THE DEVIL

BY

LEO TOLSTOY

Translated by

AYLMER MAUDE

LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD.
RUSKIN HOUSE, 40 MUSEUM STREET, W.C.1

The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Devil, by Leo Tolstoy

Title: The Devil

Author: Leo Tolstoy

Translator: Aylmer Maude

Release Date: January 22, 2022 [eBook #67224]

Language: English

Produced by: Laura Natal Rodrigues (Images generously made available by Hathi Trust Digital Library.)

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First published in 1926.

But I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

And if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell.

And if thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and call it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell.

MATTHEW V. 28, 29, 30.

LIST OF RUSSIAN NAMES

With stress-accents marked to show which syllable should be emphasized.

Dómna, a cook in Tolstoy's house.
Leo Tolstóy, the author.
Yásnaya Polyána, his estate.

Anna Prókhorova, a peasant woman.
Ánnushka, a servant.
Desyatína, a land measure, about 2·7 acres.
Dúmchin, an ex-Marshal of the Nobility.
Eugene Ivánich Irténev (Jénya), a landed-proprietor.
Fëdor Zakhárich Pryánishnikov, a gentleman.
Iván (Ványa), a clerk.
Kabúshka, a mare.
Kalériya Vladímirovna Esípova, a lady.
Koltóvski, an estate.
Liza Ánnenskaya, Eugene's wife.
Mary Pávlovna Irténeva, Eugene's mother.
Matvéy, a peasant.
Misha, a man-servant.
Nicholas Lysúkh, a servant.
Nikoláy Semënich, a doctor.
Parásha, a servant.
Samókhin, a labourer.
Semënovskoe, a village.
Sídor Péchnikov, a peasant.
Stepanída Péchnikova, Sídor's wife.
Tánya, a girl.

Varára Alexéevna Ánnenskaya, Liza's mother.
Vasíli Nikoláich, a steward.
Vásin, a peasant.
Yálta, a town in the Crimea.
Zémstvo, a Local Government institution.
Zenóvi, a peasant.

ë is pronounced as *yo*.

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XXI
VARIATION OF THE CONCLUSION OF *THE DEVIL*

PREFACE

Towards the end of 1880, when he was fifty-two, Tolstoy one day approached the young tutor who lived in his house at Yasnaya Polyana, and in great agitation asked him to do him a service. The tutor, seeing Tolstoy so moved, asked what he could possibly do for him. In an unready voice Tolstoy replied: "Save me, I am falling!" The tutor, in alarm, inquired what was the matter, to which Tolstoy replied: "I am overcome by sexual desire and feel a complete lack of power to retrain myself. I am in danger of yielding to the temptation. Help me!"

"I am a weak man myself," replied the tutor. "How can I help you?"

"You can, if only you won't refuse!"

"But what must I do to help you?"

"This! Come with me on my daily walks. We will go out together and talk, and the temptation will not occur to me."

They set out together, and Tolstoy told the tutor how during his daily walks he had encountered Domna, a young woman of twenty-two who had recently been engaged as the servants' cook. This Domna was a tall, healthy, attractive young woman with a fine figure and beautiful complexion, though not otherwise particularly handsome. At first for some days he had found it pleasant to watch her. Then he had followed her and whittled to her. After that he had walked and talked with her, and at last had arranged a rendezvous with her. The spot was in a distant alley on the estate; to reach it from the house one had to pass the windows of the children's schoolroom. When setting out past those windows next day to keep

the appointment, he had gone through a terrible struggle between the temptation and his conscience. Just then his second son had called to him through the window, reminding him of a Greek lesson that had been fixed for that day, and this had detained Tolstoy. He woke as it were, and was glad to have been saved from keeping the appointment. But the temptation dill tormented him. He tried the effect of prayer, but it did not free him. He suffered but felt powerless and as if he might yield at any moment. So as a last resource he resolved to try the effect of making a full confession to someone—giving all particulars of the strength of the temptation that oppressed him and of his own weakness. He wished to feel as thoroughly ashamed of himself as possible, and he had decided to ask the tutor to accompany him on his daily walk, which usually he took alone. He also arranged that Domna should be removed to another place.

After the danger was over Tolstoy seldom referred to the incident unless to those who spoke to him of their own sexual difficulties, but on one occasion he wrote a full account of it to a friend.

The incident resulted in his writing this story, *The Devil*—the hero of which yields to a temptation such as that Tolstoy had encountered. It was composed some ten years later, but was not published during Tolstoy's lifetime; nor did it appear in the English edition of his posthumous works issued by Nelson & Sons. It is now translated into English for the first time. Tolstoy had vividly imagined the consequences that might have resulted from yielding to the temptation, and used that mental experience for his story, employing fictitious characters placed in surroundings with which he was familiar and such as those amid which the incident had occurred.

The relations of the sexes in Russian society of his day resembled that in English society to-day more than in English society of that period—when, both in literature and in life, repression and suppression of passion was more common. When in *Kreutzer Sonata* and in *The Devil* he expressed the views he held, Tolstoy was consciously opposing the current of life around him, and these works also run counter to the movement of our own society to-day. That however does not detract from the value of the work. The belief that ill-results follow from the indulgence of the sexual instincts is not

an obsolete eccentricity but a belief held by many men in many ages, and it receives sufficient confirmation from experience to make it certain that it is a view which has to be reckoned with.

The ancient conception of a bitter strife between the flesh and the spirit and of woman as the devil's chief agent in achieving man's spiritual destruction, is alien to the modern outlook, and to-day it is often not understood how and why men ever held such beliefs; but both in *The Kreutzer Sonata* and in this story Tolstoy makes us realize how easily and naturally men of a certain temperament may come to those convictions. Without adopting that view one is enabled to realize what others have felt, and to perceive how probable is a reaction from the unrestraint of to-day; as happened after the libertinage of the Restoration period.

I do not think there is any other important story of Tolstoy's that has not yet been translated. He left several trunks full of manuscripts, chiefly early drafts of works that had been published during his lifetime or commencements of stories he abandoned; but before his death he expressed the opinion that, except some passages in his Diaries, there was little or nothing worth publishing among those remains. He was indeed a great artist, and his mastery showed itself in knowing what to strike out, omit, and withhold. His published writings are voluminous, but among them there is little (except perhaps some of the later repetitions of his non-resistance doctrine) that we could willingly spare. But if the mass of documents which while he lived he had the good sense to suppress are now to be published, together with a large amount of didactic correspondence, it is likely to injure rather than to enhance his literary reputation. There is a disquieting rumour that this is to take place, in the form of an edition of his works extending to one hundred volumes. Not even that calamity will depose him from the place he securely holds as the greatest and most influential of Russian writers, but it will be an obstacle rather than a help to those who want to become acquainted with the works on which he wished his reputation to rest. The present story is an exception. It is so characteristic of him, and so closely connected with an event that influenced him, that it would be a pity for it not to be known,

especially as it is one of the few posthumous works he left in a completed state; even in this case we do not know which of the two endings he wrote he would have adopted had he published it himself.

The foot-notes are by the translator.

AYLMER MAUDE

GREAT BADDOW, CHELMSFORD

September 12, 1925.

THE DEVIL

I

A brilliant career lay before Eugene Irtenev. He had all that was necessary for this: an admirable education at home, high honours when he graduated in law at Petersburg University, connections in the highest society through his recently deceased father, and he had himself already begun service in one of the Ministries under the protection of the Minister. He also had a fortune; even a large one, though insecure. His father had lived abroad and in Petersburg, allowing his sons, Eugene, and Andrew, the elder who was in the Horse Guards, 6,000 rubles a year each, while he himself and his wife spent a great deal. He only used to visit his estate for a couple of months in summer and did not concern himself with its direction, entrusting it all to an unscrupulous manager who also failed to attend to it, but in whom he had complete confidence.

After the father's death, when the brothers began to divide the property, there were found to be so many debts that their lawyer even advised them to refuse the inheritance and retain only an estate left them by their grand-mother, which was valued at 100,000 rubles. But a neighbouring landed-proprietor who had done business with old Irtenev, that is to say, who had promissory notes from him and had come to Petersburg on that account, said that in spite of the debts they could straighten out affairs so as to retain a large fortune —it would only be necessary to sell the forest and some outlying land, retaining the rich Semënov estate with 4,000 desyatinas of black-earth, the sugar-factory, and 200 desyatinas of water-meadows—if one devoted oneself to the management and, settling on the estate, farmed it wisely and economically.

And so, having visited the estate in spring (his father had died in Lent), Eugene looked into everything, resolved to retire from the Civil Service, settle in the country with his mother, and undertake the management, with the object of preserving the main estate. He arranged with his brother, with whom he was very friendly, that he would pay him 4,000 rubles a year, or alternatively would pay him 80,000 in a lump sum, while Andrew, on his part, handed over to him his share of the inheritance.

So he arranged matters and, having settled down with his mother in the big house, ardently and yet cautiously began managing the estate.

It is generally supposed that Conservatives are usually old people, and those in favour of change are the young. That is not quite correct. The most usual Conservatives are young people: those who want to live but who do not think, and have not time to think, about how to live and who therefore take as a model for themselves a way of life that they have seen.

Thus it was with Eugene. Having settled in the village, his aim and ideal was to restore the form of life that had existed, not in his father's time—his father had been a bad manager—but in his grandfather's. And now in the house, the garden, in the estate-management—of course with changes suited to the times—he tried

to resurrect the general spirit of his grandfather's life—everything on a large scale—good order, method, and everybody satisfied; but so to arrange things entailed much work. It was necessary to meet the demands of the creditors and the banks, and for that purpose to sell some land and arrange renewals of credit. It was also necessary to get money to carry on (partly by farming out land, and partly by hiring labour) the immense operations on the Semënov estate, with its 400 desyatinas of ploughland and its sugar-factory, and to deal with the garden so that it should not seem to be neglected or in decay.

There was much work to do, but Eugene had plenty of strength—physical and mental. He was twenty-six, of medium height, strongly built, with muscles developed by gymnastics. He was full-blooded and very red over his whole neck, with bright teeth and lips and hair soft and curly, though not thick. His only physical defect was shortsightedness, which he had himself developed by using spectacles, so that he could not now do without a pince-nez, which had already formed a line at the top of his nose-ridge.

Such he was physically. For his spiritual portrait it might be said that the better anyone knew him the better they liked him. His mother had always loved him more than she loved anyone else; and now, after her husband's death, she concentrated on him not only her whole affection but her whole life. Nor was it only his mother who so loved him. All his comrades at the high-school and the university not merely liked him very much, but respected him. He had this effect on all who met him. It was impossible not to believe what he said, impossible to suspect any deception or falseness in one who had such an open, honest face and, in particular, such eyes.

