said to his wife.

She went in and sat down by her husband.

"I did not notice him following me," she said timidly. "I just looked

in."

Holding his little girl with one arm, Nicholas glanced at his wife and,

seeing her guilty expression, put his other arm around her and kissed

her hair.

"May I kiss Mamma?" he asked Natasha.

Natasha smiled bashfully.

"Again!" she commanded, pointing with a peremptory gesture to the spot

where Nicholas had placed the kiss.

"I don't know why you think I am cross," said Nicholas, replying to the

question he knew was in his wife's mind.

"You have no idea how unhappy, how lonely, I feel when you are like

that. It always seems to me..."

"Mary, don't talk nonsense. You ought to be ashamed of yourself!" he

said gaily.

"It seems to be that you can't love me, that I am so plain... always...

and now... in this cond..."

"Oh, how absurd you are! It is not beauty that endears, it's love that

makes us see beauty. It is only Malvinas and women of that kind who are

loved for their beauty. But do I love my wife? I don't love her, but...

I don't know how to put it. Without you, or when something comes between

us like this, I seem lost and can't do anything. Now do I love my

finger? I don't love it, but just try to cut it off!"

"I'm not like that myself, but I understand. So you're not angry with

me?"

"Awfully angry!" he said, smiling and getting up. And smoothing his hair

he began to pace the room.

"Do you know, Mary, what I've been thinking?" he began, immediately

thinking aloud in his wife's presence now that they had made it up.

He did not ask if she was ready to listen to him. He did not care. A

thought had occurred to him and so it belonged to her also. And he told

her of his intention to persuade Pierre to stay with them till spring.

Countess Mary listened till he had finished, made some remark, and in

her turn began thinking aloud. Her thoughts were about the children.

"You can see the woman in her already," she said in French, pointing to

little Natasha. "You reproach us women with being illogical. Here is our

logic. I say: 'Papa wants to sleep!' but she says, 'No, he's laughing.'

And she was right," said Countess Mary with a happy smile.

"Yes, yes." And Nicholas, taking his little daughter in his strong hand,

lifted her high, placed her on his shoulder, held her by the legs, and

paced the room with her. There was an expression of carefree happiness

on the faces of both father and daughter.

"But you know you may be unfair. You are too fond of this one," his wife

whispered in French.

"Yes, but what am I to do?... I try not to show..."

At that moment they heard the sound of the door pulley and footsteps in

the hall and anteroom, as if someone had arrived.

"Somebody has come."

"I am sure it is Pierre. I will go and see," said Countess Mary and left

the room.

In her absence Nicholas allowed himself to give his little daughter a

gallop round the room. Out of breath, he took the laughing child quickly

from his shoulder and pressed her to his heart. His capers reminded him

of dancing, and looking at the child's round happy little face he

thought of what she would be like when he was an old man, taking her

into society and dancing the mazurka with her as his old father had

danced Daniel Cooper with his daughter.

"It is he, it is he, Nicholas!" said Countess Mary, re-entering the room

a few minutes later. "Now our Natasha has come to life. You should have

seen her ecstasy, and how he caught it for having stayed away so long.

Well, come along now, quick, quick! It's time you two were parted," she

added, looking smilingly at the little girl who clung to her father.

Nicholas went out holding the child by the hand.

Countess Mary remained in the sitting room.

"I should never, never have believed that one could be so happy," she

whispered to herself. A smile lit up her face but at the same time she

sighed, and her deep eyes expressed a quiet sadness as though she felt,

through her happiness, that there is another sort of happiness

unattainable in this life and of which she involuntarily thought at that

instant.

CHAPTER X

Natasha had married in the early spring of 1813, and in 1820 already had

three daughters besides a son for whom she had longed and whom she was

now nursing. She had grown stouter and broader, so that it was difficult

to recognize in this robust, motherly woman the slim, lively Natasha of

former days. Her features were more defined and had a calm, soft, and

serene expression. In her face there was none of the ever-glowing

animation that had formerly burned there and constituted its charm. Now

her face and body were often all that one saw, and her soul was not

visible at all. All that struck the eye was a strong, handsome, and

fertile woman. The old fire very rarely kindled in her face now. That

happened only when, as was the case that day, her husband returned home,

or a sick child was convalescent, or when she and Countess Mary spoke of

Prince Andrew (she never mentioned him to her husband, who she imagined

was jealous of Prince Andrew's memory), or on the rare occasions when

something happened to induce her to sing, a practice she had quite

abandoned since her marriage. At the rare moments when the old fire did

kindle in her handsome, fully developed body she was even more

attractive than in former days.

Since their marriage Natasha and her husband had lived in Moscow, in

Petersburg, on their estate near Moscow, or with her mother, that is to

say, in Nicholas' house. The young Countess Bezukhova was not often seen

in society, and those who met her there were not pleased with her and

found her neither attractive nor amiable. Not that Natasha liked

solitude--she did not know whether she liked it or not, she even thought

that she did not--but with her pregnancies, her confinements, the

nursing of her children, and sharing every moment of her husband's life,

she had demands on her time which could be satisfied only by renouncing

society. All who had known Natasha before her marriage wondered at the

change in her as at something extraordinary. Only the old countess with

her maternal instinct had realized that all Natasha's outbursts had been

due to her need of children and a husband--as she herself had once

exclaimed at Otradnoe not so much in fun as in earnest--and her mother

was now surprised at the surprise expressed by those who had never

understood Natasha, and she kept saying that she had always known that

Natasha would make an exemplary wife and mother.

"Only she lets her love of her husband and children overflow all

bounds," said the countess, "so that it even becomes absurd."

Natasha did not follow the golden rule advocated by clever folk,

especially by the French, which says that a girl should not let herself

go when she marries, should not neglect her accomplishments, should be

even more careful of her appearance than when she was unmarried, and

should fascinate her husband as much as she did before he became her

husband. Natasha on the contrary had at once abandoned all her witchery,

of which her singing had been an unusually powerful part. She gave it up

just because it was so powerfully seductive. She took no pains with her

manners or with delicacy of speech, or with her toilet, or to show

herself to her husband in her most becoming attitudes, or to avoid

inconveniencing him by being too exacting. She acted in contradiction to

all those rules. She felt that the allurements instinct had formerly

taught her to use would now be merely ridiculous in the eyes of her

husband, to whom she had from the first moment given herself up

entirely--that is, with her whole soul, leaving no corner of it hidden

from him. She felt that her unity with her husband was not maintained by

the poetic feelings that had attracted him to her, but by something

else--indefinite but firm as the bond between her own body and soul.

To fluff out her curls, put on fashionable dresses, and sing romantic

songs to fascinate her husband would have seemed as strange as to adorn

herself to attract herself. To adorn herself for others might perhaps

have been agreeable--she did not know--but she had no time at all for

it. The chief reason for devoting no time either to singing, to dress,

or to choosing her words was that she really had no time to spare for

these things.

We know that man has the faculty of becoming completely absorbed in a

subject however trivial it may be, and that there is no subject so

trivial that it will not grow to infinite proportions if one's entire

attention is devoted to it.

The subject which wholly engrossed Natasha's attention was her family:

that is, her husband whom she had to keep so that he should belong

entirely to her and to the home, and the children whom she had to bear,

bring into the world, nurse, and bring up.

And the deeper she penetrated, not with her mind only but with her whole

soul, her whole being, into the subject that absorbed her, the larger

did that subject grow and the weaker and more inadequate did her powers

appear, so that she concentrated them wholly on that one thing and yet

was unable to accomplish all that she considered necessary.

There were then as now conversations and discussions about women's

rights, the relations of husband and wife and their freedom and rights,

though these themes were not yet termed questions as they are now; but

these topics were not merely uninteresting to Natasha, she positively

did not understand them.

These questions, then as now, existed only for those who see nothing in

marriage but the pleasure married people get from one another, that is,

only the beginnings of marriage and not its whole significance, which

lies in the family.

Discussions and questions of that kind, which are like the question of

how to get the greatest gratification from one's dinner, did not then

and do not now exist for those for whom the purpose of a dinner is the

nourishment it affords; and the purpose of marriage is the family.

If the purpose of dinner is to nourish the body, a man who eats two

dinners at once may perhaps get more enjoyment but will not attain his

purpose, for his stomach will not digest the two dinners.

If the purpose of marriage is the family, the person who wishes to have

many wives or husbands may perhaps obtain much pleasure, but in that

case will not have a family.

If the purpose of food is nourishment and the purpose of marriage is the

family, the whole question resolves itself into not eating more than one

can digest, and not having more wives or husbands than are needed for

the family--that is, one wife or one husband. Natasha needed a husband.

A husband was given her and he gave her a family. And she not only saw

no need of any other or better husband, but as all the powers of her

soul were intent on serving that husband and family, she could not

imagine and saw no interest in imagining how it would be if things were

different.

Natasha did not care for society in general, but prized the more the

society of her relatives--Countess Mary, and her brother, her mother,

and Sonya. She valued the company of those to whom she could come

striding disheveled from the nursery in her dressing gown, and with

joyful face show a yellow instead of a green stain on baby's napkin, and

from whom she could hear reassuring words to the effect that baby was

much better.

To such an extent had Natasha let herself go that the way she dressed

and did her hair, her ill-chosen words, and her jealousy--she was

jealous of Sonya, of the governess, and of every woman, pretty or plain-

-were habitual subjects of jest to those about her. The general opinion

was that Pierre was under his wife's thumb, which was really true. From

the very first days of their married life Natasha had announced her

demands. Pierre was greatly surprised by his wife's view, to him a

perfectly novel one, that every moment of his life belonged to her and

to the family. His wife's demands astonished him, but they also

flattered him, and he submitted to them.

Pierre's subjection consisted in the fact that he not only dared not

flirt with, but dared not even speak smilingly to, any other woman; did

not dare dine at the club as a pastime, did not dare spend money on a

whim, and did not dare absent himself for any length of time, except on

business--in which his wife included his intellectual pursuits, which

she did not in the least understand but to which she attributed great

importance. To make up for this, at home Pierre had the right to

regulate his life and that of the whole family exactly as he chose. At

home Natasha placed herself in the position of a slave to her husband,

and the whole household went on tiptoe when he was occupied--that is,

was reading or writing in his study. Pierre had but to show a partiality

for anything to get just what he liked done always. He had only to

express a wish and Natasha would jump up and run to fulfill it.

The entire household was governed according to Pierre's supposed orders,

that is, by his wishes which Natasha tried to guess. Their way of life

and place of residence, their acquaintances and ties, Natasha's

occupations, the children's upbringing, were all selected not merely

with regard to Pierre's expressed wishes, but to what Natasha from the

thoughts he expressed in conversation supposed his wishes to be. And she

deduced the essentials of his wishes quite correctly, and having once

arrived at them clung to them tenaciously. When Pierre himself wanted to

change his mind she would fight him with his own weapons.

Thus in a time of trouble ever memorable to him after the birth of their

first child who was delicate, when they had to change the wet nurse

three times and Natasha fell ill from despair, Pierre one day told her

of Rousseau's view, with which he quite agreed, that to have a wet nurse

is unnatural and harmful. When her next baby was born, despite the

opposition of her mother, the doctors, and even of her husband himself--

who were all vigorously opposed to her nursing her baby herself, a thing

then unheard of and considered injurious--she insisted on having her own

way, and after that nursed all her babies herself.

It very often happened that in a moment of irritation husband and wife

would have a dispute, but long afterwards Pierre to his surprise and

delight would find in his wife's ideas and actions the very thought

against which she had argued, but divested of everything superfluous

that in the excitement of the dispute he had added when expressing his

opinion.

After seven years of marriage Pierre had the joyous and firm

consciousness that he was not a bad man, and he felt this because he saw

himself reflected in his wife. He felt the good and bad within himself

inextricably mingled and overlapping. But only what was really good in

him was reflected in his wife, all that was not quite good was rejected.

And this was not the result of logical reasoning but was a direct and

mysterious reflection.

CHAPTER XI

Two months previously when Pierre was already staying with the Rostovs

he had received a letter from Prince Theodore, asking him to come to

Petersburg to confer on some important questions that were being

discussed there by a society of which Pierre was one of the principal

founders.

On reading that letter (she always read her husband's letters) Natasha

herself suggested that he should go to Petersburg, though she would feel

his absence very acutely. She attributed immense importance to all her

husband's intellectual and abstract interests though she did not

understand them, and she always dreaded being a hindrance to him in such

matters. To Pierre's timid look of inquiry after reading the letter she

replied by asking him to go, but to fix a definite date for his return.

He was given four weeks' leave of absence.

Ever since that leave of absence had expired, more than a fortnight

before, Natasha had been in a constant state of alarm, depression, and

irritability.

Denisov, now a general on the retired list and much dissatisfied with

the present state of affairs, had arrived during that fortnight. He

looked at Natasha with sorrow and surprise as at a bad likeness of a

person once dear. A dull, dejected look, random replies, and talk about

the nursery was all he saw and heard from his former enchantress.

Natasha was sad and irritable all that time, especially when her mother,

her brother, Sonya, or Countess Mary in their efforts to console her

tried to excuse Pierre and suggested reasons for his delay in returning.

"It's all nonsense, all rubbish--those discussions which lead to nothing

and all those idiotic societies!" Natasha declared of the very affairs

in the immense importance of which she firmly believed.

And she would go to the nursery to nurse Petya, her only boy. No one

else could tell her anything so comforting or so reasonable as this

little three-month-old creature when he lay at her breast and she was

conscious of the movement of his lips and the snuffling of his little

nose. That creature said: "You are angry, you are jealous, you would

like to pay him out, you are afraid--but here am I! And I am he..." and

that was unanswerable. It was more than true.

During that fortnight of anxiety Natasha resorted to the baby for

comfort so often, and fussed over him so much, that she overfed him and

he fell ill. She was terrified by his illness, and yet that was just

what she needed. While attending to him she bore the anxiety about her

husband more easily.

She was nursing her boy when the sound of Pierre's sleigh was heard at

the front door, and the old nurse--knowing how to please her mistress--

entered the room inaudibly but hurriedly and with a beaming face.

"Has he come?" Natasha asked quickly in a whisper, afraid to move lest

she should rouse the dozing baby.

"He's come, ma'am," whispered the nurse.

The blood rushed to Natasha's face and her feet involuntarily moved, but

she could not jump up and run out. The baby again opened his eyes and

looked at her. "You're here?" he seemed to be saying, and again lazily

smacked his lips.

Cautiously withdrawing her breast, Natasha rocked him a little, handed

him to the nurse, and went with rapid steps toward the door. But at the

door she stopped as if her conscience reproached her for having in her

joy left the child too soon, and she glanced round. The nurse with

raised elbows was lifting the infant over the rail of his cot.

"Go, ma'am! Don't worry, go!" she whispered, smiling, with the kind of

familiarity that grows up between a nurse and her mistress.

Natasha ran with light footsteps to the anteroom.

Denisov, who had come out of the study into the dancing room with his

pipe, now for the first time recognized the old Natasha. A flood of

brilliant, joyful light poured from her transfigured face.

"He's come!" she exclaimed as she ran past, and Denisov felt that he too

was delighted that Pierre, whom he did not much care for, had returned.

On reaching the vestibule Natasha saw a tall figure in a fur coat

unwinding his scarf. "It's he! It's really he! He has come!" she said to

herself, and rushing at him embraced him, pressed his head to her

breast, and then pushed him back and gazed at his ruddy, happy face,

covered with hoarfrost. "Yes, it is he, happy and contented..."

Then all at once she remembered the tortures of suspense she had

experienced for the last fortnight, and the joy that had lit up her face

vanished; she frowned and overwhelmed Pierre with a torrent of

reproaches and angry words.

"Yes, it's all very well for you. You are pleased, you've had a good

time.... But what about me? You might at least have shown consideration

for the children. I am nursing and my milk was spoiled.... Petya was at

death's door. But you were enjoying yourself. Yes, enjoying..."

Pierre knew he was not to blame, for he could not have come sooner; he

knew this outburst was unseemly and would blow over in a minute or two;

above all he knew that he himself was bright and happy. He wanted to

smile but dared not even think of doing so. He made a piteous,

frightened face and bent down.

"I could not, on my honor. But how is Petya?"

"All right now. Come along! I wonder you're not ashamed! If only you

could see what I was like without you, how I suffered!"

"You are well?"

"Come, come!" she said, not letting go of his arm. And they went to

their rooms.

When Nicholas and his wife came to look for Pierre he was in the nursery

holding his baby son, who was again awake, on his huge right palm and

dandling him. A blissful bright smile was fixed on the baby's broad face

with its toothless open mouth. The storm was long since over and there

was bright, joyous sunshine on Natasha's face as she gazed tenderly at

her husband and child.

