A HERO OF NOWADAYS

1839–1840

A HERO OF NOWADAYS

BY

M. I. LERMONTOV

TRANSLATED BY

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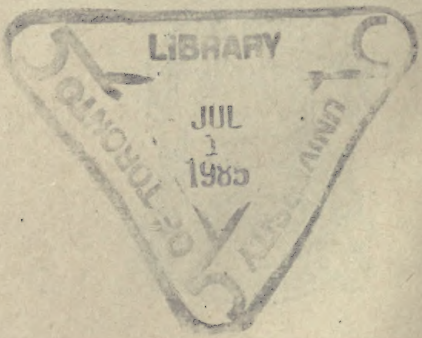
THOMAS NELSON AND SONS, LTD.
LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND NEW YORK



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INTRODUCTION.

BYRON had half a mind to write a novel. The project is mentioned in his letters time and again; and some members of his own family, at any rate, credited him with the capacity for this kind of writing, for they persisted in attributing the earlier Waverleys to his pen. The project was never realized; but of that unwritten book one may evoke some traits for certain: it could not have been other than autobiographical; it would have presented (with much incidental wit) the portrait of youthful genius, high-born and unhappy, self-inoculated by a merciless irony against the poison of self-delusion as well as the wounds of ridicule; suffering the discontents of a man who never meets his equal, and trying to cure them by cynical indulgence in sensuality. And his outlines would have been shown in picturesque relief against a romantic scenery of island or mountain. Lermontov's Byronic sympathies were so strong that he wrote in Russian just the book that Byron left unwritten in

English. Now that the Victorian Age is rapidly getting out of sight round a corner of the road, and that Byron's greatness may be expected to regain at home the recognition which he has never lacked abroad, this may, perhaps, serve as a first claim to engage the British reader's interest. Then there are some fanciers to whom a poet's prose is always a delicacy, like a colourist's occasional exercises in black and white. Add to these, as a third, a nationalist consideration, that Lermontov, as his name betrays, was partly of Scottish origin. Fate would have it that within a few hours of his end he should be dancing at a Scottish party in Piatigorsk. I dare say some will recognize a Scottish type of face in the drawing * of him which was made the day after his death. Be this fanciful or no (let physiognomists and ethnologists settle it), the Scottish strain in his genius is unmistakable. He is a signal instance of the fine-edged self-consciousness which commonly marks the literary Scot—the quality which is seen in various degrees in Carlyle and Stevenson, and the lamented author of "The House with the Green Shutters" (to say nothing of lesser modern lights), and which Byron himself so conspicuously inherited from his Scottish mother. The con-

* Reproduced in the Introduction of Chuiko's collected edition.

jecture will not stand forcing, for the family had been two hundred years in Russia. The melancholy of genius is a quality which knows no distinctions of place or race, and you must allow a great deal for conscious Byronism practised of set purpose; but, all abatements taken, there seems to be something outstanding in Lermontov which is rather Scottish than Russian.

Regarded as a novel, "A Hero of Nowadays" has certain obvious faults: the composition is episodic and the whole effect incomplete. But it is not so unstitched as appears at first sight, and it has countervailing merits. There is the penetrating veracity of representation which usually distinguishes a self-portrait; for though vanity may bias the artist in these circumstances, he paints himself with so much more loving study than any other would. There is here another merit which is pretty rare in fiction: often the absence of it disgusts people altogether of novel reading, as their taste grows robust and impatient—and perhaps stiffens somewhat. Lermontov knows his ground and knows his *monde*.—I don't mean merely the Caucasian backgrounds. Local colouring has become nowadays rather a cheap success for the better second-rate laureates of the lending libraries.—But to be the true historian of private society is no small achieve-

ment for a novelist. For this is the eventual purpose which has guided the vast and vague development of this dominating modern form. When a man with a nice literary trick of the pen draws not the society and the situations which he would like us to think of him as moving in, but those which he actually frequents as an *habitué* and an equal, he is always worth reading. A novelist who does that takes rank with Jane Austen and Trollope.