In general his personality helped him much in his affairs. A creditor who would have refused another, trusted him. The clerk, the village Elder, or a peasant, who would have played a dirty trick and cheated someone else, forgot to deceive under the pleasant impression of intercourse with this kindly, agreeable, and above all candid man.

It was the end of May. Eugene had somehow managed, in town, to get the vacant land freed from the mortgage, so as to sell it to a

merchant, and had borrowed money from that same merchant to replenish his stock, that is to say, to procure horses, bulls, carts and, chiefly, to begin to build a necessary farm-house. The matter had been arranged. The timber was being carted, the carpenters were already at work, and manure for the estate was being brought on eighty carts. But everything still hung by a thread.

II

Amid these cares something came about which, though unimportant, tormented Eugene at the time. As a young man he had lived as all healthy young men live, that is, he had had relations with women of various kinds. He was not a libertine but, as he himself said, neither was he a monk. He only turned to this, however, in so far as was necessary for physical health and to have his mind free, as he used to say. This had begun when he was sixteen and had gone on satisfactorily. Satisfactorily in the sense that he did not give himself up to debauchery, was not once infatuated, and had never contracted a disease. At first he had a seamstress in Petersburg, then she got spoilt and he made other arrangements, and that side of his affairs was so well secured that it did not trouble him.

But now he was living in the country for the second month and did not at all know what he was to do. Compulsory self-restraint was beginning to have a bad effect on him.

Must he really go to town for that purpose? And where to? How? That was the only thing that disturbed Eugene Ivanich, but as he was convinced that the thing was necessary and that he needed it, it really became necessary, and he felt that he was not free and that involuntarily his eyes followed every young woman.

He did not approve of having relations with a married woman or a maid in his own village. He knew by report that both his father and

grandfather had been quite different in this matter from other land-owners of that time. At home they had never had any entanglements with peasant-women, and he had decided that he would not do so either; but afterwards, feeling himself ever more and more under compulsion, and imagining with horror what might happen to him in the neighbouring country town, and reflecting on the fact that the days of serfdom were now over, he decided that it might be done on the spot. Only it must be done so that no one should know of it, and not for the sake of debauchery but merely for health's sake—as he said to himself. And when he had decided this he became still more restless. When talking to the village Elder, the peasants, or the carpenters, he involuntarily brought the conversation round to women, and when it turned to women, he kept it on that theme. He noticed the women more and more.

III

To settle the matter in his own mind was one thing, but to carry it out was another. To approach a woman himself was impossible. Which one? Where? It must be done through someone else, but to whom should he speak about it?

He happened to go into a watchman's hut in the forest to get a drink of water. The watchman had been his father's huntsman. Eugene Ivanich chatted with him, and the watchman began telling some strange tales of hunting sprees. It occurred to Eugene Ivanich that it would be convenient to arrange matters in this hut, or in the wood. Only he did not know how to manage it, and whether old Daniel would undertake the arrangement. "Perhaps he will be horrified at such a proposal; and I shall have disgraced myself, but perhaps he would agree to it quite simply." So he thought while listening to Daniel's stories. Daniel was telling how once when they

had been stopping at the hut of the sexton's wife in an outlying field, he had brought a woman for Fëdor Zakharich Pryanishnikov.

"It will be all right," thought Eugene.

"Your father, may the kingdom of heaven be his, did not go in for nonsense of that kind."

"It won't do," thought Eugene. But to test the matter he said: "How was it you engaged on such bad things?"

"But what is there bad in it? She was glad of it, and Fëdor Zakharich was satisfied, very satisfied. I got a ruble. Why, what was he to do? He too is a lively limb, apparently, and drinks wine."

"Yes, I may speak," thought Eugene, and at once proceeded to do so.

"And, do you know, Daniel, I don't know how to endure it,"—he felt himself going scarlet.

Daniel smiled.

"I am not a monk,—I have been accustomed to it."

He felt that what he was saying was stupid, but was glad to see that Daniel approved.

"Why of course, you should have told me long ago. It can all be arranged," said he: "Only tell me which one you want."

"Oh, it is really all the same to me. Of course not an ugly one, and she must be healthy."

"I understand!" said Daniel briefly. He reflected.

"Ah! There is a tasty morsel," he began. Again Eugene went red. "A tasty morsel. See here, she was married last autumn." Daniel whispered,—"and he hasn't been able to do anything. Think what that is worth to one who wants it!"

Eugene even frowned with shame.

"No, no," he said. "I don't want that at all. I want, on the contrary (what could the contrary be?), on the contrary I only want that she

should be healthy and that there should be as little fuss as possible —a woman whose husband is away in the army, or something of that kind."

"I know. It's Stepanida I must bring you. Her husband is away in town, just the same as a soldier. And she is a fine woman, and clean. You will be satisfied. As it is I was saying to her the other day —you should go, but she . . ."

"Well then, when is it to be?"

"To-morrow if you like. I shall be going to get some tobacco and I will call in, and at the dinner-hour come here, or to the bath-house behind the kitchen garden. There will be nobody about. Besides after dinner everybody takes a nap."

"All right, then."

A terrible excitement seized Eugene as he rode home. "What will happen? What is a peasant woman like? Suppose it turns out that she is hideous, horrible. No, she is handsome," he told himself, remembering some he had been noticing. "But what shall I say? What shall I do?"

He was not himself all that day. Next day at noon he went to the forester's hut. Daniel stood at the door and silently and significantly nodded towards the wood. The blood rushed to Eugene's heart, he was conscious of it and went to the kitchen-garden. No one was there. He went to the bath-house—there was no one about, he looked in, came out, and suddenly heard the crackling of a breaking twig. He looked round—and she was standing in the thicket beyond the little ravine. He rushed there across the ravine. There were nettles in it which he had not noticed. They stung him and, losing the pince-nez from his nose, he ran up the slope on the farther side. In a white embroidered apron, in a red-brown skirt and a bright red kerchief, barefoot, fresh, firm, and handsome, she stood shyly smiling.

"There is a path leading round,—you should have gone round," she said. "I came long ago, ever so long."

He went up to her and, looking her over, touched her.

A quarter of an hour later they separated; he found his pince-nez, called in to see Daniel, and in reply to his question: "Are you satisfied, master?" gave him a ruble and went home.

He was satisfied. Only at first had he felt ashamed, then it had passed off. And it had all gone well. The best thing was that he now felt at ease, tranquil and vigorous. As for her, he had not even seen her thoroughly. He remembered that she was clean, fresh, not bad-looking, and simple, without any pretence. "Whose wife is she?" said he to himself. "Pechnikov's, Daniel said. What Pechnikov is that? There are two households of that name. Probably she is old Michael's daughter-in-law. Yes, that must be it. His son does live in Moscow. I'll ask Daniel about it some time."

From then onward that previously important drawback to country life—enforced self-restraint—was eliminated. Eugene's freedom of mind was no longer disturbed and he was able to attend freely to his affairs.

And the matter Eugene had undertaken was far from easy: it sometimes seemed to him that he would not be able to go through with it, and that it would end in his having to sell the estate after all, so that all his efforts would be wasted and it would turn out that he had failed, and been unable to accomplish what he had undertaken. That prospect disturbed him most of all. Before he had time to stop up one hole a new one would unexpectedly show itself.

All this time more and more debts of his father's, which he had not expected, came to light. It was evident that his father had latterly borrowed right and left. At the time of the settlement in May, Eugene had thought he at last knew everything, but suddenly, in the middle of the summer, he received a letter from which it appeared that there was still a debt of 12,000 rubles to the widow Esipova. There was no promissory note, but only an ordinary receipt, which his lawyer told him could be disputed. But it did not enter Eugene's head to refuse to pay a debt of his father's merely because the document could be challenged. He only wanted to know for certain whether there had been such a debt.

"Mamma! Who is Kaleriya Vladimirovna Esipova?" he asked his mother, when they met as usual for dinner.

"Esipova? She was brought up by your grandfather. Why?"

Eugene told his mother about the letter.

"I wonder she is not ashamed to ask for it. Your father gave her so much!"

"But do we owe her this?"

"Well now, how shall I say? It is not a debt. Papa, out of his unbounded kindness . . ."

"Yes, but did Papa consider it a debt?"

"I cannot say. I don't know. I only know it is hard enough for you without that."

Eugene saw that Mary Pavlovna did not know what to say, and was as it were sounding him.

"I see from what you say, that it must be paid," said the son. "I will go to see her to-morrow and have a chat, and see if it cannot be deferred."

"Ah, how sorry I am for you, but, you know, that will be best. Tell her she must wait," said Mary Pavlovna, evidently tranquillized and proud of her son's decision.

Eugene's position was particularly hard because his mother, who was living with him, did not at all realize his position. She had been so accustomed all her life long to live extravagantly that she could not even imagine to herself the position her son was in, that is to say, that to-day or to-morrow matters might shape themselves so that they would have nothing left, and he would have to sell everything, and live and support his mother on what salary he could earn, which at the very most would be 2,000 rubles. She did not understand that they could only save themselves from that position by cutting down expense in everything, and so she could not understand why Eugene was so careful about trifles, in expenditure on gardeners, coachmen, servants—even on food. Also, like most widows, she

nourished feelings of devotion to the memory of her departed spouse quite different from those she had felt for him while he lived, and she did not admit the thought that what the departed had done, or had arranged, could be wrong or could be altered.

Eugene by great efforts managed to keep up the garden and the conservatory with two gardeners, and the stables with two coachmen. And Mary Pavlovna naïvely thought that she was sacrificing herself for her son and doing all a mother could do, by not complaining of the food which the old man-cook prepared, of the fact that the paths in the park were not all swept clean, and that instead of footmen they had only a boy.

So, too, concerning this new debt, in which Eugene saw an almost crushing blow to all his undertakings, Mary Pavlovna only saw an incident displaying Eugene's noble nature.

Mary Pavlovna moreover did not feel much anxiety about Eugene's position, because she was confident that he would make a brilliant marriage which would put everything right. And he could make a very brilliant marriage: she knew a dozen families who would be glad to give their daughters to him. And she wished to arrange the matter as soon as possible.

IV

Eugene himself dreamt of marriage, but not in the same way as his mother. The idea of using marriage as a means of putting his affairs in order was repulsive to him. He wished to marry honourably, for love. He observed the girls whom he met and those he knew, and compared himself with them, but no decision had yet been taken. Meanwhile contrary to his expectations his relations with Stepanida continued, and even acquired the character of a settled affair. Eugene was so far from debauchery, it was so hard for him secretly

to do this thing which he felt to be bad, that he could not arrange these meetings himself, and even after the first one hoped not to see Stepanida again; but it turned out that after some time the same restlessness (due, he believed, to that cause) again overcame him. And his restlessness this time was no longer impersonal, but suggested just those same bright, black eyes, and that deep voice, saying, "ever so long," that same scent of something fresh and strong, and that same full bread lifting the bib of her apron, and all this in that hazel and maple thicket, bathed in bright sunlight.