"And have you talked everything well over with Prince Theodore?" she

asked.

"Yes, capitally."

"You see, he holds it up." (She meant the baby's head.) "But how he did

frighten me... You've seen the princess? Is it true she's in love with

that..."

"Yes, just fancy..."

At that moment Nicholas and Countess Mary came in. Pierre with the baby

on his hand stooped, kissed them, and replied to their inquiries. But in

spite of much that was interesting and had to be discussed, the baby

with the little cap on its unsteady head evidently absorbed all his

attention.

"How sweet!" said Countess Mary, looking at and playing with the baby.

"Now, Nicholas," she added, turning to her husband, "I can't understand

how it is you don't see the charm of these delicious marvels."

"I don't and can't," replied Nicholas, looking coldly at the baby. "A

lump of flesh. Come along, Pierre!"

"And yet he's such an affectionate father," said Countess Mary,

vindicating her husband, "but only after they are a year old or so..."

"Now, Pierre nurses them splendidly," said Natasha. "He says his hand is

just made for a baby's seat. Just look!"

"Only not for this..." Pierre suddenly exclaimed with a laugh, and

shifting the baby he gave him to the nurse.

CHAPTER XII

As in every large household, there were at Bald Hills several perfectly

distinct worlds which merged into one harmonious whole, though each

retained its own peculiarities and made concessions to the others. Every

event, joyful or sad, that took place in that house was important to all

these worlds, but each had its own special reasons to rejoice or grieve

over that occurrence independently of the others.

For instance, Pierre's return was a joyful and important event and they

all felt it to be so.

The servants--the most reliable judges of their masters because they

judge not by their conversation or expressions of feeling but by their

acts and way of life--were glad of Pierre's return because they knew

that when he was there Count Nicholas would cease going every day to

attend to the estate, and would be in better spirits and temper, and

also because they would all receive handsome presents for the holidays.

The children and their governesses were glad of Pierre's return because

no one else drew them into the social life of the household as he did.

He alone could play on the clavichord that ecossaise (his only piece) to

which, as he said, all possible dances could be danced, and they felt

sure he had brought presents for them all.

Young Nicholas, now a slim lad of fifteen, delicate and intelligent,

with curly light-brown hair and beautiful eyes, was delighted because

Uncle Pierre as he called him was the object of his rapturous and

passionate affection. No one had instilled into him this love for Pierre

whom he saw only occasionally. Countess Mary who had brought him up had

done her utmost to make him love her husband as she loved him, and

little Nicholas did love his uncle, but loved him with just a shade of

contempt. Pierre, however, he adored. He did not want to be an hussar or

a Knight of St. George like his uncle Nicholas; he wanted to be learned,

wise, and kind like Pierre. In Pierre's presence his face always shone

with pleasure and he flushed and was breathless when Pierre spoke to

him. He did not miss a single word he uttered, and would afterwards,

with Dessalles or by himself, recall and reconsider the meaning of

everything Pierre had said. Pierre's past life and his unhappiness prior

to 1812 (of which young Nicholas had formed a vague poetic picture from

some words he had overheard), his adventures in Moscow, his captivity,

Platon Karataev (of whom he had heard from Pierre), his love for Natasha

(of whom the lad was also particularly fond), and especially Pierre's

friendship with the father whom Nicholas could not remember--all this

made Pierre in his eyes a hero and a saint.

From broken remarks about Natasha and his father, from the emotion with

which Pierre spoke of that dead father, and from the careful, reverent

tenderness with which Natasha spoke of him, the boy, who was only just

beginning to guess what love is, derived the notion that his father had

loved Natasha and when dying had left her to his friend. But the father

whom the boy did not remember appeared to him a divinity who could not

be pictured, and of whom he never thought without a swelling heart and

tears of sadness and rapture. So the boy also was happy that Pierre had

arrived.

The guests welcomed Pierre because he always helped to enliven and unite

any company he was in.

The grown-up members of the family, not to mention his wife, were

pleased to have back a friend whose presence made life run more smoothly

and peacefully.

The old ladies were pleased with the presents he brought them, and

especially that Natasha would now be herself again.

Pierre felt the different outlooks of these various worlds and made

haste to satisfy all their expectations.

Though the most absent-minded and forgetful of men, Pierre, with the aid

of a list his wife drew up, had now bought everything, not forgetting

his mother--and brother-in-law's commissions, nor the dress material for

a present to Belova, nor toys for his wife's nephews. In the early days

of his marriage it had seemed strange to him that his wife should expect

him not to forget to procure all the things he undertook to buy, and he

had been taken aback by her serious annoyance when on his first trip he

forgot everything. But in time he grew used to this demand. Knowing that

Natasha asked nothing for herself, and gave him commissions for others

only when he himself had offered to undertake them, he now found an

unexpected and childlike pleasure in this purchase of presents for

everyone in the house, and never forgot anything. If he now incurred

Natasha's censure it was only for buying too many and too expensive

things. To her other defects (as most people thought them, but which to

Pierre were qualities) of untidiness and neglect of herself, she now

added stinginess.

From the time that Pierre began life as a family man on a footing

entailing heavy expenditure, he had noticed to his surprise that he

spent only half as much as before, and that his affairs--which had been

in disorder of late, chiefly because of his first wife's debts--had

begun to improve.

Life was cheaper because it was circumscribed: that most expensive

luxury, the kind of life that can be changed at any moment, was no

longer his nor did he wish for it. He felt that his way of life had now

been settled once for all till death and that to change it was not in

his power, and so that way of life proved economical.

With a merry, smiling face Pierre was sorting his purchases.

"What do you think of this?" said he, unrolling a piece of stuff like a

shopman.

Natasha, who was sitting opposite to him with her eldest daughter on her

lap, turned her sparkling eyes swiftly from her husband to the things he

showed her.

"That's for Belova? Excellent!" She felt the quality of the material.

"It was a ruble an arshin, I suppose?"

Pierre told her the price.

"Too dear!" Natasha remarked. "How pleased the children will be and

Mamma too! Only you need not have bought me this," she added, unable to

suppress a smile as she gazed admiringly at a gold comb set with pearls,

of a kind then just coming into fashion.

"Adele tempted me: she kept on telling me to buy it," returned Pierre.

"When am I to wear it?" and Natasha stuck it in her coil of hair. "When

I take little Masha into society? Perhaps they will be fashionable again

by then. Well, let's go now."

And collecting the presents they went first to the nursery and then to

the old countess' rooms.

The countess was sitting with her companion Belova, playing grand-

patience as usual, when Pierre and Natasha came into the drawing room

with parcels under their arms.

The countess was now over sixty, was quite gray, and wore a cap with a

frill that surrounded her face. Her face had shriveled, her upper lip

had sunk in, and her eyes were dim.

After the deaths of her son and husband in such rapid succession, she

felt herself a being accidentally forgotten in this world and left

without aim or object for her existence. She ate, drank, slept, or kept

awake, but did not live. Life gave her no new impressions. She wanted

nothing from life but tranquillity, and that tranquillity only death

could give her. But until death came she had to go on living, that is,

to use her vital forces. A peculiarity one sees in very young children

and very old people was particularly evident in her. Her life had no

external aims--only a need to exercise her various functions and

inclinations was apparent. She had to eat, sleep, think, speak, weep,

work, give vent to her anger, and so on, merely because she had a

stomach, a brain, muscles, nerves, and a liver. She did these things not

under any external impulse as people in the full vigor of life do, when

behind the purpose for which they strive that of exercising their

functions remains unnoticed. She talked only because she physically

needed to exercise her tongue and lungs. She cried as a child does,

because her nose had to be cleared, and so on. What for people in their

full vigor is an aim was for her evidently merely a pretext.

Thus in the morning--especially if she had eaten anything rich the day

before--she felt a need of being angry and would choose as the handiest

pretext Belova's deafness.

She would begin to say something to her in a low tone from the other end

of the room.

"It seems a little warmer today, my dear," she would murmur.

And when Belova replied: "Oh yes, they've come," she would mutter

angrily: "O Lord! How stupid and deaf she is!"

Another pretext would be her snuff, which would seem too dry or too damp

or not rubbed fine enough. After these fits of irritability her face

would grow yellow, and her maids knew by infallible symptoms when Belova

would again be deaf, the snuff damp, and the countess' face yellow. Just

as she needed to work off her spleen so she had sometimes to exercise

her still-existing faculty of thinking--and the pretext for that was a

game of patience. When she needed to cry, the deceased count would be

the pretext. When she wanted to be agitated, Nicholas and his health

would be the pretext, and when she felt a need to speak spitefully, the

pretext would be Countess Mary. When her vocal organs needed exercise,

which was usually toward seven o'clock when she had had an after-dinner

rest in a darkened room, the pretext would be the retelling of the same

stories over and over again to the same audience.

The old lady's condition was understood by the whole household though no

one ever spoke of it, and they all made every possible effort to satisfy

her needs. Only by a rare glance exchanged with a sad smile between

Nicholas, Pierre, Natasha, and Countess Mary was the common

understanding of her condition expressed.

But those glances expressed something more: they said that she had

played her part in life, that what they now saw was not her whole self,

that we must all become like her, and that they were glad to yield to

her, to restrain themselves for this once precious being formerly as

full of life as themselves, but now so much to be pitied. "Memento

mori," said these glances.

Only the really heartless, the stupid ones of that household, and the

little children failed to understand this and avoided her.

CHAPTER XIII

When Pierre and his wife entered the drawing room the countess was in

one of her customary states in which she needed the mental exertion of

playing patience, and so--though by force of habit she greeted him with

the words she always used when Pierre or her son returned after an

absence: "High time, my dear, high time! We were all weary of waiting

for you. Well, thank God!" and received her presents with another

customary remark: "It's not the gift that's precious, my dear, but that

you give it to me, an old woman..."--yet it was evident that she was not

pleased by Pierre's arrival at that moment when it diverted her

attention from the unfinished game.

She finished her game of patience and only then examined the presents.

They consisted of a box for cards, of splendid workmanship, a bright-

blue Sevres tea cup with shepherdesses depicted on it and with a lid,

and a gold snuffbox with the count's portrait on the lid which Pierre

had had done by a miniaturist in Petersburg. The countess had long

wished for such a box, but as she did not want to cry just then she

glanced indifferently at the portrait and gave her attention chiefly to

the box for cards.

"Thank you, my dear, you have cheered me up," said she as she always

did. "But best of all you have brought yourself back--for I never saw

anything like it, you ought to give your wife a scolding! What are we to

do with her? She is like a mad woman when you are away. Doesn't see

anything, doesn't remember anything," she went on, repeating her usual

phrases. "Look, Anna Timofeevna," she added to her companion, "see what

a box for cards my son has brought us!"

Belova admired the presents and was delighted with her dress material.

Though Pierre, Natasha, Nicholas, Countess Mary, and Denisov had much to

talk about that they could not discuss before the old countess--not that

anything was hidden from her, but because she had dropped so far

behindhand in many things that had they begun to converse in her

presence they would have had to answer inopportune questions and to

repeat what they had already told her many times: that so-and-so was

dead and so-and-so was married, which she would again be unable to

remember--yet they sat at tea round the samovar in the drawing room from

habit, and Pierre answered the countess' questions as to whether Prince

Vasili had aged and whether Countess Mary Alexeevna had sent greetings

and still thought of them, and other matters that interested no one and

to which she herself was indifferent.

Conversation of this kind, interesting to no one yet unavoidable,

continued all through teatime. All the grown-up members of the family

were assembled near the round tea table at which Sonya presided beside

the samovar. The children with their tutors and governesses had had tea

and their voices were audible from the next room. At tea all sat in

their accustomed places: Nicholas beside the stove at a small table

where his tea was handed to him; Milka, the old gray borzoi bitch

(daughter of the first Milka), with a quite gray face and large black

eyes that seemed more prominent than ever, lay on the armchair beside

him; Denisov, whose curly hair, mustache, and whiskers had turned half

gray, sat beside countess Mary with his general's tunic unbuttoned;

Pierre sat between his wife and the old countess. He spoke of what he

knew might interest the old lady and that she could understand. He told

her of external social events and of the people who had formed the

circle of her contemporaries and had once been a real, living, and

distinct group, but who were now for the most part scattered about the

world and like herself were garnering the last ears of the harvests they

had sown in earlier years. But to the old countess those contemporaries

of hers seemed to be the only serious and real society. Natasha saw by

Pierre's animation that his visit had been interesting and that he had

much to tell them but dare not say it before the old countess. Denisov,

not being a member of the family, did not understand Pierre's caution

and being, as a malcontent, much interested in what was occurring in

Petersburg, kept urging Pierre to tell them about what had happened in

the Semenovsk regiment, then about Arakcheev, and then about the Bible

Society. Once or twice Pierre was carried away and began to speak of

these things, but Nicholas and Natasha always brought him back to the

health of Prince Ivan and Countess Mary Alexeevna.

"Well, and all this idiocy--Gossner and Tatawinova?" Denisov asked. "Is

that weally still going on?"

"Going on?" Pierre exclaimed. "Why more than ever! The Bible Society is

the whole government now!"

"What is that, mon cher ami?" asked the countess, who had finished her

tea and evidently needed a pretext for being angry after her meal. "What

are you saying about the government? I don't understand."

"Well, you know, Maman," Nicholas interposed, knowing how to translate

things into his mother's language, "Prince Alexander Golitsyn has

founded a society and in consequence has great influence, they say."

"Arakcheev and Golitsyn," incautiously remarked Pierre, "are now the

whole government! And what a government! They see treason everywhere and

are afraid of everything."

"Well, and how is Prince Alexander to blame? He is a most estimable man.

I used to meet him at Mary Antonovna's," said the countess in an

offended tone; and still more offended that they all remained silent,

she went on: "Nowadays everyone finds fault. A Gospel Society! Well, and

what harm is there in that?" and she rose (everybody else got up too)

and with a severe expression sailed back to her table in the sitting

room.

The melancholy silence that followed was broken by the sounds of the

children's voices and laughter from the next room. Evidently some jolly

excitement was going on there.

"Finished, finished!" little Natasha's gleeful yell rose above them all.

Pierre exchanged glances with Countess Mary and Nicholas (Natasha he

never lost sight of) and smiled happily.

"That's delightful music!" said he.

"It means that Anna Makarovna has finished her stocking," said Countess

Mary.

"Oh, I'll go and see," said Pierre, jumping up. "You know," he added,

stopping at the door, "why I'm especially fond of that music? It is

always the first thing that tells me all is well. When I was driving

here today, the nearer I got to the house the more anxious I grew. As I

entered the anteroom I heard Andrusha's peals of laughter and that meant

that all was well."

"I know! I know that feeling," said Nicholas. "But I mustn't go there--

those stockings are to be a surprise for me."

Pierre went to the children, and the shouting and laughter grew still

louder.

"Come, Anna Makarovna," Pierre's voice was heard saying, "come here into

the middle of the room and at the word of command, 'One, two,' and when

I say 'three'... You stand here, and you in my arms--well now! One,

two!..." said Pierre, and a silence followed: "three!" and a rapturously

breathless cry of children's voices filled the room. "Two, two!" they

shouted.

This meant two stockings, which by a secret process known only to

herself Anna Makarovna used to knit at the same time on the same

needles, and which, when they were ready, she always triumphantly drew,

one out of the other, in the children's presence.

CHAPTER XIV

Soon after this the children came in to say good night. They kissed

everyone, the tutors and governesses made their bows, and they went out.

Only young Nicholas and his tutor remained. Dessalles whispered to the

boy to come downstairs.

"No, Monsieur Dessalles, I will ask my aunt to let me stay," replied

Nicholas Bolkonski also in a whisper.

"Ma tante, please let me stay," said he, going up to his aunt.

His face expressed entreaty, agitation, and ecstasy. Countess Mary

glanced at him and turned to Pierre.

"When you are here he can't tear himself away," she said.

"I will bring him to you directly, Monsieur Dessalles. Good night!" said

Pierre, giving his hand to the Swiss tutor, and he turned to young

Nicholas with a smile. "You and I haven't seen anything of one another

yet... How like he is growing, Mary!" he added, addressing Countess

Mary.

"Like my father?" asked the boy, flushing crimson and looking up at

Pierre with bright, ecstatic eyes.

Pierre nodded, and went on with what he had been saying when the

children had interrupted. Countess Mary sat down doing woolwork; Natasha

did not take her eyes off her husband. Nicholas and Denisov rose, asked

for their pipes, smoked, went to fetch more tea from Sonya--who sat

weary but resolute at the samovar--and questioned Pierre. The curly-

headed, delicate boy sat with shining eyes unnoticed in a corner,

starting every now and then and muttering something to himself, and

evidently experiencing a new and powerful emotion as he turned his curly

head, with his thin neck exposed by his turn-down collar, toward the

place where Pierre sat.