Whether Lermontov writes of garrison existence in a Caucasian frontier fort, or the life of a mondain at a Caucasian *ville d'eaux*, he has been there; he has met the people he describes, and he knows what he is talking about.

That the book is autobiographical admits of no doubt. Were there none but internal evidence, a fine ear is not easily deceived in the peculiar ring of a voice which is confessing itself and reporting from experience. But Lermontov's contemporaries vouch explicitly for the fact that, whether he meant it or not, he drew himself to the life in Pechorin. You can hardly doubt that he did it deliberately. And in this instance the autobiographer cannot be accused of showing complaisance towards himself. So deeply does his own personality interest him that his self-love is too scrupulous to permit of any hypocrisy. Lermontov

in his life (it is but too well attested) posed ultra-Byronically; his Pechorin poses in this book; Lermontov knew that he posed; he is, therefore, guiltless of literary hypocrisy or self-deception. He knew what he was doing, and could study himself unflinchingly in the mirror of self-consciousness, and coolly record what manner of man he read himself to be. Men of middle age, or men who have survived some great interior spiritual convulsion, sometimes achieve this ruthless lucidity. It is astonishing in Lermontov at twenty-five. "Yes, I pose, and I know that I pose, because I choose to do so. This is what I am like. I prefer your hate to your pity, and I know the portrait is both hateful and pitiable." Did Byron ever attain to this avowal? At least it may be doubted whether Byron ever had the kindly humour to sketch such a figure as Maxim Maximich.

Lermontov's progenitor was a Learmonth, who settled in Russia during the reign of Michael Theodorovich (1613–45). The family were about the Court and in high military situations during the eighteenth century. The poet's father retired from the army in 1811 with the rank of captain.

Michael Jourievich, the poet, was born October 3, 1814. His mother, a consumptive, died before she was twenty-one years old, leav-

the two-year-old infant to be brought up by his maternal grandmother, Elizabeth Alexeivna Arseniev, *née* Stolypin. She doted on him, and apparently did all the damage to his character that might be expected of such guardianship. The child was altogether exceptional. He early and readily acquired French, English, and German; he was deep in Byron at ten years old. At the same age he first fell in love; no mere childish preference, but an attack which had all the symptoms incident to this complaint when contracted in adolescence. The scene was a Caucasian watering-place, and the poet afterwards averred that it was this first love which "consecrated the Caucasus in his memory." How dear to his imagination that region became is shown both in "A Hero of Nowadays" and in many of his poems.

He spent two years at school in Moscow, and matriculated at the university there at sixteen. After two years his student course was cut short. He was "sent down" in consequence of some prank of academic unruliness, and entered a military college. To this part of his education Lermontov's biographers agree in imputing the most unfortunate effects on his character. Whether it was the unsympathetic atmosphere of the junker school, or the nemesis of an early boyhood committed to a fond woman

who was no more competent to guide than able to arrest the precocious expansion of talent; or the disastrous combination of these influences; certain it is that at this period the stigmata of genius, and especially of the poetical temperament, began to appear in him. He was solitary, moody, and discontented, intolerably arrogant in manner, quickly irritated; his youthful cynicism already found expression in some magazine verses. For his models of form he looked to Poushkin; Byron furnished his inspiration. His collected works comprise poems written as early as 1829; he had long commenced author when he received his commission in the Hussars in 1834.