Though he felt ashamed, he again approached Daniel. And again a rendezvous was fixed for midday, in the wood. This time Eugene looked her over more carefully, and everything about her seemed attractive. He tried talking to her, and asked about her husband. He really was Michael's son, and lived as a coachman in Moscow.

"Well, then, how is it you . . ." Eugene wanted to ask how it was she was untrue to him.

"What about 'how is it'?" asked she. Evidently she was clever and quick-witted.

"Well, how is it you come to me?"

"There now," said she merrily. "I bet he goes on the spree there. Why shouldn't I?"

Evidently she was putting on an air of sauciness and assurance. And this seemed charming to Eugene. But all the same he did not himself fix a rendezvous with her. Even when she proposed that they should meet without the aid of Daniel, to whom she seemed not very well-disposed, Eugene did not consent. He hoped that this meeting would be the last. He liked her. He thought such intercourse was necessary for him and that there was nothing bad about it, but in the depth of his soul there was a stricter judge, who did not approve of it and hoped that this would be the last time, or if he did not hope that, at any rate did not wish to participate in arrangements to repeat it another time.

So the whole summer passed, during which they met a dozen times and always by Daniel's help. It happened once that she could

not be there because her husband had come home, and Daniel proposed another woman, but Eugene refused with disgust. Then the husband went away, and the meetings continued as before, at first through Daniel, but afterwards he simply fixed the time and she came with another woman, Prokhorova—as it would not do for a peasant-woman to go about alone.

Once at the very time fixed for the rendezvous a family came to call on Mary Pavlovna, with the very girl she wished Eugene to marry, and it was impossible for Eugene to get away. As soon as he could do so, he went out as though to the thrashing-floor, and round by the path to their meeting-place in the wood. She was not there, but at the accustomed spot everything within reach of one's hand had been broken—the black alder, the hazel-twigs, and even a young maple the thickness of a stake. She had waited, had become excited and angry, and had skittishly left him a remembrance. He waited, waited, and went to Daniel to ask him to call her for to-morrow. She came, and was just as usual.

So the summer passed. The meetings were always arranged in the wood, and only once, when it grew towards autumn, in the shed that stood in her back-yard.

It did not enter Eugene's head that these relations of his had any importance for him. About her he did not even think. He gave her money and nothing more. At first he did not know and did not think that the affair was known and she was envied throughout the village, or that her relations took money from her and encouraged her, and that her conception of any sin in the matter had been quite obliterated by the influence of the money and her family's approval. It seemed to her that if people envied her, then what she was doing was good.

"It is simply necessary for one's health," thought Eugene. "I grant it is not right, and though no one says anything, everybody, or many people, know of it. The woman who comes with her knows. And once she knows, she is sure to have told others. But what's to be done? I am acting badly," thought Eugene, "but what's one to do? Anyhow it is not for long."

What chiefly disturbed Eugene was the thought of the husband. At first, for some reason, it seemed to him that the husband must be a poor sort, and this, as it were, partly justified his conduct. But he saw the husband and was struck: he was a fine fellow and smartly dressed, in no way a worse man, but surely better, than himself. At their next meeting he told her he had seen her husband and had been surprised to see that he was such a fine fellow.

"There's not such another in the village," said she proudly.

This surprised Eugene. The thought of the husband tormented him still more after that. He happened to be at Daniel's one day and Daniel, having begun chatting, plainly said to him:

"And Michael, the other day, asked me: 'Is it true that the master is living with my wife?' I said I did not know. Anyway, I said, better with the master than with a peasant."

"Well, and what did he say?"

"He said,—'Wait a bit. I'll get to know, and I'll give it her all the same.'"

"Yes, if the husband returned to live here, I would give her up," thought Eugene.

But the husband lived in town and for the present their intercourse continued.

"When necessary, I will break it off, and there will be nothing left of it," thought he.

And this seemed to him certain, especially as during the whole summer many different things occupied him very fully: the erection of the new farm-house, and the harvest, and building, and above all meeting the debts and selling the waste land. All these were affairs that completely absorbed him and on which he spent his thoughts when he lay down and when he rose. All that was, real life. His intercourse—he did not even call it connection—with Stepanida was something quite unnoticed. It is true that when the wish to see her arose, it came with such strength that he could think of nothing else.

But this did not last long. A meeting was arranged, and he again forgot her for a week or even for a month.

In autumn Eugene often rode to town, and there became friendly with the Annenskis. They had a daughter who had just finished the Institute.[1] And then, to Mary Pavlovna's great grief, it happened that Eugene, as she expressed it, "cheapened himself,"—by falling in love with Liza Annenskaya and proposing to her.

From that time the relations with Stepanida ceased.

[1]The Institute was a boarding-school for the daughters of the nobility and gentry, in which great attention was paid to the manners and accomplishments of the pupils.

V

It is impossible to explain why Eugene chose Liza Annenskaya, as it is never possible to explain why a man chooses this and not that woman. There were many reasons—positive and negative. One reason was that she was not a very rich heiress such as his mother sought for him, another that she was naïve and to be pitied in her relations with her mother, then there was the fact that she was not a beauty who attracted general attention to herself, but yet was not bad looking. The chief reason was that his acquaintance with her began at the time when Eugene was ripe for marriage. He fell in love because he knew that he would marry.

Liza Annenskaya was at first merely pleasing to Eugene, but when he decided to make her his wife, his feelings for her became much stronger. He felt that he was in love.

Liza was tall, slender, and long. Everything about her was long; her face, and her nose—not prominently but downwards—and her fingers, and her feet. The colour of her face was very delicate, yellowish white and delicately pink; her hair was long, light brown, soft, curly, and she had beautiful, clear, mild, confiding eyes. Those eyes especially struck Eugene. And when he thought of Liza he always saw those clear, mild, confiding eyes.

Such was she physically; spiritually he knew nothing of her, but only saw those eyes. And those eyes seemed to tell him all he needed to know. The meaning of those eyes was this:

While still in the Institute, when she was fifteen, Liza used continually to fall in love with all attractive men and was animated and happy only when she was in love. After leaving the Institute she continued to fall in love, in just the same way, with all the young men she met, and of course fell in love with Eugene as soon as she made his acquaintance. It was this being in love which gave her eyes that particular expression which so captivated Eugene. Already that winter she had been, at one and the same time, in love with two young men, and blushed and became excited not only when they entered the room but whenever their names were mentioned. But afterwards, when her mother hinted to her that Irtenev seemed to have serious intentions, her love for him increased so that she became almost indifferent to the two previous attractions, and when Irtenev began to come to their balls and parties, and danced with her more than with others and evidently only wished to know whether she loved him, her love for him became painful. She dreamed of him in her sleep and seemed to see him when she was awake in a dark room, and everyone else vanished from her mind. But when he proposed and they were formally engaged, and when they had kissed one another and were a betrothed couple, then she had no thoughts but of him, no desire but to be with him, to love him, and to be loved by him. She was also proud of him and felt emotional about him and herself and her love, and quite melted and felt faint from love of him.

The more he got to know her the more he loved her. He had not at all expected to find such love, and it strengthened his own feeling

still more.

VI

Towards spring he went to his estate at Semënovskoe to have a look at it and to give directions about the management, and especially about the house which was being done up for his wedding.

Mary Pavlovna was dissatisfied with her son's choice, not only because the match was not as brilliant as it might have been, but also because she did not like Varvara Alexeevna, his future mother-in-law. Whether she was good-natured or not she did not know and could not decide, but that she was not well-bred, not *comme il faut*, "not a lady" as Mary Pavlovna said to herself,—she saw from their first acquaintance, and this distressed her; distressed her because she was accustomed to value breeding and knew that Eugene was sensitive to it, and she foresaw that he would suffer much annoyance on this account. But she liked the girl. Liked her chiefly because Eugene did. One could not help loving her. And Mary Pavlovna was quite sincerely ready to do so.

Eugene found his mother contented and in good spirits. She was getting everything straight in the house and preparing to go away herself as soon as he brought his young wife. Eugene persuaded her to stay for the time being, and the future remained undecided.

In the evening after tea Mary Pavlovna played patience as usual. Eugene sat by, helping her. This was the hour of their most intimate talks. Having finished one game of patience and while preparing to begin another, Mary Pavlovna looked up at Eugene and, with a little hesitation, began thus:

"I wanted to tell you, Jenya,—of course I do not know, but in general I wanted to suggest to you that before your wedding it is absolutely necessary to have finished with all your bachelor affairs, so that nothing may disturb either you or your wife. God forbid that it should. You understand me?"

And indeed Eugene at once understood that Mary Pavlovna was hinting at his relations with Stepanida which had ended in the previous autumn; and that she attributed much more importance to those relations than they deserved, as single women always do. Eugene blushed, and not from shame so much as from vexation that good-natured Mary Pavlovna was bothering—out of affection no doubt—but still was bothering about matters that were not her business and that she did not and could not understand. He answered that he had nothing that needed concealment, and that he had always conducted himself so that there should be nothing to hinder his marrying.

"Well, dear, that is excellent. Only, Jenya, don't be vexed with me," said Mary Pavlovna, in confusion.

But Eugene saw that she had not finished and had not said what she wanted to. So it appeared when a little later she began to tell him of how, in his absence, she had been asked to stand godmother at . . . the Pechnikovs.

Eugene flushed now, not with vexation or shame, but with some strange consciousness of the importance of what was about to be told him—an involuntary consciousness quite at variance with his conclusions. And what he expected happened. Mary Pavlovna, as if merely by way of conversation, mentioned that this year only boys were being born,—evidently a sign of a coming war. Both at the Vasins and the Pechnikovs the young wife had a first child—at each house a boy. Mary Pavlovna wanted to say this casually, but she herself felt ashamed when she saw the colour mount to her son's face and saw him nervously removing, tapping, and replacing his pince-nez and hurriedly lighting a cigarette. She became silent. He too was silent and could not think how to break that silence. So they both understood that they had understood one another.

"Yes, the chief thing is that there should be justice and no favouritism in the village,—as under your grandfather."

"Mamma,"—said Eugene suddenly,—"I know why you are saying this. You have no need to be disturbed. My future family-life is so sacred to me that I should not infringe it in any case. And as to what occurred in my bachelor days, that is quite ended. I never formed any union and no one has any claims on me."

"Well, I am glad," said his mother. "I know how noble your feelings are."

Eugene accepted his mother's words as a tribute due to him, and did not reply.

Next day he drove to town thinking of his fiancée and of anything in the world except of Stepanida. But, as if purposely to remind him, on approaching the church he met people walking and driving back from it. He met old Matvey with Simon, some lads and girls, and then two women, one elderly, the other smartly dressed with a bright red kerchief, who seemed familiar. The woman was walking lightly, boldly, carrying a child in her arms. He came up to them, the elder woman bowed, stopping in the old-fashioned way, but the young woman with the child only bent her head, and from under the kerchief gleamed familiar, merry, smiling eyes.