The conversation turned on the contemporary gossip about those in power,

in which most people see the chief interest of home politics. Denisov,

dissatisfied with the government on account of his own disappointments

in the service, heard with pleasure of the things done in Petersburg

which seemed to him stupid, and made forcible and sharp comments on what

Pierre told them.

"One used to have to be a German--now one must dance with Tatawinova and

Madame Kwudener, and wead Ecka'tshausen and the bwethwen. Oh, they

should let that fine fellow Bonaparte loose--he'd knock all this

nonsense out of them! Fancy giving the command of the Semenov wegiment

to a fellow like that Schwa'tz!" he cried.

Nicholas, though free from Denisov's readiness to find fault with

everything, also thought that discussion of the government was a very

serious and weighty matter, and the fact that A had been appointed

Minister of This and B Governor General of That, and that the Emperor

had said so-and-so and this minister so-and-so, seemed to him very

important. And so he thought it necessary to take an interest in these

things and to question Pierre. The questions put by these two kept the

conversation from changing its ordinary character of gossip about the

higher government circles.

But Natasha, knowing all her husband's ways and ideas, saw that he had

long been wishing but had been unable to divert the conversation to

another channel and express his own deeply felt idea for the sake of

which he had gone to Petersburg to consult with his new friend Prince

Theodore, and she helped him by asking how his affairs with Prince

Theodore had gone.

"What was it about?" asked Nicholas.

"Always the same thing," said Pierre, looking round at his listeners.

"Everybody sees that things are going so badly that they cannot be

allowed to go on so and that it is the duty of all decent men to

counteract it as far as they can."

"What can decent men do?" Nicholas inquired, frowning slightly. "What

can be done?"

"Why, this..."

"Come into my study," said Nicholas.

Natasha, who had long expected to be fetched to nurse her baby, now

heard the nurse calling her and went to the nursery. Countess Mary

followed her. The men went into the study and little Nicholas Bolkonski

followed them unnoticed by his uncle and sat down at the writing table

in a shady corner by the window.

"Well, what would you do?" asked Denisov.

"Always some fantastic schemes," said Nicholas.

"Why this," began Pierre, not sitting down but pacing the room,

sometimes stopping short, gesticulating, and lisping: "the position in

Petersburg is this: the Emperor does not look into anything. He has

abandoned himself altogether to this mysticism" (Pierre could not

tolerate mysticism in anyone now). "He seeks only for peace, and only

these people sans foi ni loi \* can give it him--people who recklessly

hack at and strangle everything--Magnitski, Arakcheev, and tutti

quanti.... You will agree that if you did not look after your estates

yourself but only wanted a quiet life, the harsher your steward was the

more readily your object might be attained," he said to Nicholas.

\* Without faith or law.

"Well, what does that lead up to?" said Nicholas.

"Well, everything is going to ruin! Robbery in the law courts, in the

army nothing but flogging, drilling, and Military Settlements; the

people are tortured, enlightenment is suppressed. All that is young and

honest is crushed! Everyone sees that this cannot go on. Everything is

strained to such a degree that it will certainly break," said Pierre (as

those who examine the actions of any government have always said since

governments began). "I told them just one thing in Petersburg."

"Told whom?"

"Well, you know whom," said Pierre, with a meaning glance from under his

brows. "Prince Theodore and all those. To encourage culture and

philanthropy is all very well of course. The aim is excellent but in the

present circumstances something else is needed."

At that moment Nicholas noticed the presence of his nephew. His face

darkened and he went up to the boy.

"Why are you here?"

"Why? Let him be," said Pierre, taking Nicholas by the arm and

continuing. "That is not enough, I told them. Something else is needed.

When you stand expecting the overstrained string to snap at any moment,

when everyone is expecting the inevitable catastrophe, as many as

possible must join hands as closely as they can to withstand the general

calamity. Everything that is young and strong is being enticed away and

depraved. One is lured by women, another by honors, a third by ambition

or money, and they go over to that camp. No independent men, such as you

or I, are left. What I say is widen the scope of our society, let the

mot d'ordre be not virtue alone but independence and action as well!"

Nicholas, who had left his nephew, irritably pushed up an armchair, sat

down in it, and listened to Pierre, coughing discontentedly and frowning

more and more.

"But action with what aim?" he cried. "And what position will you adopt

toward the government?"

"Why, the position of assistants. The society need not be secret if the

government allows it. Not merely is it not hostile to government, but it

is a society of true conservatives--a society of gentlemen in the full

meaning of that word. It is only to prevent some Pugachev or other from

killing my children and yours, and Arakcheev from sending me off to some

Military Settlement. We join hands only for the public welfare and the

general safety."

"Yes, but it's a secret society and therefore a hostile and harmful one

which can only cause harm."

"Why? Did the Tugendbund which saved Europe" (they did not then venture

to suggest that Russia had saved Europe) "do any harm? The Tugendbund is

an alliance of virtue: it is love, mutual help... it is what Christ

preached on the Cross."

Natasha, who had come in during the conversation, looked joyfully at her

husband. It was not what he was saying that pleased her--that did not

even interest her, for it seemed to her that was all extremely simple

and that she had known it a long time (it seemed so to her because she

knew that it sprang from Pierre's whole soul), but it was his animated

and enthusiastic appearance that made her glad.

The boy with the thin neck stretching out from the turn-down collar--

whom everyone had forgotten--gazed at Pierre with even greater and more

rapturous joy. Every word of Pierre's burned into his heart, and with a

nervous movement of his fingers he unconsciously broke the sealing wax

and quill pens his hands came upon on his uncle's table.

"It is not at all what you suppose; but that is what the German

Tugendbund was, and what I am proposing."

"No, my fwiend! The Tugendbund is all vewy well for the sausage eaters,

but I don't understand it and can't even pwonounce it," interposed

Denisov in a loud and resolute voice. "I agwee that evewything here is

wotten and howwible, but the Tugendbund I don't understand. If we're not

satisfied, let us have a bunt of our own. That's all wight. Je suis

vot'e homme!" \*

\* "I'm your man."

Pierre smiled, Natasha began to laugh, but Nicholas knitted his brows

still more and began proving to Pierre that there was no prospect of any

great change and that all the danger he spoke of existed only in his

imagination. Pierre maintained the contrary, and as his mental faculties

were greater and more resourceful, Nicholas felt himself cornered. This

made him still angrier, for he was fully convinced, not by reasoning but

by something within him stronger than reason, of the justice of his

opinion.

"I will tell you this," he said, rising and trying with nervously

twitching fingers to prop up his pipe in a corner, but finally

abandoning the attempt. "I can't prove it to you. You say that

everything here is rotten and that an overthrow is coming: I don't see

it. But you also say that our oath of allegiance is a conditional

matter, and to that I reply: 'You are my best friend, as you know, but

if you formed a secret society and began working against the government-

-be it what it may--I know it is my duty to obey the government. And if

Arakcheev ordered me to lead a squadron against you and cut you down, I

should not hesitate an instant, but should do it.' And you may argue

about that as you like!"

An awkward silence followed these words. Natasha was the first to speak,

defending her husband and attacking her brother. Her defense was weak

and inapt but she attained her object. The conversation was resumed, and

no longer in the unpleasantly hostile tone of Nicholas' last remark.

When they all got up to go in to supper, little Nicholas Bolkonski went

up to Pierre, pale and with shining, radiant eyes.

"Uncle Pierre, you... no... If Papa were alive... would he agree with

you?" he asked.

And Pierre suddenly realized what a special, independent, complex, and

powerful process of thought and feeling must have been going on in this

boy during that conversation, and remembering all he had said he

regretted that the lad should have heard him. He had, however, to give

him an answer.

"Yes, I think so," he said reluctantly, and left the study.

The lad looked down and seemed now for the first time to notice what he

had done to the things on the table. He flushed and went up to Nicholas.

"Uncle, forgive me, I did that... unintentionally," he said, pointing to

the broken sealing wax and pens.

Nicholas started angrily.

"All right, all right," he said, throwing the bits under the table.

And evidently suppressing his vexation with difficulty, he turned away

from the boy.

"You ought not to have been here at all," he said.

CHAPTER XV

The conversation at supper was not about politics or societies, but

turned on the subject Nicholas liked best--recollections of 1812.

Denisov started these and Pierre was particularly agreeable and amusing

about them. The family separated on the most friendly terms.

After supper Nicholas, having undressed in his study and given

instructions to the steward who had been waiting for him, went to the

bedroom in his dressing gown, where he found his wife still at her

table, writing.

"What are you writing, Mary?" Nicholas asked.

Countess Mary blushed. She was afraid that what she was writing would

not be understood or approved by her husband.

She had wanted to conceal what she was writing from him, but at the same

time was glad he had surprised her at it and that she would now have to

tell him.

"A diary, Nicholas," she replied, handing him a blue exercise book

filled with her firm, bold writing.

"A diary?" Nicholas repeated with a shade of irony, and he took up the

book.

It was in French.

December 4. Today when Andrusha (her eldest boy) woke up he did not wish

to dress and Mademoiselle Louise sent for me. He was naughty and

obstinate. I tried threats, but he only grew angrier. Then I took the

matter in hand: I left him alone and began with nurse's help to get the

other children up, telling him that I did not love him. For a long time

he was silent, as if astonished, then he jumped out of bed, ran to me in

his shirt, and sobbed so that I could not calm him for a long time. It

was plain that what troubled him most was that he had grieved me.

Afterwards in the evening when I gave him his ticket, he again began

crying piteously and kissing me. One can do anything with him by

tenderness.

"What is a 'ticket'?" Nicholas inquired.

"I have begun giving the elder ones marks every evening, showing how

they have behaved."

Nicholas looked into the radiant eyes that were gazing at him, and

continued to turn over the pages and read. In the diary was set down

everything in the children's lives that seemed noteworthy to their

mother as showing their characters or suggesting general reflections on

educational methods. They were for the most part quite insignificant

trifles, but did not seem so to the mother or to the father either, now

that he read this diary about his children for the first time.

Under the date "5" was entered:

Mitya was naughty at table. Papa said he was to have no pudding. He had

none, but looked so unhappily and greedily at the others while they were

eating! I think that punishment by depriving children of sweets only

develops their greediness. Must tell Nicholas this.

Nicholas put down the book and looked at his wife. The radiant eyes

gazed at him questioningly: would he approve or disapprove of her diary?

There could be no doubt not only of his approval but also of his

admiration for his wife.

Perhaps it need not be done so pedantically, thought Nicholas, or even

done at all, but this untiring, continual spiritual effort of which the

sole aim was the children's moral welfare delighted him. Had Nicholas

been able to analyze his feelings he would have found that his steady,

tender, and proud love of his wife rested on his feeling of wonder at

her spirituality and at the lofty moral world, almost beyond his reach,

in which she had her being.

He was proud of her intelligence and goodness, recognized his own

insignificance beside her in the spiritual world, and rejoiced all the

more that she with such a soul not only belonged to him but was part of

himself.

"I quite, quite approve, my dearest!" said he with a significant look,

and after a short pause he added: "And I behaved badly today. You

weren't in the study. We began disputing--Pierre and I--and I lost my

temper. But he is impossible: such a child! I don't know what would

become of him if Natasha didn't keep him in hand.... Have you any idea

why he went to Petersburg? They have formed..."

"Yes, I know," said Countess Mary. "Natasha told me."

"Well, then, you know," Nicholas went on, growing hot at the mere

recollection of their discussion, "he wanted to convince me that it is

every honest man's duty to go against the government, and that the oath

of allegiance and duty... I am sorry you weren't there. They all fell on

me--Denisov and Natasha... Natasha is absurd. How she rules over him!

And yet there need only be a discussion and she has no words of her own

but only repeats his sayings..." added Nicholas, yielding to that

irresistible inclination which tempts us to judge those nearest and

dearest to us. He forgot that what he was saying about Natasha could

have been applied word for word to himself in relation to his wife.

"Yes, I have noticed that," said Countess Mary.

"When I told him that duty and the oath were above everything, he

started proving goodness knows what! A pity you were not there--what

would you have said?"

"As I see it you were quite right, and I told Natasha so. Pierre says

everybody is suffering, tortured, and being corrupted, and that it is

our duty to help our neighbor. Of course he is right there," said

Countess Mary, "but he forgets that we have other duties nearer to us,

duties indicated to us by God Himself, and that though we might expose

ourselves to risks we must not risk our children."

"Yes, that's it! That's just what I said to him," put in Nicholas, who

fancied he really had said it. "But they insisted on their own view:

love of one's neighbor and Christianity--and all this in the presence of

young Nicholas, who had gone into my study and broke all my things."

"Ah, Nicholas, do you know I am often troubled about little Nicholas,"

said Countess Mary. "He is such an exceptional boy. I am afraid I

neglect him in favor of my own: we all have children and relations while

he has no one. He is constantly alone with his thoughts."

"Well, I don't think you need reproach yourself on his account. All that

the fondest mother could do for her son you have done and are doing for

him, and of course I am glad of it. He is a fine lad, a fine lad! This

evening he listened to Pierre in a sort of trance, and fancy--as we were

going in to supper I looked and he had broken everything on my table to

bits, and he told me of it himself at once! I never knew him to tell an

untruth. A fine lad, a fine lad!" repeated Nicholas, who at heart was

not fond of Nicholas Bolkonski but was always anxious to recognize that

he was a fine lad.

"Still, I am not the same as his own mother," said Countess Mary. "I

feel I am not the same and it troubles me. A wonderful boy, but I am

dreadfully afraid for him. It would be good for him to have companions."

"Well it won't be for long. Next summer I'll take him to Petersburg,"

said Nicholas. "Yes, Pierre always was a dreamer and always will be," he

continued, returning to the talk in the study which had evidently

disturbed him. "Well, what business is it of mine what goes on there--

whether Arakcheev is bad, and all that? What business was it of mine

when I married and was so deep in debt that I was threatened with

prison, and had a mother who could not see or understand it? And then

there are you and the children and our affairs. Is it for my own

pleasure that I am at the farm or in the office from morning to night?

No, but I know I must work to comfort my mother, to repay you, and not

to leave the children such beggars as I was."

Countess Mary wanted to tell him that man does not live by bread alone

and that he attached too much importance to these matters. But she knew

she must not say this and that it would be useless to do so. She only

took his hand and kissed it. He took this as a sign of approval and a

confirmation of his thoughts, and after a few minutes' reflection

continued to think aloud.

"You know, Mary, today Elias Mitrofanych" (this was his overseer) "came

back from the Tambov estate and told me they are already offering eighty

thousand rubles for the forest."

And with an eager face Nicholas began to speak of the possibility of

repurchasing Otradnoe before long, and added: "Another ten years of life

and I shall leave the children... in an excellent position."

Countess Mary listened to her husband and understood all that he told

her. She knew that when he thought aloud in this way he would sometimes

ask her what he had been saying, and be vexed if he noticed that she had

been thinking about something else. But she had to force herself to

attend, for what he was saying did not interest her at all. She looked

at him and did not think, but felt, about something different. She felt

a submissive tender love for this man who would never understand all

that she understood, and this seemed to make her love for him still

stronger and added a touch of passionate tenderness. Besides this

feeling which absorbed her altogether and hindered her from following

the details of her husband's plans, thoughts that had no connection with

what he was saying flitted through her mind. She thought of her nephew.

Her husband's account of the boy's agitation while Pierre was speaking

struck her forcibly, and various traits of his gentle, sensitive

character recurred to her mind; and while thinking of her nephew she

thought also of her own children. She did not compare them with him, but

compared her feeling for them with her feeling for him, and felt with

regret that there was something lacking in her feeling for young

Nicholas.

Sometimes it seemed to her that this difference arose from the

difference in their ages, but she felt herself to blame toward him and

promised in her heart to do better and to accomplish the impossible--in

this life to love her husband, her children, little Nicholas, and all

her neighbors, as Christ loved mankind. Countess Mary's soul always

strove toward the infinite, the eternal, and the absolute, and could

therefore never be at peace. A stern expression of the lofty, secret

suffering of a soul burdened by the body appeared on her face. Nicholas

gazed at her. "O God! What will become of us if she dies, as I always

fear when her face is like that?" thought he, and placing himself before

the icon he began to say his evening prayers.

CHAPTER XVI

Natasha and Pierre, left alone, also began to talk as only a husband and

wife can talk, that is, with extraordinary clearness and rapidity,

understanding and expressing each other's thoughts in ways contrary to

all rules of logic, without premises, deductions, or conclusions, and in

a quite peculiar way. Natasha was so used to this kind of talk with her

husband that for her it was the surest sign of something being wrong

between them if Pierre followed a line of logical reasoning. When he

began proving anything, or talking argumentatively and calmly and she,

led on by his example, began to do the same, she knew that they were on

the verge of a quarrel.