His friends in the regiment were few. He took no trouble to add to the very small number with whom his intellectual stature and pace permitted him to run tolerably well matched in harness. Without Byron's deformity to excuse him, he found it as difficult as Byron did to be himself. Posturing was second nature. He had the same pride, the same invincible fear of ridicule; the same morbid sensitiveness constantly screening itself behind a mobile defence of cynicism and irony. Yet there were flashes of sympathy when the mask dropped, the devil of affectation was exorcised, and a comrade came away from a sincere, equal, unimpeded talk with the poet, announcing a revelation

of the real Lermontov. But, alas! such moments were as rare as they were wonderful. Few men possessing the abilities to qualify them for such companionship have also the patience to bear with so provoking a friend. Civilized man has invented friendship by letter, and it is a means whereby human affection may be communicated and continued between persons whose friendship could hardly remain sweet and unembarrassed if they must live together. Byron's exile probably saved his best friendships; but what chance had Lermontov in a guardsmen's mess? As a young man he was generally disliked for his conceit and affectation. And then he had, like Congreve, the vanity (common enough in all ages, perhaps) of being, not a man of letters, but a gentleman, a fine gentleman, who happened to write poetry. Serving two mistresses, Literature and Fashion, cost him as dear as most men pay for such a double establishment.

Hitherto his name was little known: Poushkin's death, in 1837, was the signal for Lermontov's literary epiphany. His verses on that occasion made only too much noise: his language gave such offence in high quarters that he was relegated to a dragoon regiment in the Caucasus. This time he was soon restored from disgrace; but a duel with the French Ambassador's son (Barante) was a more serious

scrape, for which he was sentenced to a further banishment. It was in the year 1840. "A Hero of Nowadays" was already written, and his published work already placed him high among living Russian poets. But when he quitted the capital for the Caucasus he left rather an odious personal reputation in St. Petersburg society for his dandyism, his scarifying wit, and his Byronic attitudes.

The change from dilettantism and the *beau monde* to a frontier fort produced a marvellous transformation in his character, as great as that which Byron experienced when his long enchanted spirit awoke at the summons of a great cause. Yet for Lermontov there was no overmastering power of a new affection to make a second spring in his mind; it was simply the escape from his own false self, the shadow of a coxcomb reflected in the mirrors of St. Petersburg ballrooms. But those who knew him best report that he was now a new man: to the poseur succeeded a mad wag, whose pastime was reckless pranks, like those of a mischievous schoolboy; all highly spiced with danger, the one seasoning that now amused his palate. The Bela episode in the story gives a true notion of his real escapades. He was destined never to return from the Caucasus. Most of the first half of 1841 he spent at Piatigorsk, and here took place his last duel. The

circumstances have never been quite elucidated. He was killed by Major Martinov, who survived till 1876, but for those thirty-five years persisted in declining to add any further explanation to what he had told his commanding officer at the time. There was said to be a lady in the case; but it seems that Lermontov's old failing was the direct cause: he could neither leave the lacerating jest unuttered nor bring himself afterwards to disown his tongue. He died a martyr to the least amiable of the passions which constitute the literary temperament.

The death scene was Byronically mounted like the scene in this novel. The rivals met in the foothills on a summer's evening, while a great thunderstorm raged between Beshtau and Mashuk. It was a cold-blooded affair. Lermontov fired in the air: Martinov took such long and steady aim that the seconds called out, "Fire, or we'll separate you." Lermontov fell, shot through the heart, and expired instantly. Local opinion, it is said, was strong and bitter against Martinov.

So died this poet—of an age with Lucan and with Keats—at twenty-six years old.

He was buried at Piatigorsk, a protest from the clergy notwithstanding; and next year the remains were removed to Tarchana in the Penza Government, where they lie under a severely handsome mausoleum.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

In every book the Preface comes first; but it comes last too. Either it serves to declare the purpose of the work, or it stands for an apology and a reply to critics. But readers are not generally concerned about the moral purposes of authors or the attacks of reviewers, and therefore they do not read prefaces. It is a pity that this is so, especially for us in Russia. Our public is still so young and ingenuous that it does not understand a story unless it finds the moral there at the end of it. They do not see a joke or feel an irony; in fact, they have not the education of a gentleman. They do not even realize that in polite society and in polite literature open warfare is quite out of place; that contemporary civilization has discovered an instrument of surpassingly fine edge, almost invisible, but none the less deadly, which under the appearance of flattery can inflict an irresistible and unerring wound. Our public is like a provincial person, who, upon listening to

a conversation between two diplomatists representing two hostile Powers, should come away convinced that each of them must be betraying his Government to indulge his intimate personal tenderness for his *confrère*.