Yes, this was she, but all was over and it was no use looking at her: "and the child may be mine," flashed through his mind. No, what nonsense! There was her husband, she used to see him. He did not even consider the matter further, so settled in his mind was it that it had been necessary for his health,—he had paid her money and there was no more to be said; there was, there had been, and there could be, no question of any union between them. It was not that he stifled the voice of conscience, no—his conscience simply said nothing to him. And he thought no more about her after the conversation with his mother and after this meeting. Nor did he meet her again.

Eugene was married in town the week after Easter, and left at once with his young wife for his country estate. The house had been

arranged as usual for a young couple. Mary Pavlovna wished to leave, but Eugene and still more strongly Liza begged her to remain, and she only moved into a detached wing of the house.

And so a new life began for Eugene.

VII

The first year of his marriage was a hard one for Eugene. It was hard because affairs he had managed to put off during the time of his courtship now, after his marriage, all came upon him at once.

To escape from debts was impossible. An outlying part of the estate was sold and the most pressing obligations met, but others remained, and he had no money. The estate yielded a good revenue, but he had had to send payments to his brother, and to spend on his own marriage, so that there was no ready money and the factory could not carry on and would have to be closed down. The only way of escape was to use his wife's money. Liza, having realized her husband's position, insisted on this herself. Eugene agreed, but only on condition that he should give her a mortgage on half his estate; and this he did. Of course it was not for the sake of his wife, who felt offended at it, but to appease his mother-in-law.

These affairs, with various fluctuations of success and failure, helped to poison Eugene's life that first year. Another thing was his wife's ill-health. That same first year, seven months after their marriage, in autumn, a misfortune befell Liza. She drove out to meet her husband who was returning from town; the quiet horse became rather playful, and she was frightened and jumped out. Her jump was comparatively fortunate—she might have been caught by the wheel—but she was pregnant, and that same night the pains began and she had a miscarriage from which she was long in recovering. The loss of the expected child and his wife's illness, together with the

disorder in his affairs, and above all the presence of his mother-in-law, who arrived as soon as Liza fell ill—all this together made the year still harder for Eugene.

But notwithstanding these difficult circumstances, towards the end of the first year Eugene felt very well. First of all his cherished hope of restoring his fallen fortune and renewing his grandfather's way of life in a new form, was approaching accomplishment, though slowly and with difficulty. There was no longer any question of having to sell the whole estate to meet the debts. The chief estate, though transferred to his wife's name, was saved, and if only the beet crop succeeded and the price kept up, by next year his position of want and stress might be replaced by one of complete prosperity. That was one thing.

Another was that however much he had expected from his wife, he had never expected to find in her what he actually found. It was not what he had expected, but it was much better. Emotion, raptures of love—though he tried to produce them—did not take place or were very slight, but something quite different appeared, namely, that he was not merely more cheerful and happier but that it became easier to live. He did not know why this should be so, but it was.

It happened because immediately after the marriage she decided that Eugene Irtenev was superior to, wiser, purer, and nobler than, anyone else in the world, and therefore it was right for everyone to serve him and do what would please him; but as it was impossible to make everyone do this, she to the limit of her strength must do it herself. So she did; and therefore all her strength of mind was directed towards learning and guessing what he liked, and then doing just that, whatever it was and however difficult it might be.

She had the gift which furnishes the chief delight of intercourse with a loving woman; thanks to her love of her husband she penetrated into his soul. She knew—better it seemed to him than he himself—his every state, and every shade of his feeling, and she behaved correspondingly, and therefore never hurt his feelings, but always lessened his distresses and strengthened his joys. And she understood not only his feelings but also his joys. Things quite

foreign to her—concerning the farming, the factory, or the appraisement of others, she immediately understood so that she could not merely converse with him, but could often, as he himself said, be a useful and irreplaceable counsellor. She regarded affairs and people, and everything in the world, only through his eyes. She loved her mother, but having seen that Eugene disliked his mother-in-law's interference in their life she immediately took her husband's side, and did so with such decision that he had to restrain her.

Besides all this she had very much taste, tact, and above all, peacefulness. All that she did, she did unnoticed; only the results of what she did were observable, namely, that always and in everything there was cleanliness, order, and elegance. Liza had at once understood in what her husband's ideal of life consisted, and she tried to attain, and in the arrangement and order of the house did attain, what he wanted. Children, it is true, were lacking, but there was hope of this also. In winter she went to Petersburg to see a specialist, and he assured them that she was quite well and could have children.

And this desire was accomplished. By the end of the year she was again pregnant.

The one thing that threatened, not to say poisoned, their happiness was her jealousy; a jealousy she restrained and did not exhibit, but from which she often suffered. Not only might Eugene not love anyone—because there was not a woman on earth worthy of him (as to whether she herself was worthy or not, she never asked herself),—but not a single woman might, therefore, dare to love him.

VIII

They lived thus: he rose, as he always had done, early, and went to see to the farm or the factory, where work was going on, or

sometimes to the fields. Towards ten o'clock he would come back to his coffee: they had it on the verandah, Mary Pavlovna, an uncle who lived with them, and Liza. After a conversation which was often very animated while they drank their coffee, they dispersed till dinner-time. At two o'clock they dined and then went for a walk, or a drive. In the evening when he returned from his office they drank their evening tea, and sometimes he read aloud while she worked, or when there were guests they had music or talked. When he went away on business he wrote to his wife, and received letters from her, every day. Sometimes she accompanied him, and then they were particularly merry. On his name-day and on hers guests assembled, and it was pleasant to him to see how well she managed to arrange things so that it was pleasant for everybody. He saw, and heard also, that they all admired her, the young, agreeable hostess, and he loved her still more for this.

All went excellently. She bore her pregnancy easily, and though they were afraid, they both began making plans as to how they would bring the child up. The system of education and the arrangements were all decided by Eugene, and her only wish was obediently to carry out his desires. Eugene on his part read up medical works, and intended to bring the child up according to all the precepts of science. She, of course, agreed to everything and made preparations, making warm and also cool "envelopes,"[2] and preparing a cradle. Thus the second year of their marriage arrived, and the second spring.

[2]An "envelope" was a small mattress with attached coverlet, on which babies were carried about.

IX

It was just before Trinity Sunday. Liza was in her fifth month, and, though careful, she was brisk and active. Both the mothers, his and hers, were living in the house, but under pretext of watching and safeguarding her only upset her by their tiffs. Eugene was specially engrossed with a new experiment for the cultivation of sugar-beet on a large scale.

Just before Trinity Liza decided that it was necessary to have a thorough house-cleaning, as it had not been done since Easter, and she hired two women by the day, to help the servants wash the floors and windows, beat the furniture and the carpets, and put covers on them. The women came early in the morning, heated the coppers, and set to work. One of the two was Stepanida, who had just weaned her baby boy. Through the office-clerk—whom she now carried on with—she had begged for the job of washing the floors. She wanted to have a good look at the new mistress. Stepanida was living by herself, as formerly, her husband being away, and she was up to tricks, as she had formerly been first with old Daniel (who had once caught her taking some logs of firewood), afterwards with the master, and now with the young clerk. She was not concerning herself any longer about her master. "He has a wife now," she thought. But it would be good to have a look at the lady and at her establishment: folk said it was well arranged.

Eugene had not seen her since he had met her with the child. Having a baby to attend to she had not been going out to work, and he seldom walked through the village. That morning, on the eve of Trinity Sunday, Eugene rose at five o'clock and rode to the fallow

land which was to be sprinkled with phosphates, and he left the house before the women were about it, and while they were still engaged lighting the copper fires.

Merry, contented, and hungry, Eugene returned to breakfast. He dismounted from his mare at the gate and handed her over to the gardener. Flicking the high grass with his whip and repeating, as one often does, a phrase he had just uttered, he walked towards the house. The phrase he repeated was: "phosphates justify"—what or to whom he neither knew nor reflected.

They were beating a carpet on the grass. The furniture had been brought out.

"There now! What a house-cleaning Liza has undertaken! . . . Phosphates justify. . . . What a manageress she is! A manageress! Yes, a manageress," said he to himself, vividly imagining her in her white wrapper and with her smiling joyful face, as it nearly always was when he looked at her. "Yes, I must change my boots, or else 'phosphates justify,' that is, smell of manure, and the manageress is in such a condition. Why 'in such a condition'? Because a new little Irtenev is growing there inside her," he thought. "Yes, phosphates justify," and smiling at his thoughts he put his hand to the door of his room.

But he had not time to push the door before it opened of itself and he met, face to face, a woman coming towards him carrying a pail, barefoot, and with sleeves turned up high. He stepped aside to let her pass, she too stepped aside, adjusting her kerchief with a wet hand.

"Go on, go on, I won't go there, if you . . ." began Eugene and, suddenly, recognizing her, stopped.

She glanced merrily at him with smiling eyes, and pulling down her skirt went out by the door.

"What nonsense! . . . It is impossible," said Eugene to himself, frowning and waving his hand as though to get rid of a fly, displeased at having noticed her. He was vexed that he had noticed her and yet he could not take his eyes from her strong body, swayed by the agile

strides of her bare feet, or from her arms, shoulders, and the pleasing folds of her shirt and handsome skirt, tucked up high above her white calves.

"But why am I looking?" said he to himself, lowering his eyes so as not to see her. "But anyhow I must go in to get some other boots." And he turned back to go into his own room, but had not gone five steps before, without knowing why or wherefore, he again glanced round to have another look at her. She was just going round the corner and also glanced at him.

"Ah, what am I doing!" said he to himself. "She may think . . . It is even certain that she already does think . . ."

He entered his damp room. Another woman, an old and skinny one, was there, and was still washing it. Eugene passed on tiptoe across the floor wet with dirty water to the wall where his boots stood, and he was about to leave the room, when the woman herself went out.

"This one has gone and the other, Stepanida, will come here alone," someone within him began to reflect.

"My God, what am I thinking of and what am I doing!" He seized his boots and ran out with them into the hall, put them on there, brushed himself, and went out on to the verandah where both the mammas were already drinking coffee. Liza had evidently been expecting him and came on to the verandah through another door at the same time.

"My God! If she, who considers me so honourable, pure, and innocent,—if she only knew!"—thought he.

Liza, as usual, met him with shining face. But to-day somehow she seemed to him particularly pale, yellow, long, and weak.

X

During coffee, as often happened, a peculiarly feminine kind of conversation went on which had no logical sequence, but which evidently was connected in some way for it went on uninterruptedly.

The two old ladies were pin-pricking one another, and Liza was skilfully manœuvring between them.

"I am so vexed that we had not finished washing your room before you got back," she said to her husband. "But I do so want to get everything arranged."

"Well, did you sleep well after I got up?"

"Yes, I slept well, and I feel well."