From the moment they were alone and Natasha came up to him with wide-

open happy eyes, and quickly seizing his head pressed it to her bosom,

saying: "Now you are all mine, mine! You won't escape!"--from that

moment this conversation began, contrary to all the laws of logic and

contrary to them because quite different subjects were talked about at

one and the same time. This simultaneous discussion of many topics did

not prevent a clear understanding but on the contrary was the surest

sign that they fully understood one another.

Just as in a dream when all is uncertain, unreasoning, and

contradictory, except the feeling that guides the dream, so in this

intercourse contrary to all laws of reason, the words themselves were

not consecutive and clear but only the feeling that prompted them.

Natasha spoke to Pierre about her brother's life and doings, of how she

had suffered and lacked life during his own absence, and of how she was

fonder than ever of Mary, and how Mary was in every way better than

herself. In saying this Natasha was sincere in acknowledging Mary's

superiority, but at the same time by saying it she made a demand on

Pierre that he should, all the same, prefer her to Mary and to all other

women, and that now, especially after having seen many women in

Petersburg, he should tell her so afresh.

Pierre, answering Natasha's words, told her how intolerable it had been

for him to meet ladies at dinners and balls in Petersburg.

"I have quite lost the knack of talking to ladies," he said. "It was

simply dull. Besides, I was very busy."

Natasha looked intently at him and went on:

"Mary is so splendid," she said. "How she understands children! It is as

if she saw straight into their souls. Yesterday, for instance, Mitya was

naughty..."

"How like his father he is," Pierre interjected.

Natasha knew why he mentioned Mitya's likeness to Nicholas: the

recollection of his dispute with his brother-in-law was unpleasant and

he wanted to know what Natasha thought of it.

"Nicholas has the weakness of never agreeing with anything not generally

accepted. But I understand that you value what opens up a fresh line,"

said she, repeating words Pierre had once uttered.

"No, the chief point is that to Nicholas ideas and discussions are an

amusement--almost a pastime," said Pierre. "For instance, he is

collecting a library and has made it a rule not to buy a new book till

he has read what he had already bought--Sismondi and Rousseau and

Montesquieu," he added with a smile. "You know how much I..." he began

to soften down what he had said; but Natasha interrupted him to show

that this was unnecessary.

"So you say ideas are an amusement to him...."

"Yes, and for me nothing else is serious. All the time in Petersburg I

saw everyone as in a dream. When I am taken up by a thought, all else is

mere amusement."

"Ah, I'm so sorry I wasn't there when you met the children," said

Natasha. "Which was most delighted? Lisa, I'm sure."

"Yes," Pierre replied, and went on with what was in his mind. "Nicholas

says we ought not to think. But I can't help it. Besides, when I was in

Petersburg I felt (I can say this to you) that the whole affair would go

to pieces without me--everyone was pulling his own way. But I succeeded

in uniting them all; and then my idea is so clear and simple. You see, I

don't say that we ought to oppose this and that. We may be mistaken.

What I say is: 'Join hands, you who love the right, and let there be but

one banner--that of active virtue.' Prince Sergey is a fine fellow and

clever."

Natasha would have had no doubt as to the greatness of Pierre's idea,

but one thing disconcerted her. "Can a man so important and necessary to

society be also my husband? How did this happen?" She wished to express

this doubt to him. "Now who could decide whether he is really cleverer

than all the others?" she asked herself, and passed in review all those

whom Pierre most respected. Judging by what he had said there was no one

he had respected so highly as Platon Karataev.

"Do you know what I am thinking about?" she asked. "About Platon

Karataev. Would he have approved of you now, do you think?"

Pierre was not at all surprised at this question. He understood his

wife's line of thought.

"Platon Karataev?" he repeated, and pondered, evidently sincerely trying

to imagine Karataev's opinion on the subject. "He would not have

understood... yet perhaps he would."

"I love you awfully!" Natasha suddenly said. "Awfully, awfully!"

"No, he would not have approved," said Pierre, after reflection. "What

he would have approved of is our family life. He was always so anxious

to find seemliness, happiness, and peace in everything, and I should

have been proud to let him see us. There now--you talk of my absence,

but you wouldn't believe what a special feeling I have for you after a

separation...."

"Yes, I should think..." Natasha began.

"No, it's not that. I never leave off loving you. And one couldn't love

more, but this is something special.... Yes, of course-" he did not

finish because their eyes meeting said the rest.

"What nonsense it is," Natasha suddenly exclaimed, "about honeymoons,

and that the greatest happiness is at first! On the contrary, now is the

best of all. If only you did not go away! Do you remember how we

quarreled? And it was always my fault. Always mine. And what we

quarreled about--I don't even remember!"

"Always about the same thing," said Pierre with a smile. "Jealo..."

"Don't say it! I can't bear it!" Natasha cried, and her eyes glittered

coldly and vindictively. "Did you see her?" she added, after a pause.

"No, and if I had I shouldn't have recognized her."

They were silent for a while.

"Oh, do you know? While you were talking in the study I was looking at

you," Natasha began, evidently anxious to disperse the cloud that had

come over them. "You are as like him as two peas--like the boy." (She

meant her little son.) "Oh, it's time to go to him.... The milk's

come.... But I'm sorry to leave you."

They were silent for a few seconds. Then suddenly turning to one another

at the same time they both began to speak. Pierre began with self-

satisfaction and enthusiasm, Natasha with a quiet, happy smile. Having

interrupted one another they both stopped to let the other continue.

"No. What did you say? Go on, go on."

"No, you go on, I was talking nonsense," said Natasha.

Pierre finished what he had begun. It was the sequel to his complacent

reflections on his success in Petersburg. At that moment it seemed to

him that he was chosen to give a new direction to the whole of Russian

society and to the whole world.

"I only wished to say that ideas that have great results are always

simple ones. My whole idea is that if vicious people are united and

constitute a power, then honest folk must do the same. Now that's simple

enough."

"Yes."

"And what were you going to say?"

"I? Only nonsense."

"But all the same?"

"Oh nothing, only a trifle," said Natasha, smilingly still more

brightly. "I only wanted to tell you about Petya: today nurse was coming

to take him from me, and he laughed, shut his eyes, and clung to me. I'm

sure he thought he was hiding. Awfully sweet! There, now he's crying.

Well, good-by!" and she left the room.

Meanwhile downstairs in young Nicholas Bolkonski's bedroom a little lamp

was burning as usual. (The boy was afraid of the dark and they could not

cure him of it.) Dessalles slept propped up on four pillows and his

Roman nose emitted sounds of rhythmic snoring. Little Nicholas, who had

just waked up in a cold perspiration, sat up in bed and gazed before him

with wide-open eyes. He had awaked from a terrible dream. He had dreamed

that he and Uncle Pierre, wearing helmets such as were depicted in his

Plutarch, were leading a huge army. The army was made up of white

slanting lines that filled the air like the cobwebs that float about in

autumn and which Dessalles called les fils de la Vierge. In front was

Glory, which was similar to those threads but rather thicker. He and

Pierre were borne along lightly and joyously, nearer and nearer to their

goal. Suddenly the threads that moved them began to slacken and become

entangled and it grew difficult to move. And Uncle Nicholas stood before

them in a stern and threatening attitude.

"Have you done this?" he said, pointing to some broken sealing wax and

pens. "I loved you, but I have orders from Arakcheev and will kill the

first of you who moves forward." Little Nicholas turned to look at

Pierre but Pierre was no longer there. In his place was his father--

Prince Andrew--and his father had neither shape nor form, but he

existed, and when little Nicholas perceived him he grew faint with love:

he felt himself powerless, limp, and formless. His father caressed and

pitied him. But Uncle Nicholas came nearer and nearer to them. Terror

seized young Nicholas and he awoke.

"My father!" he thought. (Though there were two good portraits of Prince

Andrew in the house, Nicholas never imagined him in human form.) "My

father has been with me and caressed me. He approved of me and of Uncle

Pierre. Whatever he may tell me, I will do it. Mucius Scaevola burned

his hand. Why should not the same sort of thing happen to me? I know

they want me to learn. And I will learn. But someday I shall have

finished learning, and then I will do something. I only pray God that

something may happen to me such as happened to Plutarch's men, and I

will act as they did. I will do better. Everyone shall know me, love me,

and be delighted with me!" And suddenly his bosom heaved with sobs and

he began to cry.

"Are you ill?" he heard Dessalles' voice asking.

"No," answered Nicholas, and lay back on his pillow.

"He is good and kind and I am fond of him!" he thought of Dessalles.

"But Uncle Pierre! Oh, what a wonderful man he is! And my father? Oh,

Father, Father! Yes, I will do something with which even he would be

satisfied...."

SECOND EPILOGUE

CHAPTER I

History is the life of nations and of humanity. To seize and put into

words, to describe directly the life of humanity or even of a single

nation, appears impossible.

The ancient historians all employed one and the same method to describe

and seize the apparently elusive--the life of a people. They described

the activity of individuals who ruled the people, and regarded the

activity of those men as representing the activity of the whole nation.

The question: how did individuals make nations act as they wished and by

what was the will of these individuals themselves guided? the ancients

met by recognizing a divinity which subjected the nations to the will of

a chosen man, and guided the will of that chosen man so as to accomplish

ends that were predestined.

For the ancients these questions were solved by a belief in the direct

participation of the Deity in human affairs.

Modern history, in theory, rejects both these principles.

It would seem that having rejected the belief of the ancients in man's

subjection to the Deity and in a predetermined aim toward which nations

are led, modern history should study not the manifestations of power but

the causes that produce it. But modern history has not done this. Having

in theory rejected the view held by the ancients, it still follows them

in practice.

Instead of men endowed with divine authority and directly guided by the

will of God, modern history has given us either heroes endowed with

extraordinary, superhuman capacities, or simply men of very various

kinds, from monarchs to journalists, who lead the masses. Instead of the

former divinely appointed aims of the Jewish, Greek, or Roman nations,

which ancient historians regarded as representing the progress of

humanity, modern history has postulated its own aims--the welfare of the

French, German, or English people, or, in its highest abstraction, the

welfare and civilization of humanity in general, by which is usually

meant that of the peoples occupying a small northwesterly portion of a

large continent.

Modern history has rejected the beliefs of the ancients without

replacing them by a new conception, and the logic of the situation has

obliged the historians, after they had apparently rejected the divine

authority of the kings and the "fate" of the ancients, to reach the same

conclusion by another road, that is, to recognize (1) nations guided by

individual men, and (2) the existence of a known aim to which these

nations and humanity at large are tending.

At the basis of the works of all the modern historians from Gibbon to

Buckle, despite their seeming disagreements and the apparent novelty of

their outlooks, lie those two old, unavoidable assumptions.

In the first place the historian describes the activity of individuals

who in his opinion have directed humanity (one historian considers only

monarchs, generals, and ministers as being such men, while another

includes also orators, learned men, reformers, philosophers, and poets).

Secondly, it is assumed that the goal toward which humanity is being led

is known to the historians: to one of them this goal is the greatness of

the Roman, Spanish, or French realm; to another it is liberty, equality,

and a certain kind of civilization of a small corner of the world called

Europe.

In 1789 a ferment arises in Paris; it grows, spreads, and is expressed

by a movement of peoples from west to east. Several times it moves

eastward and collides with a countermovement from the east westward. In

1812 it reaches its extreme limit, Moscow, and then, with remarkable

symmetry, a countermovement occurs from east to west, attracting to it,

as the first movement had done, the nations of middle Europe. The

counter movement reaches the starting point of the first movement in the

west--Paris--and subsides.

During that twenty-year period an immense number of fields were left

untilled, houses were burned, trade changed its direction, millions of

men migrated, were impoverished, or were enriched, and millions of

Christian men professing the law of love of their fellows slew one

another.

What does all this mean? Why did it happen? What made those people burn

houses and slay their fellow men? What were the causes of these events?

What force made men act so? These are the instinctive, plain, and most

legitimate questions humanity asks itself when it encounters the

monuments and tradition of that period.

For a reply to these questions the common sense of mankind turns to the

science of history, whose aim is to enable nations and humanity to know

themselves.

If history had retained the conception of the ancients it would have

said that God, to reward or punish his people, gave Napoleon power and

directed his will to the fulfillment of the divine ends, and that reply

would have been clear and complete. One might believe or disbelieve in

the divine significance of Napoleon, but for anyone believing in it

there would have been nothing unintelligible in the history of that

period, nor would there have been any contradictions.

But modern history cannot give that reply. Science does not admit the

conception of the ancients as to the direct participation of the Deity

in human affairs, and therefore history ought to give other answers.

Modern history replying to these questions says: you want to know what

this movement means, what caused it, and what force produced these

events? Then listen:

"Louis XIV was a very proud and self-confident man; he had such and such

mistresses and such and such ministers and he ruled France badly. His

descendants were weak men and they too ruled France badly. And they had

such and such favorites and such and such mistresses. Moreover, certain

men wrote some books at that time. At the end of the eighteenth century

there were a couple of dozen men in Paris who began to talk about all

men being free and equal. This caused people all over France to begin to

slash at and drown one another. They killed the king and many other

people. At that time there was in France a man of genius--Napoleon. He

conquered everybody everywhere--that is, he killed many people because

he was a great genius. And for some reason he went to kill Africans, and

killed them so well and was so cunning and wise that when he returned to

France he ordered everybody to obey him, and they all obeyed him. Having

become an Emperor he again went out to kill people in Italy, Austria,

and Prussia. And there too he killed a great many. In Russia there was

an Emperor, Alexander, who decided to restore order in Europe and

therefore fought against Napoleon. In 1807 he suddenly made friends with

him, but in 1811 they again quarreled and again began killing many

people. Napoleon led six hundred thousand men into Russia and captured

Moscow; then he suddenly ran away from Moscow, and the Emperor

Alexander, helped by the advice of Stein and others, united Europe to

arm against the disturber of its peace. All Napoleon's allies suddenly

became his enemies and their forces advanced against the fresh forces he

raised. The Allies defeated Napoleon, entered Paris, forced Napoleon to

abdicate, and sent him to the island of Elba, not depriving him of the

title of Emperor and showing him every respect, though five years before

and one year later they all regarded him as an outlaw and a brigand.

Then Louis XVIII, who till then had been the laughingstock both of the

French and the Allies, began to reign. And Napoleon, shedding tears

before his Old Guards, renounced the throne and went into exile. Then

the skillful statesmen and diplomatists (especially Talleyrand, who

managed to sit down in a particular chair before anyone else and thereby

extended the frontiers of France) talked in Vienna and by these

conversations made the nations happy or unhappy. Suddenly the

diplomatists and monarchs nearly quarreled and were on the point of

again ordering their armies to kill one another, but just then Napoleon

arrived in France with a battalion, and the French, who had been hating

him, immediately all submitted to him. But the Allied monarchs were

angry at this and went to fight the French once more. And they defeated

the genius Napoleon and, suddenly recognizing him as a brigand, sent him

to the island of St. Helena. And the exile, separated from the beloved

France so dear to his heart, died a lingering death on that rock and

bequeathed his great deeds to posterity. But in Europe a reaction

occurred and the sovereigns once again all began to oppress their

subjects."

It would be a mistake to think that this is ironic--a caricature of the

historical accounts. On the contrary it is a very mild expression of the

contradictory replies, not meeting the questions, which all the

historians give, from the compilers of memoirs and the histories of

separate states to the writers of general histories and the new

histories of the culture of that period.

The strangeness and absurdity of these replies arise from the fact that

modern history, like a deaf man, answers questions no one has asked.

If the purpose of history be to give a description of the movement of

humanity and of the peoples, the first question--in the absence of a

reply to which all the rest will be incomprehensible--is: what is the

power that moves peoples? To this, modern history laboriously replies

either that Napoleon was a great genius, or that Louis XIV was very

proud, or that certain writers wrote certain books.

All that may be so and mankind is ready to agree with it, but it is not

what was asked. All that would be interesting if we recognized a divine

power based on itself and always consistently directing its nations

through Napoleons, Louis-es, and writers; but we do not acknowledge such

a power, and therefore before speaking about Napoleons, Louis-es, and

authors, we ought to be shown the connection existing between these men

and the movement of the nations.

If instead of a divine power some other force has appeared, it should be

explained in what this new force consists, for the whole interest of

history lies precisely in that force.

History seems to assume that this force is self-evident and known to

everyone. But in spite of every desire to regard it as known, anyone

reading many historical works cannot help doubting whether this new

force, so variously understood by the historians themselves, is really

quite well known to everybody.

CHAPTER II

What force moves the nations?