This book has recently had to suffer from the deplorable simplicity with which some readers (and even some reviewers) put their trust in the literal meanings of words. People have been horribly offended (quite seriously) that the example of such an unprincipled man should be presented to them as "A Hero of Nowadays;" others have made the very acute remark that the author must have been drawing his own portrait and the portraits of his acquaintance. Pitiful old jest! But evidently Russia is so constituted that everything else in it is liable to change and reform except this particular form of silliness. With us even the most marvellous of fairy stories hardly escapes being reproached for an attempt to libel individuals.

"A Hero of Nowadays," my worthy sirs, is, in fact, a portrait, but not of an individual; it is a portrait composed of the vices of all our generation, in their full development. Do you still insist on telling me that a man cannot be so wicked? But I ask you why, if you believe in the possible existence of all the villains in tragedy and romance, should you not believe

in the authenticity of Pechorin? If you can take delight in creations of fancy far more frightful and monstrous, why does this character—simply as a creation of fancy—find no mercy at your hands? Is it not that there is more truth in the picture than you like?

Will you complain that there is nothing here to help the cause of morality? I beg pardon. People have been fed on sweets quite enough; their stomach has lost tone; they want bitter antidotes, a course of caustic truth. But do not proceed to infer that the author has conceived a lofty ambition of setting up for a reformer of human vices. Heaven preserve him from any such sin against good manners! The fact is, it amused him to draw the contemporary man, such as he apprehends him, and such as (to his and your misfortune) he has too often experienced him. The result may be the diagnosis of a disease; but where the remedy is to come from, God only knows!

1841.

A HERO OF NOWADAYS.

I.

BELA.

I WAS travelling post from Tiflis. All the baggage in my *teliéjka* consisted of a single trunk, of moderate dimensions, and half of it crammed with my travelling sketches of Georgia. The greater part of these (luckily for you) were lost; but the trunk with the rest of my things (luckily for me) arrived safe and sound.

The sun was already beginning to be hidden behind a range of snow mountains when I drove into the Koishaurskaya Valley. The Ossete who was driving me pushed his horses unrestingly in order to achieve the ascent of the Koishaursky mountain before nightfall, and he sang songs at the top of his voice. What a delicious place the valley is! Impregnable mountains on every quarter; reddish rocks,

mantled with green ivy and crowned with dense growths of plane trees; yellow precipices, streaked by ravines; and aloft, ever so high aloft, a fringe of snow; and beneath you, the Aragva, joining hands with another nameless river, bursts tumultuously out of a dark gorge full of mist, and uncoils itself in a silvery thread like a snake.

On approaching the foot of the Koishaursky ascent, we halted beside a *Doukhan*, and a noisy crowd of Georgians and Highlanders appeared. A caravan of camels, encamped for the night, was in the neighbourhood. I was obliged to hire oxen to haul my *teliéjka* up the steep ascent, for it was getting late autumn, the road was glazed with frost, and there is a mile and a half of hill. There was nothing for it: I hired six oxen and several Ossetes. They lost no time. One of them hoisted my trunk on his shoulders, and the rest were busy with the oxen.

Behind my vehicle a team of four oxen was drawing another *teliéjka*, and making light work enough of it, although it was loaded to the top. This circumstance surprised me. Behind it walked the owner, smoking a little Kabarda pipe mounted with silver. He wore an officer's overcoat without epaulettes, and a shaggy Circassian hat. I guessed his age at fifty. The swarthy complexion of his face be-

spoke him long acquainted with Caucasian suns; his prematurely grizzled moustaches assorted ill with the freshness of his step and the energy of his countenance. I approached him and bowed; he returned my bow in silence, and blew a dense cloud of smoke.

"It seems we are fellow-travellers?"

Again he bowed without saying a word.