"How can a woman be well in her condition during this intolerable heat, when her windows face the sun," said Varvara Alexeevna, her mother. "And they have no venetian-blinds or awnings. I always had awnings."

"But you know we are in the shade after ten o'clock," said Mary Pavlovna.

"That's what causes fever; it comes of dampness," said Varvara Alexeevna, not noticing that what she was saying did not agree with what she had just said. "My doctor always says that it is impossible to diagnose an illness unless one knows the patient. And he certainly knows, for he is the leading physician and we pay him a hundred rubles a visit. My late husband did not believe in doctors, but he did not grudge me anything."

"How can a man grudge anything to a woman when perhaps her life and the child's depend . . ."

"Yes, when she has means, a wife need not depend on her husband. A good wife submits to her husband," said Varvara Alexeevna,—"only Liza is too weak after her illness."

"Oh no, mamma, I feel quite well. But why have they not brought you any boiled cream?"

"I don't want any. I can do with raw cream."

"I offered some to Varvara Alexeevna, but she declined," said Mary Pavlovna, as if justifying herself.

"No, I don't want any to-day." And as if to terminate an unpleasant conversation and yield magnanimously, Varvara Alexeevna turned to Eugene and said: "Well, and have you sprinkled the phosphates?"

Liza ran to fetch the cream.

"But I don't want it. I don't want it."

"Liza, Liza, go gently,"—said Mary Pavlovna. "Such rapid movements do her harm."

"Nothing does harm, if one's mind is at peace," said Varvara Alexeevna as if referring to something, though she knew that there was nothing that her words could refer to.

Liza returned with the cream, Eugene drank his coffee and listened morosely. He was accustomed to these conversations, but to-day he was particularly annoyed by its lack of sense. He wanted to think over what had happened to him, but this chatter disturbed him. Having finished her coffee Varvara Alexeevna went away in a bad humour. Liza, Eugene, and Mary Pavlovna stayed behind, and their conversation was simple and pleasant. But Liza, being sensitive, at once noticed that something was tormenting Eugene, and she asked him whether anything unpleasant had happened. He was not prepared for this question, and hesitated a little before replying that there had been nothing unpleasant. And this reply made Liza think all the more; that something was tormenting, and greatly tormenting, him was as evident to her as the fact that a fly had fallen into the milk, yet he did not speak of it. What could it be?

XI

After breakfast they all dispersed. Eugene as usual went to his study. He did not begin reading or writing his letters, but sat smoking one cigarette after another and thinking. He was terribly surprised and disturbed by the expected recrudescence within him of the bad feeling from which he had thought himself free since his marriage. Since then he had not once experienced that feeling, either for her—the woman he had known—or for any other woman except his wife. He had often felt glad of this emancipation, and now suddenly a chance meeting, seemingly so unimportant, revealed to him the fact that he was not free. What now tormented him was not that he was yielding to that feeling and desired her—he did not dream of so doing—but that the feeling was awake within him and he had to be on his guard against it. He had no doubt but that he would suppress it.

He had a letter to answer and a paper to write. He sat down at his writing-table and began to work. Having finished it and quite forgotten what had disturbed him, he went out to go to the stables. And again as ill-luck would have it, either by unfortunate chance or intentionally, as soon as he stepped from the porch, a red skirt and red kerchief appeared from round the corner, and she went past him swinging her arms and swaying her body. She not only went past him, but on passing him ran, as if playfully, to overtake her fellow-servant.

Again the bright midday, the nettles, the back of Daniel's hut, and in the shade of the plane-trees her smiling face biting some leaves, rose in his imagination.

"No, it is impossible to let matters continue so," he said to himself, and waiting till the women had passed out of sight he went to the office.

It was just the dinner-hour and he hoped to find the steward still there. So it happened. The steward was just waking up from his after-dinner nap. Standing in the office, stretching himself and yawning, he was looking at the herdsman who was telling him something.

"Vasili Nikolaich!" said Eugene to the steward.

"What is your pleasure?"

"I want to speak to you."

"What is your pleasure?"

"Just finish what you are saying."

"Aren't you going to bring it in?" said Vasili Nikolaich to the herdsman.

"It's heavy, Vasili Nikolaich."

"What is it?" asked Eugene.

"Why, a cow has calved in the meadow. Well, all right, I'll order them to harness a horse at once. Tell Nicholas Lysukh to get out the dray cart."

The herdsman went out.

"Do you know," began Eugene, flushing and conscious that he was doing so, "do you know, Vasili Nikolaich, while I was a bachelor I went off the track a bit. . . . You may have heard . . ."

Vasili Nikolaich with smiling eyes and evidently sorry for his master, said: "Is it about Stepanida?"

"Why, yes. Look here. Please, please do not engage her to help in the house. You understand, it is very awkward for me . . ."

"Yes, it must have been Vanya, the clerk, who arranged it."

"Yes, please. . . . Well, and hadn't the rest of the phosphates better be strewn?" said Eugene, to hide his confusion.

"Yes, I am just going to see to it."

So it ended. And Eugene calmed down, hoping that as he had lived for a year without seeing her, so things would go on now. "Besides, Vasili Nikolaich will speak to Ivan the clerk; Ivan will speak to her, and she will understand that I don't want it," said Eugene to himself, and he was glad that he had forced himself to speak to Vasili Nikolaich, hard as it had been to do so.

"Yes, it is better, better, than that feeling of doubt, that feeling of shame." He shuddered at the mere remembrance of his sin in thought.

XII

The moral effort he had made to overcome his shame and speak to Vasili Nikolaich, tranquillized Eugene. It seemed to him that the matter was all over now. Liza at once noticed that he was quite calm, and even happier than usual. "No doubt he was upset by our mothers pin-pricking one another. It really is disagreeable, especially for him who is so sensitive and noble, always to hear such unfriendly and ill-mannered insinuations," thought she.

The next day was Trinity Sunday. The weather was beautiful, and the peasant-women, according to custom, on their way into the woods to plait wreaths, came to the landowner's home and began to sing and dance. Mary Pavlovna and Varvara Alexeevna came out on to the porch in smart clothes, carrying sunshades, and went up to the ring of singers. With them, in a jacket of Chinese silk, came out the uncle, a flabby libertine and drunkard, who was living that summer with Eugene.

As usual there was a bright, many-coloured ring of young women and girls, the centre of everything, and around these from different sides like attendant planets that had detached themselves and were circling round, went girls hand in hand, rustling in their new print gowns; young lads giggling and running backwards and forwards after one another; full-grown lads in dark blue or black coats and caps and with red shirts, who unceasingly spat out sunflower-seed shells; and the domestic servants or other outsiders watching the dance-circle from aside. Both the old ladies went close up to the ring, and Liza accompanied them in a light blue dress, with light blue

ribbons on her head, and with wide sleeves under which her long white arms and angular elbows were visible.

Eugene did not wish to come out, but it was ridiculous to hide, and he too came out on to the porch smoking a cigarette, bowed to the men and lads, and talked with one of them. The women meanwhile shouted a dance-song with all their might, snapping their fingers, clapping their hands, and dancing.

"They are calling for the master," said a youngster, coming up to Eugene's wife who had not noticed the call. Liza called Eugene to look at the dance and at one of the women dancers who particularly pleased her. This was Stepanida. She wore a yellow skirt, a velveteen sleeveless jacket and a silk kerchief, and was broad, energetic, ruddy, and merry. No doubt she danced well. He saw nothing.

"Yes, yes," said he, removing and replacing his pince-nez. "Yes, yes," repeated he. "So it seems I cannot be rid of her," he thought.

He did not look at her as he was afraid of her attraction, and just on that account what his passing glance caught of her seemed to him especially attractive. Besides this he saw by her sparkling look that she saw him and saw that he admired her. He stood there as long as propriety demanded, and seeing that Varvara Alexeevna had called her, senselessly and insincerely, "my dear," and was talking to her, he turned aside and went away.

He went into the house. He retired in order not to see her, but on reaching the upper story, without knowing how or why, he approached the window, and as long as the women remained at the porch he stood there and looked and looked at her, feasting his eyes on her.

He ran, while there was no one to see him, and then went with quiet steps on to the verandah, and from there, smoking a cigarette and as if going for a stroll, he passed through the garden and followed the direction she had taken. He had not gone two steps along the alley before he noticed behind the trees a velveteen sleeveless jacket, with a pink and yellow skirt and a red kerchief.

She was going somewhere with another woman. "Where are they going?"

And suddenly a terrible desire scorched him, as though a hand were seizing his heart. As if by someone else's wish he looked round and went towards her.

"Eugene Ivanich, Eugene Ivanich! I have come to see your honour," said a voice behind him, and Eugene, seeing old Samokhin, who was digging a well for him, roused himself and, turning quickly round, went to meet Samokhin. While speaking with him he turned sideways and saw that she and the woman who was with her went down the slope, evidently to the well, or making an excuse of the well, and having stopped there a little while, ran back to the dance-circle.

XIII

After talking to Samokhin, Eugene returned to the house as depressed as if he had committed a crime. In the first place she had understood him, believed that he wanted to see her, and desired it herself. Secondly, that other woman, Anna Prokhorova, evidently knew of it.

Above all, he felt that he was conquered, that he was not master of his own will but that there was another power moving him, that he had been saved only by good fortune, and that, if not to-day, to-morrow or a day later, he would perish all the same.

"Yes, perish," he did not understand it otherwise: to be unfaithful to his young and loving wife with a peasant woman in the village, in the sight of everyone,—what was it but to perish, perish utterly, so that it would be impossible to live? No, something must be done.

"My God, my God! What am I to do? Can it be that I shall perish like this?" said he to himself. "Is it not possible to do anything? Yet something must be done. Do not think about her"—he ordered himself. "Do not think!" and immediately he began thinking and seeing her before him, and seeing also the shade of the plane tree.

He remembered having read of a hermit who, to avoid the temptation he felt for a woman on whom he had to lay his hand to heal her, thrust his other hand into a brazier and burnt his fingers. He called that to mind. "Yes, I am ready to burn my fingers rather than to perish." He looked round to make sure that there was no one in the room, lit a candle, and put a finger into the flame. "There now think about her," he said to himself ironically. It hurt him and he withdrew his smoke-stained finger, threw away the match, and laughed at himself. What nonsense! That was not what had to be done. But it was necessary to do something, to avoid seeing her—either to go away himself or to send her away. Yes,—send her away. Offer her husband money to remove to town, or to another village. People would hear of it and would talk about it. Well, what of that? At any rate it was better than this danger. "Yes, that must be done," he said to himself; and at the very time he was looking at her without moving his eyes. "Where is she going?" he suddenly asked himself. She, as it seemed to him, had seen him at the window and now, having glanced at him and taken another woman by the hand, was going towards the garden swinging her arm briskly. Without knowing why or wherefore, merely in accord with what he had been thinking, he went to the office.