Biographical historians and historians of separate nations understand

this force as a power inherent in heroes and rulers. In their narration

events occur solely by the will of a Napoleon, and Alexander, or in

general of the persons they describe. The answers given by this kind of

historian to the question of what force causes events to happen are

satisfactory only as long as there is but one historian to each event.

As soon as historians of different nationalities and tendencies begin to

describe the same event, the replies they give immediately lose all

meaning, for this force is understood by them all not only differently

but often in quite contradictory ways. One historian says that an event

was produced by Napoleon's power, another that it was produced by

Alexander's, a third that it was due to the power of some other person.

Besides this, historians of that kind contradict each other even in

their statement as to the force on which the authority of some

particular person was based. Thiers, a Bonapartist, says that Napoleon's

power was based on his virtue and genius. Lanfrey, a Republican, says it

was based on his trickery and deception of the people. So the historians

of this class, by mutually destroying one another's positions, destroy

the understanding of the force which produces events, and furnish no

reply to history's essential question.

Writers of universal history who deal with all the nations seem to

recognize how erroneous is the specialist historians' view of the force

which produces events. They do not recognize it as a power inherent in

heroes and rulers, but as the resultant of a multiplicity of variously

directed forces. In describing a war or the subjugation of a people, a

general historian looks for the cause of the event not in the power of

one man, but in the interaction of many persons connected with the

event.

According to this view the power of historical personages, represented

as the product of many forces, can no longer, it would seem, be regarded

as a force that itself produces events. Yet in most cases universal

historians still employ the conception of power as a force that itself

produces events, and treat it as their cause. In their exposition, an

historic character is first the product of his time, and his power only

the resultant of various forces, and then his power is itself a force

producing events. Gervinus, Schlosser, and others, for instance, at one

time prove Napoleon to be a product of the Revolution, of the ideas of

1789 and so forth, and at another plainly say that the campaign of 1812

and other things they do not like were simply the product of Napoleon's

misdirected will, and that the very ideas of 1789 were arrested in their

development by Napoleon's caprice. The ideas of the Revolution and the

general temper of the age produced Napoleon's power. But Napoleon's

power suppressed the ideas of the Revolution and the general temper of

the age.

This curious contradiction is not accidental. Not only does it occur at

every step, but the universal historians' accounts are all made up of a

chain of such contradictions. This contradiction occurs because after

entering the field of analysis the universal historians stop halfway.

To find component forces equal to the composite or resultant force, the

sum of the components must equal the resultant. This condition is never

observed by the universal historians, and so to explain the resultant

forces they are obliged to admit, in addition to the insufficient

components, another unexplained force affecting the resultant action.

Specialist historians describing the campaign of 1813 or the restoration

of the Bourbons plainly assert that these events were produced by the

will of Alexander. But the universal historian Gervinus, refuting this

opinion of the specialist historian, tries to prove that the campaign of

1813 and the restoration of the Bourbons were due to other things beside

Alexander's will--such as the activity of Stein, Metternich, Madame de

Stael, Talleyrand, Fichte, Chateaubriand, and others. The historian

evidently decomposes Alexander's power into the components: Talleyrand,

Chateaubriand, and the rest--but the sum of the components, that is, the

interactions of Chateaubriand, Talleyrand, Madame de Stael, and the

others, evidently does not equal the resultant, namely the phenomenon of

millions of Frenchmen submitting to the Bourbons. That Chateaubriand,

Madame de Stael, and others spoke certain words to one another only

affected their mutual relations but does not account for the submission

of millions. And therefore to explain how from these relations of theirs

the submission of millions of people resulted--that is, how component

forces equal to one A gave a resultant equal to a thousand times A--the

historian is again obliged to fall back on power--the force he had

denied--and to recognize it as the resultant of the forces, that is, he

has to admit an unexplained force acting on the resultant. And that is

just what the universal historians do, and consequently they not only

contradict the specialist historians but contradict themselves.

Peasants having no clear idea of the cause of rain, say, according to

whether they want rain or fine weather: "The wind has blown the clouds

away," or, "The wind has brought up the clouds." And in the same way the

universal historians sometimes, when it pleases them and fits in with

their theory, say that power is the result of events, and sometimes,

when they want to prove something else, say that power produces events.

A third class of historians--the so-called historians of culture--

following the path laid down by the universal historians who sometimes

accept writers and ladies as forces producing events--again take that

force to be something quite different. They see it in what is called

culture--in mental activity.

The historians of culture are quite consistent in regard to their

progenitors, the writers of universal histories, for if historical

events may be explained by the fact that certain persons treated one

another in such and such ways, why not explain them by the fact that

such and such people wrote such and such books? Of the immense number of

indications accompanying every vital phenomenon, these historians select

the indication of intellectual activity and say that this indication is

the cause. But despite their endeavors to prove that the cause of events

lies in intellectual activity, only by a great stretch can one admit

that there is any connection between intellectual activity and the

movement of peoples, and in no case can one admit that intellectual

activity controls people's actions, for that view is not confirmed by

such facts as the very cruel murders of the French Revolution resulting

from the doctrine of the equality of man, or the very cruel wars and

executions resulting from the preaching of love.

But even admitting as correct all the cunningly devised arguments with

which these histories are filled--admitting that nations are governed by

some undefined force called an idea--history's essential question still

remains unanswered, and to the former power of monarchs and to the

influence of advisers and other people introduced by the universal

historians, another, newer force--the idea--is added, the connection of

which with the masses needs explanation. It is possible to understand

that Napoleon had power and so events occurred; with some effort one may

even conceive that Napoleon together with other influences was the cause

of an event; but how a book, Le Contrat Social, had the effect of making

Frenchmen begin to drown one another cannot be understood without an

explanation of the causal nexus of this new force with the event.

Undoubtedly some relation exists between all who live contemporaneously,

and so it is possible to find some connection between the intellectual

activity of men and their historical movements, just as such a

connection may be found between the movements of humanity and commerce,

handicraft, gardening, or anything else you please. But why intellectual

activity is considered by the historians of culture to be the cause or

expression of the whole historical movement is hard to understand. Only

the following considerations can have led the historians to such a

conclusion: (1) that history is written by learned men, and so it is

natural and agreeable for them to think that the activity of their class

supplies the basis of the movement of all humanity, just as a similar

belief is natural and agreeable to traders, agriculturists, and soldiers

(if they do not express it, that is merely because traders and soldiers

do not write history), and (2) that spiritual activity, enlightenment,

civilization, culture, ideas, are all indistinct, indefinite conceptions

under whose banner it is very easy to use words having a still less

definite meaning, and which can therefore be readily introduced into any

theory.

But not to speak of the intrinsic quality of histories of this kind

(which may possibly even be of use to someone for something) the

histories of culture, to which all general histories tend more and more

to approximate, are significant from the fact that after seriously and

minutely examining various religious, philosophic, and political

doctrines as causes of events, as soon as they have to describe an

actual historic event such as the campaign of 1812 for instance, they

involuntarily describe it as resulting from an exercise of power--and

say plainly that that was the result of Napoleon's will. Speaking so,

the historians of culture involuntarily contradict themselves, and show

that the new force they have devised does not account for what happens

in history, and that history can only be explained by introducing a

power which they apparently do not recognize.

CHAPTER III

A locomotive is moving. Someone asks: "What moves it?" A peasant says

the devil moves it. Another man says the locomotive moves because its

wheels go round. A third asserts that the cause of its movement lies in

the smoke which the wind carries away.

The peasant is irrefutable. He has devised a complete explanation. To

refute him someone would have to prove to him that there is no devil, or

another peasant would have to explain to him that it is not the devil

but a German, who moves the locomotive. Only then, as a result of the

contradiction, will they see that they are both wrong. But the man who

says that the movement of the wheels is the cause refutes himself, for

having once begun to analyze he ought to go on and explain further why

the wheels go round; and till he has reached the ultimate cause of the

movement of the locomotive in the pressure of steam in the boiler, he

has no right to stop in his search for the cause. The man who explains

the movement of the locomotive by the smoke that is carried back has

noticed that the wheels do not supply an explanation and has taken the

first sign that occurs to him and in his turn has offered that as an

explanation.

The only conception that can explain the movement of the locomotive is

that of a force commensurate with the movement observed.

The only conception that can explain the movement of the peoples is that

of some force commensurate with the whole movement of the peoples.

Yet to supply this conception various historians take forces of

different kinds, all of which are incommensurate with the movement

observed. Some see it as a force directly inherent in heroes, as the

peasant sees the devil in the locomotive; others as a force resulting

from several other forces, like the movement of the wheels; others again

as an intellectual influence, like the smoke that is blown away.

So long as histories are written of separate individuals, whether

Caesars, Alexanders, Luthers, or Voltaires, and not the histories of

all, absolutely all those who take part in an event, it is quite

impossible to describe the movement of humanity without the conception

of a force compelling men to direct their activity toward a certain end.

And the only such conception known to historians is that of power.

This conception is the one handle by means of which the material of

history, as at present expounded, can be dealt with, and anyone who

breaks that handle off, as Buckle did, without finding some other method

of treating historical material, merely deprives himself of the one

possible way of dealing with it. The necessity of the conception of

power as an explanation of historical events is best demonstrated by the

universal historians and historians of culture themselves, for they

professedly reject that conception but inevitably have recourse to it at

every step.

In dealing with humanity's inquiry, the science of history up to now is

like money in circulation--paper money and coin. The biographies and

special national histories are like paper money. They can be used and

can circulate and fulfill their purpose without harm to anyone and even

advantageously, as long as no one asks what is the security behind them.

You need only forget to ask how the will of heroes produces events, and

such histories as Thiers' will be interesting and instructive and may

perhaps even possess a tinge of poetry. But just as doubts of the real

value of paper money arise either because, being easy to make, too much

of it gets made or because people try to exchange it for gold, so also

doubts concerning the real value of such histories arise either because

too many of them are written or because in his simplicity of heart

someone inquires: by what force did Napoleon do this?--that is, wants to

exchange the current paper money for the real gold of actual

comprehension.

The writers of universal histories and of the history of culture are

like people who, recognizing the defects of paper money, decide to

substitute for it money made of metal that has not the specific gravity

of gold. It may indeed make jingling coin, but will do no more than

that. Paper money may deceive the ignorant, but nobody is deceived by

tokens of base metal that have no value but merely jingle. As gold is

gold only if it is serviceable not merely for exchange but also for use,

so universal historians will be valuable only when they can reply to

history's essential question: what is power? The universal historians

give contradictory replies to that question, while the historians of

culture evade it and answer something quite different. And as counters

of imitation gold can be used only among a group of people who agree to

accept them as gold, or among those who do not know the nature of gold,

so universal historians and historians of culture, not answering

humanity's essential question, serve as currency for some purposes of

their own, only in universities and among the mass of readers who have a

taste for what they call "serious reading."

CHAPTER IV

Having abandoned the conception of the ancients as to the divine

subjection of the will of a nation to some chosen man and the subjection

of that man's will to the Deity, history cannot without contradictions

take a single step till it has chosen one of two things: either a return

to the former belief in the direct intervention of the Deity in human

affairs or a definite explanation of the meaning of the force producing

historical events and termed "power."

A return to the first is impossible, the belief has been destroyed; and

so it is essential to explain what is meant by power.

Napoleon ordered an army to be raised and go to war. We are so

accustomed to that idea and have become so used to it that the question:

why did six hundred thousand men go to fight when Napoleon uttered

certain words, seems to us senseless. He had the power and so what he

ordered was done.

This reply is quite satisfactory if we believe that the power was given

him by God. But as soon as we do not admit that, it becomes essential to

determine what is this power of one man over others.

It cannot be the direct physical power of a strong man over a weak one--

a domination based on the application or threat of physical force, like

the power of Hercules; nor can it be based on the effect of moral force,

as in their simplicity some historians think who say that the leading

figures in history are heroes, that is, men gifted with a special

strength of soul and mind called genius. This power cannot be based on

the predominance of moral strength, for, not to mention heroes such as

Napoleon about whose moral qualities opinions differ widely, history

shows us that neither a Louis XI nor a Metternich, who ruled over

millions of people, had any particular moral qualities, but on the

contrary were generally morally weaker than any of the millions they

ruled over.

If the source of power lies neither in the physical nor in the moral

qualities of him who possesses it, it must evidently be looked for

elsewhere--in the relation to the people of the man who wields the

power.

And that is how power is understood by the science of jurisprudence,

that exchange bank of history which offers to exchange history's

understanding of power for true gold.

Power is the collective will of the people transferred, by expressed or

tacit consent, to their chosen rulers.

In the domain of jurisprudence, which consists of discussions of how a

state and power might be arranged were it possible for all that to be

arranged, it is all very clear; but when applied to history that

definition of power needs explanation.

The science of jurisprudence regards the state and power as the ancients

regarded fire--namely, as something existing absolutely. But for

history, the state and power are merely phenomena, just as for modern

physics fire is not an element but a phenomenon.

From this fundamental difference between the view held by history and

that held by jurisprudence, it follows that jurisprudence can tell

minutely how in its opinion power should be constituted and what power--

existing immutably outside time--is, but to history's questions about

the meaning of the mutations of power in time it can answer nothing.

If power be the collective will of the people transferred to their

ruler, was Pugachev a representative of the will of the people? If not,

then why was Napoleon I? Why was Napoleon III a criminal when he was

taken prisoner at Boulogne, and why, later on, were those criminals whom

he arrested?

Do palace revolutions--in which sometimes only two or three people take

part--transfer the will of the people to a new ruler? In international

relations, is the will of the people also transferred to their

conqueror? Was the will of the Confederation of the Rhine transferred to

Napoleon in 1806? Was the will of the Russian people transferred to

Napoleon in 1809, when our army in alliance with the French went to

fight the Austrians?

To these questions three answers are possible:

Either to assume (1) that the will of the people is always

unconditionally transferred to the ruler or rulers they have chosen, and

that therefore every emergence of a new power, every struggle against

the power once appointed, should be absolutely regarded as an

infringement of the real power; or (2) that the will of the people is

transferred to the rulers conditionally, under definite and known

conditions, and to show that all limitations, conflicts, and even

destructions of power result from a nonobservance by the rulers of the

conditions under which their power was entrusted to them; or (3) that

the will of the people is delegated to the rulers conditionally, but

that the conditions are unknown and indefinite, and that the appearance

of several authorities, their struggles and their falls, result solely

from the greater or lesser fulfillment by the rulers of these unknown

conditions on which the will of the people is transferred from some

people to others.

And these are the three ways in which the historians do explain the

relation of the people to their rulers.

Some historians--those biographical and specialist historians already

referred to--in their simplicity failing to understand the question of

the meaning of power, seem to consider that the collective will of the

people is unconditionally transferred to historical persons, and

therefore when describing some single state they assume that particular

power to be the one absolute and real power, and that any other force

opposing this is not a power but a violation of power--mere violence.

Their theory, suitable for primitive and peaceful periods of history,

has the inconvenience--in application to complex and stormy periods in

the life of nations during which various powers arise simultaneously and

struggle with one another--that a Legitimist historian will prove that

the National Convention, the Directory, and Bonaparte were mere

infringers of the true power, while a Republican and a Bonapartist will

prove: the one that the Convention and the other that the Empire was the

real power, and that all the others were violations of power. Evidently

the explanations furnished by these historians being mutually

contradictory can only satisfy young children.

Recognizing the falsity of this view of history, another set of

historians say that power rests on a conditional delegation of the will

of the people to their rulers, and that historical leaders have power

only conditionally on carrying out the program that the will of the

people has by tacit agreement prescribed to them. But what this program

consists in these historians do not say, or if they do they continually

contradict one another.

Each historian, according to his view of what constitutes a nation's

progress, looks for these conditions in the greatness, wealth, freedom,

or enlightenment of citizens of France or some other country. But not to

mention the historians' contradictions as to the nature of this program-

-or even admitting that some one general program of these conditions

exists--the facts of history almost always contradict that theory. If

the conditions under which power is entrusted consist in the wealth,

freedom, and enlightenment of the people, how is it that Louis XIV and

Ivan the Terrible end their reigns tranquilly, while Louis XVI and

Charles I are executed by their people? To this question historians

reply that Louis XIV's activity, contrary to the program, reacted on

Louis XVI. But why did it not react on Louis XIV or on Louis XV--why

should it react just on Louis XVI? And what is the time limit for such

reactions? To these questions there are and can be no answers. Equally

little does this view explain why for several centuries the collective

will is not withdrawn from certain rulers and their heirs, and then

suddenly during a period of fifty years is transferred to the

Convention, to the Directory, to Napoleon, to Alexander, to Louis XVIII,

to Napoleon again, to Charles X, to Louis Philippe, to a Republican

government, and to Napoleon III. When explaining these rapid transfers

of the people's will from one individual to another, especially in view

of international relations, conquests, and alliances, the historians are

obliged to admit that some of these transfers are not normal delegations

of the people's will but are accidents dependent on cunning, on

mistakes, on craft, or on the weakness of a diplomatist, a ruler, or a

party leader. So that the greater part of the events of history--civil

wars, revolutions, and conquests--are presented by these historians not

as the results of free transferences of the people's will, but as

results of the ill-directed will of one or more individuals, that is,

once again, as usurpations of power. And so these historians also see

and admit historical events which are exceptions to the theory.