"You are for Stavropol, I presume?"

"Precisely; on Crown business."

"Would you kindly inform me how it is that four oxen quite easily draw your heavy *teliéjka*, while mine, which is empty, takes half a dozen to move it at all with the help of those Ossetes?"

He smiled slyly, and cast a significant glance at me.

"You have not been long in the Caucasus?"

"A year," I answered; and again he smiled. "Why do you ask?"

"Well, that's just it! These filthy Asiatic hounds! you think they're helping because they shout? Why, the devil only can make out *what* they are shouting. But oxen understand them all right. You might harness a team of twenty, and these fellows have only to shout at them in their language and the oxen won't stir a step. Filthy rascals! But what are you to do with them? They love to fleece

a traveller. The truth is we have spoilt the sharks. Look out they don't try it on with you for *vodka*-money next. Oh, I know them; they get no change out of me!"

"Have you been serving long in these parts?"

"Yes: I was serving here in the time of Alex. Petrovich," he answered, with an extra touch of dignity. "When he marched to Lenia I was a sub-lieutenant," he continued, "and under him I got two steps for services against the Highlanders."

"And now you——?"

"Now I belong to the Third Battalion of the Line. And you?—if I may make bold to ask the question."

I told him.

With that the conversation ended, and we continued to walk side by side in silence. On the higher level we found snow. The sun set, and night followed day without interval, as is the way in southern lands; but thanks to the glimmer that played over the snow, we were easily able to distinguish the road, which was still all uphill, though not so stiff in the gradient now. I gave orders that my trunk should be put into the *teliéjka* and the oxen replaced by the horses, and for the last time I glanced downwards into the valley. Dense mist entirely hid the gorge beneath its voluminous

invasion, and not a single sound travelled up to our hearing from below. The Ossetes pressed around me noisily, and clamoured for *vodka;* but the Staff-Captain rated them so sharply that they made off pretty quick

"There you are!" said he; "just like these fellows! They don't know enough Russian to ask for bread, but they've learned by heart, 'Officer, give *vodka*-money.' I really much prefer Tartars; at least they don't drink."

We were now within a mile of the stage. It was very still all around, so still that you could follow the flight of a gnat by his hum. On our left a deep gorge showed black; beyond it and in face of us the dark blue summits of the mountains, all seamed with wrinkles and covered with wrappers of snow, figured against a background of pale horizon which still cherished the last gleams of daylight. Stars began to twinkle in the dark heaven. It gave me a queer impression to see them apparently so far higher than they are at home in the winter time. Black naked rocks stuck up on either hand of us; here and there bushes peeped out of the snow; but not so much as the whisper of a dry leaf was to be heard. In the midst of that deathly sleep of Nature, it was a relief when the snorting of the three horses in the post *troika* struck upon our ears, and the irregular tinkling of a little Russian sleigh-bell.

"We shall have glorious weather to-morrow," I said.

The Staff-Captain answered never a word, but pointed with his finger at a high peak which was right ahead of us.

"What's that?" I asked.

"Gût-Gora."

"Well, what of it?"

"Observe how he smokes."

And, in fact, Gût-Gora was smoking: light drifts of vapour were loitering on either side of him, but on the summit lay a black cloud, so black it showed like a blot against the darkness of the sky.

We had just distinguished the post-station and the roofs of the surrounding huts, and the hospitable firelight began to gleam in front of us, when a wet, cold gust swept past, and with a rushing murmur from the gorge a douche of fine rain was upon us. I had hardly time to draw my cloak round me, and we were in the thick of a snowstorm. I scanned my companion's face with an admiring respect.

"We shall have to spend the night here," he said, in tones of irritation; "there's no crossing the mountains with this kind of thing." And turning to the guide, he asked, "Have there been landslides on Krestovy?"

"No, sir," answered the Ossete; "but there's a great deal hanging—a great deal."