Vasili Nikolaich in holiday costume and with oiled hair was sitting at tea with his wife and a guest who was wearing an oriental kerchief.

"I want a word with you, Vasili Nikolaich!"

"Please say what you want to. We have finished tea."

"No. I'd rather you came out with me."

"Directly; only let me get my cap. Tanya, put out the samovar,"—said Vasili Nikolaich, stepping outside cheerfully.

It seemed to Eugene that Vasili had been drinking, but what was to be done? It might be all the better—he would sympathize with him in his difficulties the more readily.

"I have come again to speak about that same matter, Vasili Nikolaich," said Eugene,—"about that woman."

"Well, what of her? I told them not to take her again on any account."

"No, I have been thinking in general, and this is what I wanted to take your advice about. Isn't it possible to get them away, to send the whole family away?"

"Where can they be sent?" said Vasili, disapprovingly and ironically as it seemed to Eugene.

"Well, I thought of giving them money, or even some land in Koltovski,—so that she should not be here."

"But how can they be sent away? Where is he to go—torn up from his roots? And why should you do it? What harm can she do you?"

"Ah, Vasili Nikolaich, you must understand that it would be dreadful for my wife to hear of it."

"But who will tell her?"

"How can I live with this dread? The whole thing is very painful for me."

"But really, why should you distress yourself? Whoever stirs up the past—out with his eye! Who is not a sinner before God and to blame before the Tsar, as the saying is?"

"All the same it would be better to get rid of them. Can't you speak to the husband?"

"But it is no use speaking! Eh, Eugene Ivanich, what is the matter with you? It is all past and forgotten. All sorts of things happen. Who is there that would now say anything bad of you? Everybody sees you."

"But all the same go and have a talk with him."

"All right, I will speak to him."

Though he knew that nothing would come of it, this talk somewhat calmed Eugene. Above all, it made him feel that through excitement he had been exaggerating the danger.

Had he gone to meet her by appointment? It was impossible. He had simply gone to stroll in the garden and she had happened to run out at the same time.

XIV

After dinner that very Trinity Sunday Liza while walking from the garden to the meadow, where her husband wanted to show her the clover, took a false step and fell when crossing a little ditch. She fell gently, on her side; but she gave an exclamation, and her husband saw an expression in her face not only of fear but of pain. He wished to help her up, but she motioned him away with her hand.

"No, wait a bit, Eugene," she said, with a weak smile, and as it seemed to him, she looked up guiltily. "My foot only gave way under me."

"There, I always say," remarked Varvara Alexeevna, "can anyone in her condition possibly jump over ditches?"

"But no, mamma, it is all right. I shall get up directly." With her husband's help she did get up, but immediately turned pale, and her face showed fear.

"Yes, I am not well," and she whispered something to her mother.

"Oh, my God, what have you done! I said you ought not to go there,"—cried Varvara Alexeevna. "Wait,—I will call the servants. She must not walk. She must be carried!"

"Don't be afraid, Liza, I will carry you," said Eugene, putting his left arm round her. "Hold me by the neck. Like that." And stooping down he put his right arm under her knees and lifted her. He could never afterwards forget the suffering and yet beatific expression of her face.

"I am too heavy for you, dear,"—she said with a smile. "Mamma is running, tell her!" And she bent towards him and kissed him. She evidently wanted her mother to see how he was carrying her.

Eugene shouted to Varvara Alexeevna not to hurry, and that he would carry Liza home. Varvara Alexeevna stopped and began to shout still louder.

"You will drop her, you'll be sure to drop her. You want to destroy her. You have no conscience!"

"But I am carrying her excellently."

"I do not want to watch you killing my daughter, and I can't." And she ran round the bend in the alley.

"Never mind, it will pass," said Liza, smiling.

"Yes. If only it does not have consequences like last time."

"No. I am not speaking of that. That is all right. I mean mamma. You are tired. Rest a bit."

But though he found it heavy, Eugene carried his burden proudly and gladly to the house and did not hand her over to the housemaid and the man-cook whom Varvara Alexeevna had found and sent to meet them. He carried her to the bedroom and placed her on the bed.

"Now go away," she said and drawing his hand to her she kissed it. "Annushka and I will manage all right."

Mary Pavlovna also ran in from her rooms in the wing. They undressed Liza and laid her on the bed. Eugene sat in the drawing-room with a book in his hand, waiting. Varvara Alexeevna went past him with such a reproachfully gloomy air that he felt alarmed.

"Well, how is it?" he asked.

"How? What's the good of asking? It is probably what you wanted when you made your wife jump over the ditch."

"Varvara Alexeevna!" he cried. "This is impossible. If you want to torment people and to poison their life,"—he wanted to say, "then go elsewhere to do it," but he restrained himself. "How is it that it does not hurt you?"

"It is too late now." And shaking her cap in a triumphant manner she passed out by the door.

The fall had really been a bad one, Liza's foot had twisted awkwardly and there was danger of her having another miscarriage. Everyone knew that there was nothing to be done, but that she must just lie quietly, yet all the same they decided to send for a doctor.

"Dear Nikolay Semënich," wrote Eugene to the doctor, "you have always been so kind to us, that I hope you will not refuse to come to my wife's assistance. She . . ." and so on. Having written the letter he went to the stables to arrange about the horses and the carriage. Horses had to be got ready to bring the doctor, and others to take him back. When an estate is not run on a large scale, such things cannot be quickly decided but have to be considered. Having arranged it all and dispatched the coachman, it was past nine before he got back to the house. His wife was lying down, and said that she felt perfectly well and had no pain. But Varvara Alexeevna was sitting with a lamp screened from Liza by some sheets of music and knitting a large red coverlet, with a mien that said that after what had happened peace was impossible; but that no matter what anyone else did, she at any rate would do her duty.

Eugene noticed this but, to appear as if he had not seen it, he tried to assume a cheerful and tranquil air and told how he had chosen the horses and how the mare, Kabushka, had galloped capitally as left trace-horse in the troika.

"Yes, of course, it is just the time to exercise the horses when help is needed. Probably the doctor will also be thrown into the ditch," remarked Varvara Alexeevna, examining her knitting from under her pince-nez and moving it close up to the lamp.

"But you know we had to send one way or other, and I made the best arrangement I could."

"Yes, I remember very well how your horses galloped with me under the gateway arch." This was her long-standing fancy, and Eugene now was injudicious enough to remark that was not quite what had happened.

"It is not for nothing that I have always said, and have often remarked to the prince, that it is hardest of all to live with people who are untruthful and insincere; I can endure anything except that."

"Well, if anyone has to suffer more than another, it is certainly I," said Eugene. "But you . . ."

"Yes, it is evident."

"What?"

"Nothing, I am only counting my stitches."

Eugene was standing at the time by the bed and Liza was looking at him, and one of her moist hands outside the coverlet caught his hand and pressed it. "Bear with her for my sake. You know she cannot prevent our loving one another," was what her look said.

"I won't do so again. It's nothing," whispered he, and he kissed her damp, long hand and then her affectionate eyes, which closed while he kissed them.

"Can it be the same thing over again?" he asked. "How are you feeling?"

"I am afraid to say, for fear of being mistaken, but I feel that he is alive and will live," said she, glancing at her stomach.

"Ah, it is dreadful, dreadful to think of."

Notwithstanding Liza's insistence that he should go away, Eugene spent the night with her, hardly closing an eye and ready to attend on her.

But she passed the night well, and had they not sent for the doctor she would perhaps have got up.

By dinner-time the doctor arrived and of course said that, though if the symptoms recurred there might be cause for apprehension, yet actually there were no positive symptoms, but as there were also no contrary indications one might suppose on the one hand that—and on the other hand that. . . . And therefore she must lie still, and that "though I do not like prescribing, yet all the same she should take this mixture and should lie quiet." Besides this, the doctor gave Varvara Alexeevna a lecture on woman's anatomy, during which Varvara Alexeevna nodded her head significantly. Having received his fee, as usual into the backmost part of his palm, the doctor drove away and the patient was left to lie in bed for a week.

XV

Most of his time Eugene spent by his wife's bedside, talking to her, reading to her, and what was hardest of all, enduring without murmur Varvara Alexeevna's attacks, and even contriving to turn these into jokes.

But he could not stay at home. In the first place his wife sent him away, saying that he would fall ill if he always remained with her; and, secondly, the farming was progressing in a way that demanded his presence at every step. He could not stay at home; but was in the fields, in the wood, in the garden, at the thrashing-floor; and everywhere, not merely the thought but the vivid image of Stepanida pursued him, and he only occasionally forgot her. But that would not have mattered, he could perhaps have mastered his feeling; but what was worst of all was that, whereas he had previously lived for months without seeing her, he now continually came across her. She evidently understood that he wished to renew relations with her, and tried to come in his way. Nothing was said either by him or by her,

and therefore neither he nor she went directly to a rendezvous, but only sought opportunities of meeting.

The place where it was possible for them to meet each other was in the forest, where peasant-women went with sacks to collect grass for their cows. Eugene knew this and therefore went every day by that wood. Every day he told himself that he would not go there, and every day it ended by his making his way to the forest and, on hearing the sound of voices, standing behind the bushes with sinking heart looking to see if she was there.

Why he wanted to know whether it was she who was there, he did not know. If it had been she and she had been alone, he would not have gone to her—so he believed—he would have run away; but he wanted to see her.

Once he met her. As he was entering the forest she came out of it with two other women, carrying a heavy sack, full of grass, on her back. A little earlier he would perhaps have met her in the forest. But now, with the other women there, she could not go back to him in the forest. But though he realized this impossibility, he stood for a long time, at the risk of attracting the other women's attention, behind a hazel-bush. Of course she did not return, but he stayed there a long time. And, great heavens, how delightful his imagination made her appear to him! And this not once, but five or six times. And each time more intensely. Never had she seemed so attractive, and never had he been so completely in her power.

He felt that he had lost control of himself and had become almost insane. His strictness with himself was not weakened a jot; on the contrary he saw all the abomination of his desire and even of his action, for his going to the wood was an action. He knew that he only need come near her anywhere in the dark, and if possible touch her, and he would yield to his feelings. He knew that it was only shame before people, before her, and no doubt before himself also, that restrained him. And he knew too that he had sought conditions in which that shame would not be apparent—darkness or proximity—in which it would be stifled by animal passion. And therefore he knew that he was a wretched criminal, and despised and hated himself

with all his soul. He hated himself because he still had not surrendered: every day he prayed God to strengthen him, to save him from perishing; every day he determined that from to-day onward he would not take a step to see her, and would forget her. Every day he devised means of delivering himself from this enticement, and he made use of those means.

But it was all in vain.