These historians resemble a botanist who, having noticed that some

plants grow from seeds producing two cotyledons, should insist that all

that grows does so by sprouting into two leaves, and that the palm, the

mushroom, and even the oak, which blossom into full growth and no longer

resemble two leaves, are deviations from the theory.

Historians of the third class assume that the will of the people is

transferred to historic personages conditionally, but that the

conditions are unknown to us. They say that historical personages have

power only because they fulfill the will of the people which has been

delegated to them.

But in that case, if the force that moves nations lies not in the

historic leaders but in the nations themselves, what significance have

those leaders?

The leaders, these historians tell us, express the will of the people:

the activity of the leaders represents the activity of the people.

But in that case the question arises whether all the activity of the

leaders serves as an expression of the people's will or only some part

of it. If the whole activity of the leaders serves as the expression of

the people's will, as some historians suppose, then all the details of

the court scandals contained in the biographies of a Napoleon or a

Catherine serve to express the life of the nation, which is evident

nonsense; but if it is only some particular side of the activity of an

historical leader which serves to express the people's life, as other

so-called "philosophical" historians believe, then to determine which

side of the activity of a leader expresses the nation's life, we have

first of all to know in what the nation's life consists.

Met by this difficulty historians of that class devise some most

obscure, impalpable, and general abstraction which can cover all

conceivable occurrences, and declare this abstraction to be the aim of

humanity's movement. The most usual generalizations adopted by almost

all the historians are: freedom, equality, enlightenment, progress,

civilization, and culture. Postulating some generalization as the goal

of the movement of humanity, the historians study the men of whom the

greatest number of monuments have remained: kings, ministers, generals,

authors, reformers, popes, and journalists, to the extent to which in

their opinion these persons have promoted or hindered that abstraction.

But as it is in no way proved that the aim of humanity does consist in

freedom, equality, enlightenment, or civilization, and as the connection

of the people with the rulers and enlighteners of humanity is only based

on the arbitrary assumption that the collective will of the people is

always transferred to the men whom we have noticed, it happens that the

activity of the millions who migrate, burn houses, abandon agriculture,

and destroy one another never is expressed in the account of the

activity of some dozen people who did not burn houses, practice

agriculture, or slay their fellow creatures.

History proves this at every turn. Is the ferment of the peoples of the

west at the end of the eighteenth century and their drive eastward

explained by the activity of Louis XIV, XV, and XVI, their mistresses

and ministers, and by the lives of Napoleon, Rousseau, Diderot,

Beaumarchais, and others?

Is the movement of the Russian people eastward to Kazan and Siberia

expressed by details of the morbid character of Ivan the Terrible and by

his correspondence with Kurbski?

Is the movement of the peoples at the time of the Crusades explained by

the life and activity of the Godfreys and the Louis-es and their ladies?

For us that movement of the peoples from west to east, without leaders,

with a crowd of vagrants, and with Peter the Hermit, remains

incomprehensible. And yet more incomprehensible is the cessation of that

movement when a rational and sacred aim for the Crusade--the deliverance

of Jerusalem--had been clearly defined by historic leaders. Popes,

kings, and knights incited the peoples to free the Holy Land; but the

people did not go, for the unknown cause which had previously impelled

them to go no longer existed. The history of the Godfreys and the

Minnesingers can evidently not cover the life of the peoples. And the

history of the Godfreys and the Minnesingers has remained the history of

Godfreys and Minnesingers, but the history of the life of the peoples

and their impulses has remained unknown.

Still less does the history of authors and reformers explain to us the

life of the peoples.

The history of culture explains to us the impulses and conditions of

life and thought of a writer or a reformer. We learn that Luther had a

hot temper and said such and such things; we learn that Rousseau was

suspicious and wrote such and such books; but we do not learn why after

the Reformation the peoples massacred one another, nor why during the

French Revolution they guillotined one another.

If we unite both these kinds of history, as is done by the newest

historians, we shall have the history of monarchs and writers, but not

the history of the life of the peoples.

CHAPTER V

The life of the nations is not contained in the lives of a few men, for

the connection between those men and the nations has not been found. The

theory that this connection is based on the transference of the

collective will of a people to certain historical personages is an

hypothesis unconfirmed by the experience of history.

The theory of the transference of the collective will of the people to

historic persons may perhaps explain much in the domain of jurisprudence

and be essential for its purposes, but in its application to history, as

soon as revolutions, conquests, or civil wars occur--that is, as soon as

history begins--that theory explains nothing.

The theory seems irrefutable just because the act of transference of the

people's will cannot be verified, for it never occurred.

Whatever happens and whoever may stand at the head of affairs, the

theory can always say that such and such a person took the lead because

the collective will was transferred to him.

The replies this theory gives to historical questions are like the

replies of a man who, watching the movements of a herd of cattle and

paying no attention to the varying quality of the pasturage in different

parts of the field, or to the driving of the herdsman, should attribute

the direction the herd takes to what animal happens to be at its head.

"The herd goes in that direction because the animal in front leads it

and the collective will of all the other animals is vested in that

leader." This is what historians of the first class say--those who

assume the unconditional transference of the people's will.

"If the animals leading the herd change, this happens because the

collective will of all the animals is transferred from one leader to

another, according to whether the animal is or is not leading them in

the direction selected by the whole herd." Such is the reply historians

who assume that the collective will of the people is delegated to rulers

under conditions which they regard as known. (With this method of

observation it often happens that the observer, influenced by the

direction he himself prefers, regards those as leaders who, owing to the

people's change of direction, are no longer in front, but on one side,

or even in the rear.)

"If the animals in front are continually changing and the direction of

the whole herd is constantly altered, this is because in order to follow

a given direction the animals transfer their will to the animals that

have attracted our attention, and to study the movements of the herd we

must watch the movements of all the prominent animals moving on all

sides of the herd." So say the third class of historians who regard all

historical persons, from monarchs to journalists, as the expression of

their age.

The theory of the transference of the will of the people to historic

persons is merely a paraphrase--a restatement of the question in other

words.

What causes historical events? Power. What is power? Power is the

collective will of the people transferred to one person. Under what

condition is the will of the people delegated to one person? On

condition that that person expresses the will of the whole people. That

is, power is power: in other words, power is a word the meaning of which

we do not understand.

If the realm of human knowledge were confined to abstract reasoning,

then having subjected to criticism the explanation of "power" that

juridical science gives us, humanity would conclude that power is merely

a word and has no real existence. But to understand phenomena man has,

besides abstract reasoning, experience by which he verifies his

reflections. And experience tells us that power is not merely a word but

an actually existing phenomenon.

Not to speak of the fact that no description of the collective activity

of men can do without the conception of power, the existence of power is

proved both by history and by observing contemporary events.

Whenever an event occurs a man appears or men appear, by whose will the

event seems to have taken place. Napoleon III issues a decree and the

French go to Mexico. The King of Prussia and Bismarck issue decrees and

an army enters Bohemia. Napoleon I issues a decree and an army enters

Russia. Alexander I gives a command and the French submit to the

Bourbons. Experience shows us that whatever event occurs it is always

related to the will of one or of several men who have decreed it.

The historians, in accord with the old habit of acknowledging divine

intervention in human affairs, want to see the cause of events in the

expression of the will of someone endowed with power, but that

supposition is not confirmed either by reason or by experience.

On the one side reflection shows that the expression of a man's will--

his words--are only part of the general activity expressed in an event,

as for instance in a war or a revolution, and so without assuming an

incomprehensible, supernatural force--a miracle--one cannot admit that

words can be the immediate cause of the movements of millions of men. On

the other hand, even if we admitted that words could be the cause of

events, history shows that the expression of the will of historical

personages does not in most cases produce any effect, that is to say,

their commands are often not executed, and sometimes the very opposite

of what they order occurs.

Without admitting divine intervention in the affairs of humanity we

cannot regard "power" as the cause of events.

Power, from the standpoint of experience, is merely the relation that

exists between the expression of someone's will and the execution of

that will by others.

To explain the conditions of that relationship we must first establish a

conception of the expression of will, referring it to man and not to the

Deity.

If the Deity issues a command, expresses His will, as ancient history

tells us, the expression of that will is independent of time and is not

caused by anything, for the Divinity is not controlled by an event. But

speaking of commands that are the expression of the will of men acting

in time and in relation to one another, to explain the connection of

commands with events we must restore: (1) the condition of all that

takes place: the continuity of movement in time both of the events and

of the person who commands, and (2) the inevitability of the connection

between the person commanding and those who execute his command.

CHAPTER VI

Only the expression of the will of the Deity, not dependent on time, can

relate to a whole series of events occurring over a period of years or

centuries, and only the Deity, independent of everything, can by His

sole will determine the direction of humanity's movement; but man acts

in time and himself takes part in what occurs.

Reinstating the first condition omitted, that of time, we see that no

command can be executed without some preceding order having been given

rendering the execution of the last command possible.

No command ever appears spontaneously, or itself covers a whole series

of occurrences; but each command follows from another, and never refers

to a whole series of events but always to one moment only of an event.

When, for instance, we say that Napoleon ordered armies to go to war, we

combine in one simultaneous expression a whole series of consecutive

commands dependent one on another. Napoleon could not have commanded an

invasion of Russia and never did so. Today he ordered such and such

papers to be written to Vienna, to Berlin, and to Petersburg; tomorrow

such and such decrees and orders to the army, the fleet, the

commissariat, and so on and so on--millions of commands, which formed a

whole series corresponding to a series of events which brought the

French armies into Russia.

If throughout his reign Napoleon gave commands concerning an invasion of

England and expended on no other undertaking so much time and effort,

and yet during his whole reign never once attempted to execute that

design but undertook an expedition into Russia, with which country he

considered it desirable to be in alliance (a conviction he repeatedly

expressed)--this came about because his commands did not correspond to

the course of events in the first case, but did so correspond in the

latter.

For an order to be certainly executed, it is necessary that a man should

order what can be executed. But to know what can and what cannot be

executed is impossible, not only in the case of Napoleon's invasion of

Russia in which millions participated, but even in the simplest event,

for in either case millions of obstacles may arise to prevent its

execution. Every order executed is always one of an immense number

unexecuted. All the impossible orders inconsistent with the course of

events remain unexecuted. Only the possible ones get linked up with a

consecutive series of commands corresponding to a series of events, and

are executed.

Our false conception that an event is caused by a command which precedes

it is due to the fact that when the event has taken place and out of

thousands of others those few commands which were consistent with that

event have been executed, we forget about the others that were not

executed because they could not be. Apart from that, the chief source of

our error in this matter is due to the fact that in the historical

accounts a whole series of innumerable, diverse, and petty events, such

for instance as all those which led the French armies to Russia, is

generalized into one event in accord with the result produced by that

series of events, and corresponding with this generalization the whole

series of commands is also generalized into a single expression of will.

We say that Napoleon wished to invade Russia and invaded it. In reality

in all Napoleon's activity we never find anything resembling an

expression of that wish, but find a series of orders, or expressions of

his will, very variously and indefinitely directed. Amid a long series

of unexecuted orders of Napoleon's one series, for the campaign of 1812,

was carried out--not because those orders differed in any way from the

other, unexecuted orders but because they coincided with the course of

events that led the French army into Russia; just as in stencil work

this or that figure comes out not because the color was laid on from

this side or in that way, but because it was laid on from all sides over

the figure cut in the stencil.

So that examining the relation in time of the commands to the events, we

find that a command can never be the cause of the event, but that a

certain definite dependence exists between the two.

To understand in what this dependence consists it is necessary to

reinstate another omitted condition of every command proceeding not from

the Deity but from a man, which is, that the man who gives the command

himself takes part in the event.

This relation of the commander to those he commands is just what is

called power. This relation consists in the following:

For common action people always unite in certain combinations, in which

regardless of the difference of the aims set for the common action, the

relation between those taking part in it is always the same.

Men uniting in these combinations always assume such relations toward

one another that the larger number take a more direct share, and the

smaller number a less direct share, in the collective action for which

they have combined.

Of all the combinations in which men unite for collective action one of

the most striking and definite examples is an army.

Every army is composed of lower grades of the service--the rank and

file--of whom there are always the greatest number; of the next higher

military rank--corporals and noncommissioned officers of whom there are

fewer, and of still-higher officers of whom there are still fewer, and

so on to the highest military command which is concentrated in one

person.

A military organization may be quite correctly compared to a cone, of

which the base with the largest diameter consists of the rank and file;

the next higher and smaller section of the cone consists of the next

higher grades of the army, and so on to the apex, the point of which

will represent the commander-in-chief.

The soldiers, of whom there are the most, form the lower section of the

cone and its base. The soldier himself does the stabbing, hacking,

burning, and pillaging, and always receives orders for these actions

from men above him; he himself never gives an order. The noncommissioned

officers (of whom there are fewer) perform the action itself less

frequently than the soldiers, but they already give commands. An officer

still less often acts directly himself, but commands still more

frequently. A general does nothing but command the troops, indicates the

objective, and hardly ever uses a weapon himself. The commander-in-chief

never takes direct part in the action itself, but only gives general

orders concerning the movement of the mass of the troops. A similar

relation of people to one another is seen in every combination of men

for common activity--in agriculture, trade, and every administration.

And so without particularly analyzing all the contiguous sections of a

cone and of the ranks of an army, or the ranks and positions in any

administrative or public business whatever from the lowest to the

highest, we see a law by which men, to take associated action, combine

in such relations that the more directly they participate in performing

the action the less they can command and the more numerous they are,

while the less their direct participation in the action itself, the more

they command and the fewer of them there are; rising in this way from

the lowest ranks to the man at the top, who takes the least direct share

in the action and directs his activity chiefly to commanding.

This relation of the men who command to those they command is what

constitutes the essence of the conception called power.

Having restored the condition of time under which all events occur, we

find that a command is executed only when it is related to a

corresponding series of events. Restoring the essential condition of

relation between those who command and those who execute, we find that

by the very nature of the case those who command take the smallest part

in the action itself and that their activity is exclusively directed to

commanding.

CHAPTER VII

When an event is taking place people express their opinions and wishes

about it, and as the event results from the collective activity of many

people, some one of the opinions or wishes expressed is sure to be

fulfilled if but approximately. When one of the opinions expressed is

fulfilled, that opinion gets connected with the event as a command

preceding it.

Men are hauling a log. Each of them expresses his opinion as to how and

where to haul it. They haul the log away, and it happens that this is

done as one of them said. He ordered it. There we have command and power

in their primary form. The man who worked most with his hands could not

think so much about what he was doing, or reflect on or command what

would result from the common activity; while the man who commanded more

would evidently work less with his hands on account of his greater

verbal activity.

When some larger concourse of men direct their activity to a common aim

there is a yet sharper division of those who, because their activity is

given to directing and commanding, take less part in the direct work.

When a man works alone he always has a certain set of reflections which

as it seems to him directed his past activity, justify his present

activity, and guide him in planning his future actions. Just the same is

done by a concourse of people, allowing those who do not take a direct

part in the activity to devise considerations, justifications, and

surmises concerning their collective activity.

For reasons known or unknown to us the French began to drown and kill

one another. And corresponding to the event its justification appears in

people's belief that this was necessary for the welfare of France, for

liberty, and for equality. People ceased to kill one another, and this

event was accompanied by its justification in the necessity for a

centralization of power, resistance to Europe, and so on. Men went from

the west to the east killing their fellow men, and the event was

accompanied by phrases about the glory of France, the baseness of

England, and so on. History shows us that these justifications of the

events have no common sense and are all contradictory, as in the case of

killing a man as the result of recognizing his rights, and the killing

of millions in Russia for the humiliation of England. But these

justifications have a very necessary significance in their own day.

These justifications release those who produce the events from moral

responsibility. These temporary aims are like the broom fixed in front

of a locomotive to clear the snow from the rails in front: they clear

men's moral responsibilities from their path.

Without such justification there would be no reply to the simplest

question that presents itself when examining each historical event. How

is it that millions of men commit collective crimes--make war, commit

murder, and so on?

With the present complex forms of political and social life in Europe

can any event that is not prescribed, decreed, or ordered by monarchs,

ministers, parliaments, or newspapers be imagined? Is there any

collective action which cannot find its justification in political

unity, in patriotism, in the balance of power, or in civilization? So

that every event that occurs inevitably coincides with some expressed

wish and, receiving a justification, presents itself as the result of

the will of one man or of several men.