Failing rooms for us newcomers in the post-house, we were accommodated with quarters in a smoky cabin. I invited my companion to join me in drinking a glass of tea, as I had that sole consolation of travellers in the Caucasus, an iron teapot.

The hut was built into the rock on one side; three wet, slippery steps led to the door of it. I groped my way in and ran against a cow—with these people the cow-stable does duty for an antechamber. I did not know which way to turn; there was bleating of sheep here and growling of a dog there. But then, by good luck, a dim light flashed in the background, and enabled me to find another aperture resembling a door. The scene which was now revealed to me was remarkable enough: the spacious hut, whose roof rested upon two smoke-begrimed pillars, was full of people. A fire, laid on the bare ground, crackled in the midst; the smoke, thrust back by the wind from the opening in the roof, spread itself out in such a dense canopy overhead that it was long before I could discern anything clearly. At the fire sat two patriarchs, a multitude of children, and one lanky Georgian; all were in rags. There was nothing for it; so we took our places by the fire and smoked our pipes, and the tea-kettle was soon hissing genially.

"What pitiful people!" I said to the Staff-

Captain, indicating our unwashed hosts, who were staring at us in dumb stupefaction.

"Utterly brutish," he answered. "You cannot conceive such a thing. They know nothing; they're incapable of any sort of civilization. Yes, our Kabardenes and Tchetchenesses are at least brigands and ruffians—stupid blockheads as they are; but these fellows here have not got so much as the desire for weapons of any kind—you never see any of them with a decent dagger. Real Ossetes, and no mistake!"

"Have you been long in Tchetchenia?"

"Yes; I was ten years in a fort with my company at the Stone Ford. Know it?"

"I've heard of it."

"Well, my boy, I can tell you we had about enough of these blackguards. Thank God, things are quieter now; but time was you couldn't go a hundred paces from the ramparts but there was a hairy devil somewhere sitting and watching for you: be off your guard for a moment, and they were always ready for you—either a lasso round your neck or a bullet in your skull! What chaps they were!"

"But I dare say you had plenty of adventures," I said. My curiosity was moved.

"Oh, no doubt. There was one time . . ." and he began pulling at his left moustache

and shaking his head. He went off into a reverie.

With the desire congenial to all travellers and men of letters, I was desperately eager to extract some anecdote from him. Meanwhile the tea was ready ; I fetched two field tumblers out of my trunk, filled them, and put one before him. He tasted a sip and said, as if talking to himself, " Yes, there was a time . . ."

I conceived great hopes from this interjection. I know that old Caucasians like talking and spinning yarns ; they so seldom get the chance. One stays somewhere on duty for five whole years in solitude, and for five whole years no one even says " Good-day to you, old chap ! " Nothing but the sergeant-major's formal, " I wish you a good-morning, sir ! " One would have liked a bit of a crack about something. Savage, curious people all around ; danger every day ; extraordinary chances befall, and then, whether you will or no, it is a pity that so few of us can use a pen.

" Would you like a drop of rum as well ? " I asked my comrade. " I have some white from Tiflis. It is getting cold."

" No, thank you ; I don't drink."

" Really ? "

" Yes, really. I have taken an oath. When I was already a sub-lieutenant—long ago, you know—we got a bit jolly among ourselves, and

that night there was an alarm. We all turned out half screwed. We caught it, I can tell you, when Alex. Petrovich came to hear of it. Lord, what a rage he was in! It was touch-and-go that we should be court-martialled. It's just this: when you live for a whole year at a time without seeing a soul, if it comes to *vodka*, a man's done for!"

I almost lost hope when I heard that.

"But look at the Circassians," he continued; "how they fuddle themselves with their beer at a wedding or a funeral! There was one occasion when I was scarcely able to control my legs, and I was on a visit to a friendly prince at the time too."

"How did that happen?"