One of the means was continual occupation; another was intense physical work and fasting; a third was imagining clearly to himself the shame that would fall upon him when everybody knew of it—his wife, his mother-in-law, and the folk around. He did all this, and it seemed to him that he was conquering, but the hour came, midday: the hour of their former meetings and the hour when he had met her carrying the grass, and he went to the forest. Thus five days of torment passed. He only saw her from a distance, but did not once encounter her.

XVI

Liza was gradually recovering, she could move about and was only uneasy at the change that had taken place in her husband, which she did not understand.

Varvara Alexeevna had gone away for a while and the only visitor was Eugene's uncle. Mary Pavlovna was as usual at home.

Eugene was in his semi-insane condition when there came two days of pouring rain, as often happens after thunder in June. The rain stopped all work. They even ceased carting manure, on account of the dampness and dirt. The peasants remained at home. The herdsmen wore themselves out with the cattle, and eventually drove them home. The cows and sheep wandered about in the pastureland

and ran loose in the grounds. The peasant-women, barefoot and wrapped in shawls, splashing through the mud rushed about to seek the runaway cows. Streams flowed everywhere along the paths, all the leaves and all the grass were saturated with water, and streams flowed unceasingly from the spouts into the bubbling puddles.

Eugene sat at home with his wife who was particularly wearisome that day. She questioned Eugene several times as to the cause of his discontent; and he replied with vexation that nothing was the matter. She ceased questioning him, but was still distressed.

They were sitting after breakfast in the drawing-room. His uncle for the hundredth time was recounting fabrications about his society acquaintances. Liza was knitting a jacket and sighed, complaining of the weather and of a pain in the small of her back. The uncle advised her to lie down, and asked for vodka for himself. It was terribly dull for Eugene in the house. Everything was weak and dull. He read a book and a magazine, but understood nothing of them.

"Yes, I must go out and look at the rasping-machine they brought yesterday," said he. He got up and went out.

"Take an umbrella with you."

"Oh, no, I have a leather coat. And I am only going as far as the boiling-room."

He put on his boots and his leather coat and went to the factory; but he had not gone twenty steps before, coming towards him, he met her with her skirts tucked up high above her white calves. She was walking, holding down the shawl in which her head and shoulders were wrapped.

"Where are you going?" said he, not recognizing her the first instant. When he recognized her it was already too late. She stopped, smiling, and looked long at him.

"I am looking for a calf. Where are you off to in such weather?" said she, as if she were seeing him every day.

"Come to the shed," said he suddenly, without knowing how he said it. It was as if someone else had uttered the words.

She bit her shawl, winked, and ran in the direction which led from the garden to the shed, but he continued his path, intending to turn off beyond the lilac-bush and go there too.

"Master," he heard a voice behind him. "The mistress is calling you, and wants you to come back for a minute."

This was Misha, his man-servant.

"My God! This is the second time you have saved me," thought Eugene, and immediately turned back. His wife reminded him that he had promised to take some medicine at the dinner-hour to a sick woman, and he had better take it with him.

While they were getting the medicine some five minutes elapsed, and then, going away with the medicine, he hesitated to go direct to the shed, lest he should be seen from the house, but as soon as he was out of sight he promptly turned and made his way to it. He already saw her in imagination, inside the shed, smiling gaily. But she was not there, and there was nothing in the shed to show that she had been there.

He was already thinking that she had not come, had not heard or understood his words—he had muttered them through his nose as if afraid of her hearing them—or perhaps she had not wanted to come. "And why did I imagine that she would rush to me? She has her own husband; it is only I who am such a wretch as to have a wife, and a good one, and to run after another." Thus he thought sitting in the shed, the thatch of which had a leak and dripped from its straw. "But how delightful it would be if she did come,—alone here in this rain. If only I could embrace her once again; then let happen what may. But yes," he recollected, "one could tell if she has been here by her footprints." He looked at the trodden ground near the shed and at the path overgrown by grass; and the fresh print of bare feet, and even of one that had slipped, was visible. "Yes, she has been here. Well now it is settled. Wherever I may see her I shall go straight to her. I will go to her at night." He sat for a long time in the shed, and left it exhausted and crushed. He delivered the medicine, returned home, and lay down in his room to wait for dinner.

XVII

Before dinner Liza came to him and, still wondering what could be the cause of his discontent, began to say that she was afraid that he did not like the idea of her going to Moscow for her confinement, and that she had decided that she would remain at home and would on no account go to Moscow. He knew how she feared both her confinement itself and the risk of not having a healthy child, and therefore he could not help being touched at seeing how ready she was to sacrifice everything for his sake. All was so nice, so pleasant, so clean, in the house; and in his soul it was so dirty, despicable, and horrid. The whole evening Eugene was tormented by knowing that notwithstanding his sincere repulsion at his own weakness, notwithstanding his firm intention to break off,—the same thing would happen again to-morrow.

"No, this is impossible," he said to himself, walking up and down in his room. "There must be some remedy for it. My God! What am I to do?"

Someone knocked at the door as foreigners do. He knew this must be his uncle. "Come in," he said.

The uncle had come as a self-appointed ambassador from Liza.

"Do you know, I really do notice that there is a change in you," he said,—"and Liza—I understand how it troubles her. I understand that it must be hard for you to leave all the business you have so excellently started, but *que veux-tu*?[3] I should advise you to go away. It will be more satisfactory both for you and for her. And do you know, I should advise you to go to the Crimea. The climate is beautiful and there is an excellent *accoucheur* there, and you would be just in time for the best of the grape season."

"Uncle," Eugene suddenly exclaimed. "Can you keep a secret? A secret that is terrible to me, a shameful secret."

"Oh, come—do you really feel any doubt of me?"

"Uncle, you can help me. Not only help, but save me!" said Eugene. And the thought that he would disclose his secret to his uncle whom he did not respect, the thought that he would show himself in the worst light and humiliate himself before him, was pleasant. He felt himself to be despicable and guilty, and wished to punish himself.

"Speak, my dear fellow, you know how fond I am of you," said the uncle, evidently well content that there was a secret and that it was a shameful one, and that it would be communicated to him, and that he could be of use.

"First of all I must tell you that I am a wretch, a good-for-nothing, a scoundrel—a real scoundrel."

"Now what are you saying . . ." began his uncle, as if he were offended.

"What! Not a wretch when I,—Liza's husband, Liza's! One has only to know her purity, her love—and that I, her husband, want to be untrue to her with a peasant-woman!"

"How's that? Why do you want to—you have not been unfaithful to her?"

"Yes, at least just the same as being untrue, for it did not depend on me. I was ready to do so. I was hindered, or else I should . . . now. I do not know what I should have done . . ."

"But please, explain to me . . ."

"Well, it is like this. When I was a bachelor I was stupid enough to have relations with a woman here in our village. That is to say, I used to have meetings with her in the forest, in the field . . ."

"Was she pretty?" asked his uncle.

Eugene frowned at this question, but he was in such need of external help that he made as if he did not hear it, and continued:

"Well, I thought this was just casual and that I should break it off and have done with it. And I did break it off before my marriage. For nearly a year I did not see her or think about her." It seemed strange to Eugene himself to hear the description of his own condition, —"Then suddenly, I don't myself know why,—really one sometimes believes in witchcraft—I saw her, and a worm crept into my heart—and it gnaws. I reproach myself, I understood the full horror of my action, that is to say, of the act I may commit any moment, and yet I myself turned to it, and if I have not committed it is only because God preserved me. Yesterday I was on my way to see her when Liza sent for me."

"What, in the rain?"

"Yes; I am worn out, Uncle, and have decided to confess to you and to ask your help."

"Yes, of course, it's a bad thing on your own estate. People will get to know. I understand that Liza is weak and that it is necessary to spare her, but why on your own estate?"

Again Eugene tried not to hear what his uncle was saying, and hurried on to the core of the matter.

"Yes, save me from myself. That is what I ask of you. To-day I was hindered by chance. But to-morrow or next time no one will hinder me. And she knows now. Don't leave me alone."

"Yes, all right," said his uncle,—"but are you really so in love?"

"Ah, it is not that at all. It is not that, it is some kind of power that has seized me and holds me. I do not know what to do. Perhaps I shall gain strength, and then . . ."

"Well, it turns out as I suggested," said his uncle. "Let us be off to the Crimea."

"Yes, yes, let us go; and meanwhile you will be with me, and will talk to me."

[3]What will you have?

XVIII

The fact that Eugene had confided his secret to his uncle, but chiefly the sufferings of his conscience and the feeling of shame he experienced after that rainy day, sobered him. It was settled that they would start for Yalta in a week's time. During that week Eugene drove to town to get money for the journey, gave instructions from the house and from the office concerning the management of the estate, again became gay and friendly with his wife, and began to awaken morally.

So without having once seen Stepanida after that rainy day he left with his wife for the Crimea. There he spent an excellent two months. He received so many new impressions that it seemed to him that the past was obliterated from his memory. In the Crimea they met former acquaintances and became particularly friendly with them, and they also made new acquaintances. Life in the Crimea was a continual holiday for Eugene, besides being instructive and beneficial. They became friendly there with the former Marshal of the Nobility of their province; a clever and Liberal-minded man, who became fond of Eugene and coached him, and attracted him to his Party.

At the end of August Liza gave birth to a beautiful, healthy daughter, and her confinement was unexpectedly easy.

In September they returned home, the four of them, including the baby and its wet-nurse, as Liza was unable to nurse it herself. Eugene returned home entirely free from the former horrors and quite a new and happy man. Having gone through all that a husband goes through when his wife bears a child, he loved his wife more

than ever. His feeling for the child when he took it in his arms, was a funny, new, very pleasant and, as it were, a tickling feeling. Another new thing in his life now was that, besides his occupation with the estate, thanks to his acquaintance with Dumchin (the ex-Marshal) a new interest occupied his mind, that of the Zemstvo—partly an ambitious interest, partly a feeling of duty. In October there was to be a special Assembly, at which he was to be elected. After arriving home he drove once to town and another time to Dumchin.

Of the torments of his temptation and struggle he had forgotten even to think, and could with difficulty recall them to mind. It seemed to him something like an attack of insanity he had undergone.

To such an extent did he now feel free from it that he was not even afraid to make inquiries on the first occasion when he remained alone with the steward. As he had previously spoken to him about the matter he was not ashamed to ask.

"Well, and is Sidor Pechnikov still away from home?" he inquired.

"Yes, he is still in town."

"And his wife?"

"Oh, she is a worthless woman. She is now carrying on with Zenovi. She has quite gone on the loose."

"Well, that is all right," thought Eugene. "How wonderfully indifferent to it I am! How I have changed."

XIX

All that Eugene had wished had been realized. He had obtained the property, the factory was working successfully, the beet-crops were excellent, and his expected income would be a large one; his

wife had borne a child satisfactorily, his mother-in-law had left, and he had been unanimously elected to the Zemstvo.