In whatever direction a ship moves, the flow of the waves it cuts will

always be noticeable ahead of it. To those on board the ship the

movement of those waves will be the only perceptible motion.

Only by watching closely moment by moment the movement of that flow and

comparing it with the movement of the ship do we convince ourselves that

every bit of it is occasioned by the forward movement of the ship, and

that we were led into error by the fact that we ourselves were

imperceptibly moving.

We see the same if we watch moment by moment the movement of historical

characters (that is, re-establish the inevitable condition of all that

occurs--the continuity of movement in time) and do not lose sight of the

essential connection of historical persons with the masses.

When the ship moves in one direction there is one and the same wave

ahead of it, when it turns frequently the wave ahead of it also turns

frequently. But wherever it may turn there always will be the wave

anticipating its movement.

Whatever happens it always appears that just that event was foreseen and

decreed. Wherever the ship may go, the rush of water which neither

directs nor increases its movement foams ahead of it, and at a distance

seems to us not merely to move of itself but to govern the ship's

movement also.

Examining only those expressions of the will of historical persons

which, as commands, were related to events, historians have assumed that

the events depended on those commands. But examining the events

themselves and the connection in which the historical persons stood to

the people, we have found that they and their orders were dependent on

events. The incontestable proof of this deduction is that, however many

commands were issued, the event does not take place unless there are

other causes for it, but as soon as an event occurs--be it what it may--

then out of all the continually expressed wishes of different people

some will always be found which by their meaning and their time of

utterance are related as commands to the events.

Arriving at this conclusion we can reply directly and positively to

these two essential questions of history:

(1) What is power?

(2) What force produces the movement of the nations?

(1) Power is the relation of a given person to other individuals, in

which the more this person expresses opinions, predictions, and

justifications of the collective action that is performed, the less is

his participation in that action.

(2) The movement of nations is caused not by power, nor by intellectual

activity, nor even by a combination of the two as historians have

supposed, but by the activity of all the people who participate in the

events, and who always combine in such a way that those taking the

largest direct share in the event take on themselves the least

responsibility and vice versa.

Morally the wielder of power appears to cause the event; physically it

is those who submit to the power. But as the moral activity is

inconceivable without the physical, the cause of the event is neither in

the one nor in the other but in the union of the two.

Or in other words, the conception of a cause is inapplicable to the

phenomena we are examining.

In the last analysis we reach the circle of infinity--that final limit

to which in every domain of thought man's reason arrives if it is not

playing with the subject. Electricity produces heat, heat produces

electricity. Atoms attract each other and atoms repel one another.

Speaking of the interaction of heat and electricity and of atoms, we

cannot say why this occurs, and we say that it is so because it is

inconceivable otherwise, because it must be so and that it is a law. The

same applies to historical events. Why war and revolution occur we do

not know. We only know that to produce the one or the other action,

people combine in a certain formation in which they all take part, and

we say that this is so because it is unthinkable otherwise, or in other

words that it is a law.

CHAPTER VIII

If history dealt only with external phenomena, the establishment of this

simple and obvious law would suffice and we should have finished our

argument. But the law of history relates to man. A particle of matter

cannot tell us that it does not feel the law of attraction or repulsion

and that that law is untrue, but man, who is the subject of history,

says plainly: I am free and am therefore not subject to the law.

The presence of the problem of man's free will, though unexpressed, is

felt at every step of history.

All seriously thinking historians have involuntarily encountered this

question. All the contradictions and obscurities of history and the

false path historical science has followed are due solely to the lack of

a solution of that question.

If the will of every man were free, that is, if each man could act as he

pleased, all history would be a series of disconnected incidents.

If in a thousand years even one man in a million could act freely, that

is, as he chose, it is evident that one single free act of that man's in

violation of the laws governing human action would destroy the

possibility of the existence of any laws for the whole of humanity.

If there be a single law governing the actions of men, free will cannot

exist, for then man's will is subject to that law.

In this contradiction lies the problem of free will, which from most

ancient times has occupied the best human minds and from most ancient

times has been presented in its whole tremendous significance.

The problem is that regarding man as a subject of observation from

whatever point of view--theological, historical, ethical, or

philosophic--we find a general law of necessity to which he (like all

that exists) is subject. But regarding him from within ourselves as what

we are conscious of, we feel ourselves to be free.

This consciousness is a source of self-cognition quite apart from and

independent of reason. Through his reason man observes himself, but only

through consciousness does he know himself.

Apart from consciousness of self no observation or application of reason

is conceivable.

To understand, observe, and draw conclusions, man must first of all be

conscious of himself as living. A man is only conscious of himself as a

living being by the fact that he wills, that is, is conscious of his

volition. But his will--which forms the essence of his life--man

recognizes (and can but recognize) as free.

If, observing himself, man sees that his will is always directed by one

and the same law (whether he observes the necessity of taking food,

using his brain, or anything else) he cannot recognize this never-

varying direction of his will otherwise than as a limitation of it. Were

it not free it could not be limited. A man's will seems to him to be

limited just because he is not conscious of it except as free.

You say: I am not free. But I have lifted my hand and let it fall.

Everyone understands that this illogical reply is an irrefutable

demonstration of freedom.

That reply is the expression of a consciousness that is not subject to

reason.

If the consciousness of freedom were not a separate and independent

source of self-consciousness it would be subject to reasoning and to

experience, but in fact such subjection does not exist and is

inconceivable.

A series of experiments and arguments proves to every man that he, as an

object of observation, is subject to certain laws, and man submits to

them and never resists the laws of gravity or impermeability once he has

become acquainted with them. But the same series of experiments and

arguments proves to him that the complete freedom of which he is

conscious in himself is impossible, and that his every action depends on

his organization, his character, and the motives acting upon him; yet

man never submits to the deductions of these experiments and arguments.

Having learned from experiment and argument that a stone falls

downwards, a man indubitably believes this and always expects the law

that he has learned to be fulfilled.

But learning just as certainly that his will is subject to laws, he does

not and cannot believe this.

However often experiment and reasoning may show a man that under the

same conditions and with the same character he will do the same thing as

before, yet when under the same conditions and with the same character

he approaches for the thousandth time the action that always ends in the

same way, he feels as certainly convinced as before the experiment that

he can act as he pleases. Every man, savage or sage, however

incontestably reason and experiment may prove to him that it is

impossible to imagine two different courses of action in precisely the

same conditions, feels that without this irrational conception (which

constitutes the essence of freedom) he cannot imagine life. He feels

that however impossible it may be, it is so, for without this conception

of freedom not only would he be unable to understand life, but he would

be unable to live for a single moment.

He could not live, because all man's efforts, all his impulses to life,

are only efforts to increase freedom. Wealth and poverty, fame and

obscurity, power and subordination, strength and weakness, health and

disease, culture and ignorance, work and leisure, repletion and hunger,

virtue and vice, are only greater or lesser degrees of freedom.

A man having no freedom cannot be conceived of except as deprived of

life.

If the conception of freedom appears to reason to be a senseless

contradiction like the possibility of performing two actions at one and

the same instant of time, or of an effect without a cause, that only

proves that consciousness is not subject to reason.

This unshakable, irrefutable consciousness of freedom, uncontrolled by

experiment or argument, recognized by all thinkers and felt by everyone

without exception, this consciousness without which no conception of man

is possible constitutes the other side of the question.

Man is the creation of an all-powerful, all-good, and all-seeing God.

What is sin, the conception of which arises from the consciousness of

man's freedom? That is a question for theology.

The actions of men are subject to general immutable laws expressed in

statistics. What is man's responsibility to society, the conception of

which results from the conception of freedom? That is a question for

jurisprudence.

Man's actions proceed from his innate character and the motives acting

upon him. What is conscience and the perception of right and wrong in

actions that follows from the consciousness of freedom? That is a

question for ethics.

Man in connection with the general life of humanity appears subject to

laws which determine that life. But the same man apart from that

connection appears to be free. How should the past life of nations and

of humanity be regarded--as the result of the free, or as the result of

the constrained, activity of man? That is a question for history.

Only in our self-confident day of the popularization of knowledge--

thanks to that most powerful engine of ignorance, the diffusion of

printed matter--has the question of the freedom of will been put on a

level on which the question itself cannot exist. In our time the

majority of so-called advanced people--that is, the crowd of

ignoramuses--have taken the work of the naturalists who deal with one

side of the question for a solution of the whole problem.

They say and write and print that the soul and freedom do not exist, for

the life of man is expressed by muscular movements and muscular

movements are conditioned by the activity of the nerves; the soul and

free will do not exist because at an unknown period of time we sprang

from the apes. They say this, not at all suspecting that thousands of

years ago that same law of necessity which with such ardor they are now

trying to prove by physiology and comparative zoology was not merely

acknowledged by all the religions and all the thinkers, but has never

been denied. They do not see that the role of the natural sciences in

this matter is merely to serve as an instrument for the illumination of

one side of it. For the fact that, from the point of view of

observation, reason and the will are merely secretions of the brain, and

that man following the general law may have developed from lower animals

at some unknown period of time, only explains from a fresh side the

truth admitted thousands of years ago by all the religious and

philosophic theories--that from the point of view of reason man is

subject to the law of necessity; but it does not advance by a hair's

breadth the solution of the question, which has another, opposite, side,

based on the consciousness of freedom.

If men descended from the apes at an unknown period of time, that is as

comprehensible as that they were made from a handful of earth at a

certain period of time (in the first case the unknown quantity is the

time, in the second case it is the origin); and the question of how

man's consciousness of freedom is to be reconciled with the law of

necessity to which he is subject cannot be solved by comparative

physiology and zoology, for in a frog, a rabbit, or an ape, we can

observe only the muscular nervous activity, but in man we observe

consciousness as well as the muscular and nervous activity.

The naturalists and their followers, thinking they can solve this

question, are like plasterers set to plaster one side of the walls of a

church who, availing themselves of the absence of the chief

superintendent of the work, should in an access of zeal plaster over the

windows, icons, woodwork, and still unbuttressed walls, and should be

delighted that from their point of view as plasterers, everything is now

so smooth and regular.

CHAPTER IX

For the solution of the question of free will or inevitability, history

has this advantage over other branches of knowledge in which the

question is dealt with, that for history this question does not refer to

the essence of man's free will but its manifestation in the past and

under certain conditions.

In regard to this question, history stands to the other sciences as

experimental science stands to abstract science.

The subject for history is not man's will itself but our presentation of

it.

And so for history, the insoluble mystery presented by the

incompatibility of free will and inevitability does not exist as it does

for theology, ethics, and philosophy. History surveys a presentation of

man's life in which the union of these two contradictions has already

taken place.

In actual life each historic event, each human action, is very clearly

and definitely understood without any sense of contradiction, although

each event presents itself as partly free and partly compulsory.

To solve the question of how freedom and necessity are combined and what

constitutes the essence of these two conceptions, the philosophy of

history can and should follow a path contrary to that taken by other

sciences. Instead of first defining the conceptions of freedom and

inevitability in themselves, and then ranging the phenomena of life

under those definitions, history should deduce a definition of the

conception of freedom and inevitability themselves from the immense

quantity of phenomena of which it is cognizant and that always appear

dependent on these two elements.

Whatever presentation of the activity of many men or of an individual we

may consider, we always regard it as the result partly of man's free

will and partly of the law of inevitability.

Whether we speak of the migration of the peoples and the incursions of

the barbarians, or of the decrees of Napoleon III, or of someone's

action an hour ago in choosing one direction out of several for his

walk, we are unconscious of any contradiction. The degree of freedom and

inevitability governing the actions of these people is clearly defined

for us.

Our conception of the degree of freedom often varies according to

differences in the point of view from which we regard the event, but

every human action appears to us as a certain combination of freedom and

inevitability. In every action we examine we see a certain measure of

freedom and a certain measure of inevitability. And always the more

freedom we see in any action the less inevitability do we perceive, and

the more inevitability the less freedom.

The proportion of freedom to inevitability decreases and increases

according to the point of view from which the action is regarded, but

their relation is always one of inverse proportion.

A sinking man who clutches at another and drowns him; or a hungry mother

exhausted by feeding her baby, who steals some food; or a man trained to

discipline who on duty at the word of command kills a defenseless man--

seem less guilty, that is, less free and more subject to the law of

necessity, to one who knows the circumstances in which these people were

placed, and more free to one who does not know that the man was himself

drowning, that the mother was hungry, that the soldier was in the ranks,

and so on. Similarly a man who committed a murder twenty years ago and

has since lived peaceably and harmlessly in society seems less guilty

and his action more due to the law of inevitability, to someone who

considers his action after twenty years have elapsed than to one who

examined it the day after it was committed. And in the same way every

action of an insane, intoxicated, or highly excited man appears less

free and more inevitable to one who knows the mental condition of him

who committed the action, and seems more free and less inevitable to one

who does not know it. In all these cases the conception of freedom is

increased or diminished and the conception of compulsion is

correspondingly decreased or increased, according to the point of view

from which the action is regarded. So that the greater the conception of

necessity the smaller the conception of freedom and vice versa.

Religion, the common sense of mankind, the science of jurisprudence, and

history itself understand alike this relation between necessity and

freedom.

All cases without exception in which our conception of freedom and

necessity is increased and diminished depend on three considerations:

(1) The relation to the external world of the man who commits the deeds.

(2) His relation to time.

(3) His relation to the causes leading to the action.

The first consideration is the clearness of our perception of the man's

relation to the external world and the greater or lesser clearness of

our understanding of the definite position occupied by the man in

relation to everything coexisting with him. This is what makes it

evident that a drowning man is less free and more subject to necessity

than one standing on dry ground, and that makes the actions of a man

closely connected with others in a thickly populated district, or of one

bound by family, official, or business duties, seem certainly less free

and more subject to necessity than those of a man living in solitude and

seclusion.

If we consider a man alone, apart from his relation to everything around

him, each action of his seems to us free. But if we see his relation to

anything around him, if we see his connection with anything whatever--

with a man who speaks to him, a book he reads, the work on which he is

engaged, even with the air he breathes or the light that falls on the

things about him--we see that each of these circumstances has an

influence on him and controls at least some side of his activity. And

the more we perceive of these influences the more our conception of his

freedom diminishes and the more our conception of the necessity that

weighs on him increases.

The second consideration is the more or less evident time relation of

the man to the world and the clearness of our perception of the place

the man's action occupies in time. That is the ground which makes the

fall of the first man, resulting in the production of the human race,

appear evidently less free than a man's entry into marriage today. It is

the reason why the life and activity of people who lived centuries ago

and are connected with me in time cannot seem to me as free as the life

of a contemporary, the consequences of which are still unknown to me.

The degree of our conception of freedom or inevitability depends in this

respect on the greater or lesser lapse of time between the performance

of the action and our judgment of it.

If I examine an act I performed a moment ago in approximately the same

circumstances as those I am in now, my action appears to me undoubtedly

free. But if I examine an act performed a month ago, then being in

different circumstances, I cannot help recognizing that if that act had

not been committed much that resulted from it--good, agreeable, and even

essential--would not have taken place. If I reflect on an action still

more remote, ten years ago or more, then the consequences of my action

are still plainer to me and I find it hard to imagine what would have

happened had that action not been performed. The farther I go back in

memory, or what is the same thing the farther I go forward in my

judgment, the more doubtful becomes my belief in the freedom of my

action.

In history we find a very similar progress of conviction concerning the

part played by free will in the general affairs of humanity. A

contemporary event seems to us to be indubitably the doing of all the

known participants, but with a more remote event we already see its

inevitable results which prevent our considering anything else possible.

And the farther we go back in examining events the less arbitrary do

they appear.

The Austro-Prussian war appears to us undoubtedly the result of the

crafty conduct of Bismarck, and so on. The Napoleonic wars still seem to

us, though already questionably, to be the outcome of their heroes'

will. But in the Crusades we already see an event occupying its definite

place in history and without which we cannot imagine the modern history

of Europe, though to the chroniclers of the Crusades that event appeared

as merely due to the will of certain people. In regard to the migration

of the peoples it does not enter anyone's head today to suppose that the

renovation of the European world depended on Attila's caprice. The

farther back in history the object of our observation lies, the more

doubtful does the free will of those concerned in the event become and

the more manifest the law of inevitability.

The third consideration is the degree to which we apprehend that endless

chain of causation inevitably demanded by reason, in which each

phenomenon comprehended, and therefore man's every action, must have its

definite place as a result of what has gone before and as a cause of

what will follow.