"Well"—he filled his pipe, took a draw at it, and began his narrative—"well, you must know, I was stationed at that time in a fort by Terek: it'll be nearly five years ago. One time, in the autumn, there came a transport train with supplies; the officer in charge was a young man of five-and-twenty. He presented himself to me in full fig, very spick and span, and informed me that his orders were to stop with me in the fort. He was slender and rather pale, his uniform so dainty and fresh that I guessed immediately that he had not been long in our service in the Caucasus. 'Am I right in supposing,' I said to him, 'that

you have been transferred here from Russia?' 'Precisely, Captain,' he answered. I grasped his hand, and said that I had much pleasure, etc. 'You'll find it rather dull. Never mind, though; we're going to be very good friends together. Pardon me, I beg you will simply call me Maxim Maximich; and, pardon me, what's the use of full dress? Always come to me in your *fourajka*.' Quarters were assigned him, and he established himself in the fort."

"And what was his name?" I asked Maxim Maximich.

"His name? Oh, his name was Gregory Alexandrovich Pechorin. He was a charming boy, I must assure you, charming—only a bit queer. For example: rain or freeze, he would be out hunting all day long in all weathers; everybody else might be frozen and dog-tired, but he—never. Another time he would be sitting by himself in his room, a gust of wind would come, and he assures you he has caught cold; at the rattle of a shutter he trembles and turns pale, and yet he would go out after wild boar with me alone. There were times when, for an hour together, you couldn't get a word out of him; and, again, he would start telling stories till you were fit to die of laughter. Yes, with so many eccentricities he must have been a rich man. What a quantity of precious trinkets of all sorts he had got!"

"And did he live with you long?" I asked in turn.

"A year—and a year that I shall never forget! The trouble he gave me—God forgive him! Really, there are people of whom it is written at their birth that all sorts of extraordinary things shall happen to them."

"Extraordinary?" I exclaimed, with an inquiring look of curiosity, as I poured him out some more tea.

"Why, I may as well tell you the story. About four miles from the fort lived a friendly chief. His son, a boy of about fifteen, was in the habit of riding over to see us every day, for one reason or another. We used to spoil him, especially Gregory Alexandrovich. The boy was a regular scapegrace, up to any mortal thing; he could take off his hat of fire his rifle at full gallop. There was one unpleasant thing about him: he was frightfully greedy of money. One time, for a joke, Gregory Alexandrovich promised to give him a golden quarter-guinea if he would steal the best he-goat out of his father's stall for him; and what do you think?—the very next night he came dragging it by the horns! Sometimes we would amuse ourselves by teasing him; instantly his eyes would get suffused with blood, and he would whip out his dagger. 'Oh, don't lose your temper, Azamat,' I

used to say to him; 'you'll get your head broke!'

"One time the old chief himself rode over to invite us to a wedding: he was marrying his eldest daughter, and we were on good terms with him; so we couldn't refuse, you see, though he was a Tartar. So off we went. When we got to the courtyard, a great number of dogs welcomed us with a terrible barking. The women hid themselves when they saw us; those whose faces we could get a glimpse of were anything but beauties. 'I have much pleasanter recollections of the Circassian ladies than this,' said Gregory Alexandrovich to me. 'Wait a bit,' I said, laughing. I had things of my own to think about. There was already a crowd of people gathered in the chief's hut. It is the custom with these Asiatics, you know, to invite all and sundry to a wedding. We were received with every courtesy, and conducted to the *Kunatzka*. Only I did not forget to take note where they stabled our horses, in case of emergencies."

"How do they celebrate a wedding?" I asked the Staff-Captain.

"In the usual way. A mullah reads something out of the Koran; then they make presents to the young people and all their kindred; they eat, and drink their peculiar beer; then the *Djigitovka* begins, and some

unkempt fellow on a dirty, lame, ungroomed old screw of a horse gives an exhibition of *manége*—all sorts of circus tricks to amuse the worshipful company; then when it begins to grow dusk, what we should call the ball begins in the *Kunatzka*. A miserable old creature strums on a three-stringed thingumbob—I forget what they call the instrument—anyhow it is in the nature of our *balalaika*. The girls and the young children take their stand in two rows, opposite each other, and clap hands and sing. Then a girl and a young man step out and begin to spout verses in sing-song, improvised, and the rest take up the chorus.