Eugene was returning home from town after the election. He had been congratulated and had had to return thanks. He had had dinner and had drunk some five glasses of champagne. Quite new plans of life now presented themselves to him. He was driving home and thinking about these. It was the Indian summer: an excellent road and a hot sun. As he approached his home Eugene was thinking of how, as a result of this election, he would occupy among the people the position of which he had always dreamed; that is to say, one in which he would be able to serve them not only by production, which gave employment, but also by direct influence. He imagined how in another three years his own and the other peasants would think of him. "For instance this one," he thought, driving just then through the village and glancing at a peasant who with a peasant-woman was crossing the street in front of him carrying a full water-tub. They stopped to let his carriage pass. The peasant was old Pechnikov, and the woman was Stepanida. Eugene looked at her, recognized her, and was glad to feel that he remained quite tranquil. She was still as good-looking as ever, but this did not touch him at all. He drove home.

"Well, may we congratulate you?" said his uncle.

"Yes, I was elected."

"Capital! We must drink to it!"

Next day Eugene drove about to see to the farming which he had been neglecting. At the outlying farmstead a new thrashing machine was at work. While watching it Eugene stepped among the women, trying not to take notice of them; but try as he would he once or twice noticed the black eyes and red kerchief of Stepanida, who was carrying away the straw. Once or twice he glanced sideways at her and felt that something was happening, but could not account for it to himself. Only next day, when he again drove to the thrashing-floor and spent two hours there quite unnecessarily, without ceasing to caress with his eyes the familiar, handsome figure of the young woman, did he feel that he was lost, irremediably lost. Again those

torments! Again all that horror and fear, and there was no saving himself.

What he expected happened to him. The evening of the next day, without knowing how, he found himself at her back-yard, by her hay-shed, where in autumn they had once had a meeting. As though having a stroll, he stopped there lighting a cigarette. A neighbouring peasant-woman saw him, and as he turned back he heard her say to someone: "Go, he is waiting for you,—on my dying word he is standing there. Go, you fool!"

He saw how a woman—she—ran to the hay-shed; but as a peasant had met him, it was no longer possible for him to turn back, and so he went home.

XX

When he entered the drawing-room everything seemed strange and unnatural to him. He had risen that morning vigorous, determined to fling it all aside, to forget it and not to allow himself to think about it. But without noticing how it occurred he had all the morning not merely not interested himself in the work, but tried to avoid it. What had formerly been important and had cheered him, was now insignificant. Unconsciously he tried to free himself from business. It seemed to him that he had to do so in order to think and to plan. And he freed himself and remained alone. But as soon as he was alone he began to wander about in the garden and the forest. And all those spots were besmirched in his recollection by memories that gripped him. He felt that he was walking in the garden and pretending to himself that he was thinking out something, but that really he was not thinking out anything, but insanely and unreasonably expecting her; expecting that by some miracle she

would be aware that he was expecting her, and would come here at once and go somewhere where no one would see them, or would come at night when there would be no moon and no one, not even she herself, would see,—on such a night she would come and he would touch her body. . . .

"There now, talking of breaking off when I wish to," said he to himself. "Yes, and that is having a clean healthy woman for one's health's sake! No, it seems one can't play with her like that. I thought I had taken her, but it was she who took me; took me and does not let me go. Why, I thought I was free, but I was not free and was deceiving myself when I married. It was all nonsense,—fraud. From the time I had her I experienced a new feeling, the real feeling of a husband. Yes, I ought to have lived with her.

"One of two lives is possible for me: that which I began with Liza: service, estate management, the child, and people's respect. If that is life, it is necessary that she, Stepanida, should not be there. She must be sent away, as I said, or destroyed so that she shall not exist. And the other life—is this. For me to take her away from her husband, pay him money, disregard the shame and disgrace, and live with her. But in that case it is necessary that Liza should not exist, nor Mimi (the baby). No, that is not so, the baby does not matter, but it is necessary that there should be no Liza,—that she should go away—that she should know, curse me, and go away. That she should know that I have exchanged her for a peasant-woman, that I am a deceiver and a scoundrel!—No, that is too terrible! It is impossible. But it might happen," he went on thinking, —"it might happen that Liza might fall ill and die. Die, and then everything would be capital.

"Capital! Oh, scoundrel! No, if someone must die it should be she. If she, Stepanida, were to die, how good it would be.

"Yes, that is how men come to poison or kill their wives or lovers. Take a revolver and go and call her, and instead of embracing her, shoot her in the breast and have done with it.

"Really she is—a devil. Simply a devil. She has possessed herself of me against my own will.

"Kill? Yes. There are only two ways out: to kill my wife, or her. For it is impossible to live like this.[4] It is impossible. I must consider the matter and look ahead. If things remain as they are what will happen? I shall again be saying to myself that I do not wish it and that I will throw her off, but I shall only say it, and in the evening I shall be at her back-yard,—and she will know it and will come out. And if people know of it and tell my wife, or if I tell her myself,—for I can't lie—I shall not be able to live so. I cannot! People will know. They will all know—Parasha and the blacksmith. Well, is it possible to live so?"

[4]At this place the alternative ending, printed at the end of the story, begins.

"Impossible. There are only two ways out: to kill my wife, or to kill her. Yes, or else . . . Ah, yes, there is a third way: to kill myself," said he softly, and suddenly a shudder ran over his skin. "Yes, kill myself, then I shall not need to kill them." He became frightened, for he felt that only that way was possible. He had a revolver. "Shall I really kill myself? It is something I never thought of,—how strange it will be . . ."

He returned to his study and at once opened the cupboard where the revolver lay, but before he had taken it out of its case, his wife entered the room.

XXI

He threw a newspaper over the revolver.

"Again the same!" said she aghast when she had looked at him.

"What is the same?"

"The same terrible expression that you had before and would not explain to me. Jenya, dear one, tell me about it. I see that you are suffering. Tell me and you will feel easier. Whatever it may be, it will be better than for you to suffer so. Don't I know that it is nothing bad."

"You know? While . . ."

"Tell me, tell me, tell me. I won't let you go."

He smiled a piteous smile.

"Shall I?—No, it is impossible. And there is nothing to tell."

Perhaps he might have told her, but at that moment the wet-nurse entered to ask if she should go for a walk. Liza went out to dress the baby.

"Then you will tell me? I will be back directly."

"Yes, perhaps . . ."

She never could forget the piteous smile with which he said this. She went out.

Hurriedly, stealthily like a robber, he seized the revolver and took it out of its case. It was loaded, yes, but long ago, and one cartridge was missing.

"Well, how will it be?" He put it to his temple and hesitated a little, but as soon as he remembered Stepanida,—his decision not to see her, his struggle, temptation, fall, and renewed struggle,—he shuddered with horror. "No, this is better," and he pulled the trigger . . .

When Liza ran into the room—she had only had time to step down from the balcony—he was lying face downwards on the floor: black, warm blood was gushing from the wound, and his corpse was twitching.

There was an inquest. No one could understand or explain the suicide. It never even entered his uncle's head that its cause could

be anything in common with the confession Eugene had made to him two months previously.

Varvara Alexeevna assured them that she had always foreseen it. It had been evident from his way of disputing. Neither Liza nor Mary Pavlovna could at all understand why it had happened, but still they did not believe what the doctors said, namely, that he was mentally deranged—a psychopath. They were quite unable to accept this, for they knew he was saner than hundreds of their acquaintances.

And indeed if Eugene Irtenev was mentally deranged everyone is similarly insane; the most mentally deranged people are certainly those who see in others indications of insanity they do not notice in themselves.

VARIATION OF THE CONCLUSION OF *THE DEVIL*

"To kill, yes. There were only two ways out: to kill his wife, or to kill her. For it is impossible to live like this," said he to himself, and going up to the table he took from it a revolver which, having examined—one cartridge was wanting—he put in his trouser pocket.

"My God! What am I doing?" he suddenly exclaimed, and folding his hands he began to pray.

"Oh, God, help me and deliver me. Thou knowest that I do not desire evil, but by myself am powerless. Help me," said he, making the sign of the cross on his breast before the icon.

"Yes, I can control myself. I will go out, walk about and think things over."

He went to the entrance-hall, put on his overcoat and went out on to the porch. Unconsciously his steps took him past the garden along

the field path to the outlying farmstead. There the thrashing machine was still droning and the cries of the driver-lads were heard. He entered the barn. She was there. He saw her at once. She was raking up the corn, and on seeing him she, with laughing eyes, ran briskly and merrily over the scattered corn, raking it up with agility. Eugene could not help watching her though he did not wish it. He only recollected himself when she was no longer in sight. The clerk informed him that they were now finishing thrashing the corn that had been beaten down—that was why it was going slower and the output was less. Eugene went up to the drum, which occasionally gave a knock as sheaves not evenly fed in passed under it, and he asked the clerk if there were many such sheaves of beaten-down corn.

"There will be five cartloads of it."

"Then look here . . ." began Eugene, but he did not finish the sentence. She had gone close up to the drum and was raking the corn from under it, and she scorched him with her laughing eyes. That look spoke of a merry careless love between them, of the fact that she knew he wanted her and had come to her shed, and that she, as always, was ready to live and be merry with him regardless of all conditions or consequences. Eugene felt himself to be in her power, but did not wish to yield.

He remembered his prayer and tried to repeat it. He began saying it to himself, but at once felt that it was useless. A single thought now engrossed him entirely: how to arrange a meeting with her so that the others should not notice it.

"If we finish this lot to-day, are we to start on a fresh stack or leave it till to-morrow?" asked the clerk.

"Yes, yes," replied Eugene, involuntarily following her to the heap to which with the other women she was raking the corn.

"But can I really not master myself?" said he to himself. "Have I really perished? Oh, God! But there is no God. There is only a devil. And it is she. She has possessed me. But I won't, I won't! A devil, yes, a devil."

Again he went up to her, drew the revolver from his pocket and shot her, once, twice, thrice, in the back. She ran a few steps and fell on the heap of corn.

"Good Lord, oh dear! What is that?" cried the women.

"No, it was not an accident. I killed her on purpose," cried Eugene. "Send for the police-officer."

He went home and, without speaking to his wife, went to his study and locked himself in.

"Do not come to me," he cried to his wife through the door. "You will know all about it."

An hour later he rang, and bade the man-servant who answered the bell: "Go and find out whether Stepanida is alive."

The servant already knew all about it, and told him she had died an hour ago.

"Well, all right. Now leave me alone,—when the police-officer or the magistrate comes, let me know."

The police-officer and magistrate arrived next morning, and Eugene, having bidden his wife and the baby farewell, was taken to prison.

He was tried. It was during the early days of trial by jury;[5] and the verdict was one of temporary insanity, and he was sentenced only to perform church penance.

He had been kept in prison for nine months and was then confined in a monastery for one month.

[5]Trial by jury was introduced in 1864, and at first the juries were inclined to be extremely lenient to the prisoners.

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