The better we are acquainted with the physiological, psychological, and

historical laws deduced by observation and by which man is controlled,

and the more correctly we perceive the physiological, psychological, and

historical causes of the action, and the simpler the action we are

observing and the less complex the character and mind of the man in

question, the more subject to inevitability and the less free do our

actions and those of others appear.

When we do not at all understand the cause of an action, whether a

crime, a good action, or even one that is simply nonmoral, we ascribe a

greater amount of freedom to it. In the case of a crime we most urgently

demand the punishment for such an act; in the case of a virtuous act we

rate its merit most highly. In an indifferent case we recognize in it

more individuality, originality, and independence. But if even one of

the innumerable causes of the act is known to us we recognize a certain

element of necessity and are less insistent on punishment for the crime,

or the acknowledgment of the merit of the virtuous act, or the freedom

of the apparently original action. That a criminal was reared among male

factors mitigates his fault in our eyes. The self-sacrifice of a father

or mother, or self-sacrifice with the possibility of a reward, is more

comprehensible than gratuitous self-sacrifice, and therefore seems less

deserving of sympathy and less the result of free will. The founder of a

sect or party, or an inventor, impresses us less when we know how or by

what the way was prepared for his activity. If we have a large range of

examples, if our observation is constantly directed to seeking the

correlation of cause and effect in people's actions, their actions

appear to us more under compulsion and less free the more correctly we

connect the effects with the causes. If we examined simple actions and

had a vast number of such actions under observation, our conception of

their inevitability would be still greater. The dishonest conduct of the

son of a dishonest father, the misconduct of a woman who had fallen into

bad company, a drunkard's relapse into drunkenness, and so on are

actions that seem to us less free the better we understand their cause.

If the man whose actions we are considering is on a very low stage of

mental development, like a child, a madman, or a simpleton--then,

knowing the causes of the act and the simplicity of the character and

intelligence in question, we see so large an element of necessity and so

little free will that as soon as we know the cause prompting the action

we can foretell the result.

On these three considerations alone is based the conception of

irresponsibility for crimes and the extenuating circumstances admitted

by all legislative codes. The responsibility appears greater or less

according to our greater or lesser knowledge of the circumstances in

which the man was placed whose action is being judged, and according to

the greater or lesser interval of time between the commission of the

action and its investigation, and according to the greater or lesser

understanding of the causes that led to the action.

CHAPTER X

Thus our conception of free will and inevitability gradually diminishes

or increases according to the greater or lesser connection with the

external world, the greater or lesser remoteness of time, and the

greater or lesser dependence on the causes in relation to which we

contemplate a man's life.

So that if we examine the case of a man whose connection with the

external world is well known, where the time between the action and its

examination is great, and where the causes of the action are most

accessible, we get the conception of a maximum of inevitability and a

minimum of free will. If we examine a man little dependent on external

conditions, whose action was performed very recently, and the causes of

whose action are beyond our ken, we get the conception of a minimum of

inevitability and a maximum of freedom.

In neither case--however we may change our point of view, however plain

we may make to ourselves the connection between the man and the external

world, however inaccessible it may be to us, however long or short the

period of time, however intelligible or incomprehensible the causes of

the action may be--can we ever conceive either complete freedom or

complete necessity.

(1) To whatever degree we may imagine a man to be exempt from the

influence of the external world, we never get a conception of freedom in

space. Every human action is inevitably conditioned by what surrounds

him and by his own body. I lift my arm and let it fall. My action seems

to me free; but asking myself whether I could raise my arm in every

direction, I see that I raised it in the direction in which there was

least obstruction to that action either from things around me or from

the construction of my own body. I chose one out of all the possible

directions because in it there were fewest obstacles. For my action to

be free it was necessary that it should encounter no obstacles. To

conceive of a man being free we must imagine him outside space, which is

evidently impossible.

(2) However much we approximate the time of judgment to the time of the

deed, we never get a conception of freedom in time. For if I examine an

action committed a second ago I must still recognize it as not being

free, for it is irrevocably linked to the moment at which it was

committed. Can I lift my arm? I lift it, but ask myself: could I have

abstained from lifting my arm at the moment that has already passed? To

convince myself of this I do not lift it the next moment. But I am not

now abstaining from doing so at the first moment when I asked the

question. Time has gone by which I could not detain, the arm I then

lifted is no longer the same as the arm I now refrain from lifting, nor

is the air in which I lifted it the same that now surrounds me. The

moment in which the first movement was made is irrevocable, and at that

moment I could make only one movement, and whatever movement I made

would be the only one. That I did not lift my arm a moment later does

not prove that I could have abstained from lifting it then. And since I

could make only one movement at that single moment of time, it could not

have been any other. To imagine it as free, it is necessary to imagine

it in the present, on the boundary between the past and the future--that

is, outside time, which is impossible.

(3) However much the difficulty of understanding the causes may be

increased, we never reach a conception of complete freedom, that is, an

absence of cause. However inaccessible to us may be the cause of the

expression of will in any action, our own or another's, the first demand

of reason is the assumption of and search for a cause, for without a

cause no phenomenon is conceivable. I raise my arm to perform an action

independently of any cause, but my wish to perform an action without a

cause is the cause of my action.

But even if--imagining a man quite exempt from all influences, examining

only his momentary action in the present, unevoked by any cause--we were

to admit so infinitely small a remainder of inevitability as equaled

zero, we should even then not have arrived at the conception of complete

freedom in man, for a being uninfluenced by the external world, standing

outside of time and independent of cause, is no longer a man.

In the same way we can never imagine the action of a man quite devoid of

freedom and entirely subject to the law of inevitability.

(1) However we may increase our knowledge of the conditions of space in

which man is situated, that knowledge can never be complete, for the

number of those conditions is as infinite as the infinity of space. And

therefore so long as not all the conditions influencing men are defined,

there is no complete inevitability but a certain measure of freedom

remains.

(2) However we may prolong the period of time between the action we are

examining and the judgment upon it, that period will be finite, while

time is infinite, and so in this respect too there can never be absolute

inevitability.

(3) However accessible may be the chain of causation of any action, we

shall never know the whole chain since it is endless, and so again we

never reach absolute inevitability.

But besides this, even if, admitting the remaining minimum of freedom to

equal zero, we assumed in some given case--as for instance in that of a

dying man, an unborn babe, or an idiot--complete absence of freedom, by

so doing we should destroy the very conception of man in the case we are

examining, for as soon as there is no freedom there is also no man. And

so the conception of the action of a man subject solely to the law of

inevitability without any element of freedom is just as impossible as

the conception of a man's completely free action.

And so to imagine the action of a man entirely subject to the law of

inevitability without any freedom, we must assume the knowledge of an

infinite number of space relations, an infinitely long period of time,

and an infinite series of causes.

To imagine a man perfectly free and not subject to the law of

inevitability, we must imagine him all alone, beyond space, beyond time,

and free from dependence on cause.

In the first case, if inevitability were possible without freedom we

should have reached a definition of inevitability by the laws of

inevitability itself, that is, a mere form without content.

In the second case, if freedom were possible without inevitability we

should have arrived at unconditioned freedom beyond space, time, and

cause, which by the fact of its being unconditioned and unlimited would

be nothing, or mere content without form.

We should in fact have reached those two fundamentals of which man's

whole outlook on the universe is constructed--the incomprehensible

essence of life, and the laws defining that essence.

Reason says: (1) space with all the forms of matter that give it

visibility is infinite, and cannot be imagined otherwise. (2) Time is

infinite motion without a moment of rest and is unthinkable otherwise.

(3) The connection between cause and effect has no beginning and can

have no end.

Consciousness says: (1) I alone am, and all that exists is but me,

consequently I include space. (2) I measure flowing time by the fixed

moment of the present in which alone I am conscious of myself as living,

consequently I am outside time. (3) I am beyond cause, for I feel myself

to be the cause of every manifestation of my life.

Reason gives expression to the laws of inevitability. Consciousness

gives expression to the essence of freedom.

Freedom not limited by anything is the essence of life, in man's

consciousness. Inevitability without content is man's reason in its

three forms.

Freedom is the thing examined. Inevitability is what examines. Freedom

is the content. Inevitability is the form.

Only by separating the two sources of cognition, related to one another

as form to content, do we get the mutually exclusive and separately

incomprehensible conceptions of freedom and inevitability.

Only by uniting them do we get a clear conception of man's life.

Apart from these two concepts which in their union mutually define one

another as form and content, no conception of life is possible.

All that we know of the life of man is merely a certain relation of free

will to inevitability, that is, of consciousness to the laws of reason.

All that we know of the external world of nature is only a certain

relation of the forces of nature to inevitability, or of the essence of

life to the laws of reason.

The great natural forces lie outside us and we are not conscious of

them; we call those forces gravitation, inertia, electricity, animal

force, and so on, but we are conscious of the force of life in man and

we call that freedom.

But just as the force of gravitation, incomprehensible in itself but

felt by every man, is understood by us only to the extent to which we

know the laws of inevitability to which it is subject (from the first

knowledge that all bodies have weight, up to Newton's law), so too the

force of free will, incomprehensible in itself but of which everyone is

conscious, is intelligible to us only in as far as we know the laws of

inevitability to which it is subject (from the fact that every man dies,

up to the knowledge of the most complex economic and historic laws).

All knowledge is merely a bringing of this essence of life under the

laws of reason.

Man's free will differs from every other force in that man is directly

conscious of it, but in the eyes of reason it in no way differs from any

other force. The forces of gravitation, electricity, or chemical

affinity are only distinguished from one another in that they are

differently defined by reason. Just so the force of man's free will is

distinguished by reason from the other forces of nature only by the

definition reason gives it. Freedom, apart from necessity, that is,

apart from the laws of reason that define it, differs in no way from

gravitation, or heat, or the force that makes things grow; for reason,

it is only a momentary undefinable sensation of life.

And as the undefinable essence of the force moving the heavenly bodies,

the undefinable essence of the forces of heat and electricity, or of

chemical affinity, or of the vital force, forms the content of

astronomy, physics, chemistry, botany, zoology, and so on, just in the

same way does the force of free will form the content of history. But

just as the subject of every science is the manifestation of this

unknown essence of life while that essence itself can only be the

subject of metaphysics, even the manifestation of the force of free will

in human beings in space, in time, and in dependence on cause forms the

subject of history, while free will itself is the subject of

metaphysics.

In the experimental sciences what we know we call the laws of

inevitability, what is unknown to us we call vital force. Vital force is

only an expression for the unknown remainder over and above what we know

of the essence of life.

So also in history what is known to us we call laws of inevitability,

what is unknown we call free will. Free will is for history only an

expression for the unknown remainder of what we know about the laws of

human life.

CHAPTER XI

History examines the manifestations of man's free will in connection

with the external world in time and in dependence on cause, that is, it

defines this freedom by the laws of reason, and so history is a science

only in so far as this free will is defined by those laws.

The recognition of man's free will as something capable of influencing

historical events, that is, as not subject to laws, is the same for

history as the recognition of a free force moving the heavenly bodies

would be for astronomy.

That assumption would destroy the possibility of the existence of laws,

that is, of any science whatever. If there is even a single body moving

freely, then the laws of Kepler and Newton are negatived and no

conception of the movement of the heavenly bodies any longer exists. If

any single action is due to free will, then not a single historical law

can exist, nor any conception of historical events.

For history, lines exist of the movement of human wills, one end of

which is hidden in the unknown but at the other end of which a

consciousness of man's will in the present moves in space, time, and

dependence on cause.

The more this field of motion spreads out before our eyes, the more

evident are the laws of that movement. To discover and define those laws

is the problem of history.

From the standpoint from which the science of history now regards its

subject on the path it now follows, seeking the causes of events in

man's freewill, a scientific enunciation of those laws is impossible,

for however man's free will may be restricted, as soon as we recognize

it as a force not subject to law, the existence of law becomes

impossible.

Only by reducing this element of free will to the infinitesimal, that

is, by regarding it as an infinitely small quantity, can we convince

ourselves of the absolute inaccessibility of the causes, and then

instead of seeking causes, history will take the discovery of laws as

its problem.

The search for these laws has long been begun and the new methods of

thought which history must adopt are being worked out simultaneously

with the self-destruction toward which--ever dissecting and dissecting

the causes of phenomena--the old method of history is moving.

All human sciences have traveled along that path. Arriving at

infinitesimals, mathematics, the most exact of sciences, abandons the

process of analysis and enters on the new process of the integration of

unknown, infinitely small, quantities. Abandoning the conception of

cause, mathematics seeks law, that is, the property common to all

unknown, infinitely small, elements.

In another form but along the same path of reflection the other sciences

have proceeded. When Newton enunciated the law of gravity he did not say

that the sun or the earth had a property of attraction; he said that all

bodies from the largest to the smallest have the property of attracting

one another, that is, leaving aside the question of the cause of the

movement of the bodies, he expressed the property common to all bodies

from the infinitely large to the infinitely small. The same is done by

the natural sciences: leaving aside the question of cause, they seek for

laws. History stands on the same path. And if history has for its object

the study of the movement of the nations and of humanity and not the

narration of episodes in the lives of individuals, it too, setting aside

the conception of cause, should seek the laws common to all the

inseparably interconnected infinitesimal elements of free will.

CHAPTER XII

From the time the law of Copernicus was discovered and proved, the mere

recognition of the fact that it was not the sun but the earth that moves

sufficed to destroy the whole cosmography of the ancients. By disproving

that law it might have been possible to retain the old conception of the

movements of the bodies, but without disproving it, it would seem

impossible to continue studying the Ptolemaic worlds. But even after the

discovery of the law of Copernicus the Ptolemaic worlds were still

studied for a long time.

From the time the first person said and proved that the number of births

or of crimes is subject to mathematical laws, and that this or that mode

of government is determined by certain geographical and economic

conditions, and that certain relations of population to soil produce

migrations of peoples, the foundations on which history had been built

were destroyed in their essence.

By refuting these new laws the former view of history might have been

retained; but without refuting them it would seem impossible to continue

studying historic events as the results of man's free will. For if a

certain mode of government was established or certain migrations of

peoples took place in consequence of such and such geographic,

ethnographic, or economic conditions, then the free will of those

individuals who appear to us to have established that mode of government

or occasioned the migrations can no longer be regarded as the cause.

And yet the former history continues to be studied side by side with the

laws of statistics, geography, political economy, comparative philology,

and geology, which directly contradict its assumptions.

The struggle between the old views and the new was long and stubbornly

fought out in physical philosophy. Theology stood on guard for the old

views and accused the new of violating revelation. But when truth

conquered, theology established itself just as firmly on the new

foundation.

Just as prolonged and stubborn is the struggle now proceeding between

the old and the new conception of history, and theology in the same way

stands on guard for the old view, and accuses the new view of subverting

revelation.

In the one case as in the other, on both sides the struggle provokes

passion and stifles truth. On the one hand there is fear and regret for

the loss of the whole edifice constructed through the ages, on the other

is the passion for destruction.

To the men who fought against the rising truths of physical philosophy,

it seemed that if they admitted that truth it would destroy faith in

God, in the creation of the firmament, and in the miracle of Joshua the

son of Nun. To the defenders of the laws of Copernicus and Newton, to

Voltaire for example, it seemed that the laws of astronomy destroyed

religion, and he utilized the law of gravitation as a weapon against

religion.

Just so it now seems as if we have only to admit the law of

inevitability, to destroy the conception of the soul, of good and evil,

and all the institutions of state and church that have been built up on

those conceptions.

So too, like Voltaire in his time, uninvited defenders of the law of

inevitability today use that law as a weapon against religion, though

the law of inevitability in history, like the law of Copernicus in

astronomy, far from destroying, even strengthens the foundation on which

the institutions of state and church are erected.

As in the question of astronomy then, so in the question of history now,

the whole difference of opinion is based on the recognition or

nonrecognition of something absolute, serving as the measure of visible

phenomena. In astronomy it was the immovability of the earth, in history

it is the independence of personality--free will.

As with astronomy the difficulty of recognizing the motion of the earth

lay in abandoning the immediate sensation of the earth's fixity and of

the motion of the planets, so in history the difficulty of recognizing

the subjection of personality to the laws of space, time, and cause lies

in renouncing the direct feeling of the independence of one's own

personality. But as in astronomy the new view said: "It is true that we

do not feel the movement of the earth, but by admitting its immobility

we arrive at absurdity, while by admitting its motion (which we do not

feel) we arrive at laws," so also in history the new view says: "It is

true that we are not conscious of our dependence, but by admitting our

free will we arrive at absurdity, while by admitting our dependence on

the external world, on time, and on cause, we arrive at laws."

In the first case it was necessary to renounce the consciousness of an

unreal immobility in space and to recognize a motion we did not feel; in

the present case it is similarly necessary to renounce a freedom that

does not exist, and to recognize a dependence of which we are not

conscious.

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