"We were sitting in a place of honour, Pechorin and I. Presently the youngest daughter of our host came up, a girl of sixteen, and began to sing to him—what you might call a sort of compliment."

"What kind of thing was it she sang, do you remember?"

"Why, yes, I suppose it would be something like this. 'Musical,' says I, 'are our young men's *djigits*, and their *caftans* are decked with silver; but the young Russian officer is more musical than they, and he wears golden stripes. He is like the poplar tree in their midst; but he does not grow or flourish in our garden.' Pechorin rose and bowed to her, laid his hand on his forehead and his

heart, and begged me to reply to her. I know the language well, and I conveyed his acknowledgments. When she left us I whispered to Gregory Alexandrovich, 'Well, what do you think of her?' 'Fascinating,' he answered. 'What's her name?' 'She is called Bela,' I answered.

"And in fact she was beautiful: tall, slender; eyes black as a mountain gazelle's, so that their glance pierced your soul. Pechorin remained absorbed, and never took his eyes off her, and she often glanced furtively at him. However, Pechorin was not the only one fascinated by the chief's lovely daughter; out of a corner of the room there was another pair of eyes gazing at her, immovable and blazing. I had a good look at them, and presently recognized my old acquaintance, Kazbich. I must tell you that he was not what you could call either a friendly or an unfriendly chief; there was a good deal of suspicion against him, but he had never been actually caught playing any tricks. He sometimes brought sheep to the fort. He would sell them to us cheap enough; but never any haggling for a price. What he asked you must pay him; he would hardly ever abate. They said he was fond of keeping company with *Abreks* at Kuban, and, to tell you the truth, he looked a great ruffian—small, lean, and broad-shouldered. But what

a devil of a fellow! His *beshmet* (tunic) all in rags and tatters and shreds and patches, but his rifle silver-mounted. And his horse was famous in all Kabarda—really, it is impossible to imagine a better beast than his was. It was no wonder that every horseman coveted it and often made an attempt to steal it; but they never succeeded. I can see that horse as if he was here now. He was as black as pitch, legs as delicate as the strings of a violin, and eyes—his eyes were as fine as Bela's. And tough!—he could gallop him five-and-thirty miles. And so well trained he would follow his master like a dog, and understand what he said. At one time he used never even to fasten him up. Oh, such a steed for a brigand!

"Well, that evening Kazbich was sulkier than usual, and I remarked that under his *beshmet* he was wearing a coat of chain-mail. 'It's not for nothing he's got on that mail,' I thought to myself; 'he's some game on hand, not a doubt of it.' Well, it was stuffy in the hut, and I went out to get a breath of fresh air. Night lay upon the mountains, and the mist was beginning to wander about the gorges.

"It came into my head to take a turn round by the shed where our horses were stabled, and see if they had fodder; and besides—

well, a little precaution never does any harm: my horse was a beauty, and Kabardenes have often cast tender glances at it, and added the words, '*Yakshi, tkhe, chek, yakshi!*'

"So I was slipping softly along the partition of planks, when suddenly I heard voices. One voice I recognized instantly; it was that of the young ne'er-do-weel Azamat, our host's son. The other spoke less often and in a lower key. 'What are they talking about?' thought I—'about my horse, eh?' And I crouched down close by the planking and listened, straining my ear not to lose a word. Sometimes the noise of songs and the buzz of conversation wafted out from the hut drowned the dialogue which I was interested in overhearing. 'You've a famous horse,' said Azamat. 'If I was master at home and had a drove of three hundred brood mares, I would give half of them to get your racer, Kazbich.'

"'Aha! *Kazbich!*' I said to myself, and remembered the coat of mail.

"'Yes,' answered Kazbich, after a longish silence, 'you won't find her match in all Kabarda. One time—beyond the Terek—I rode with the *Abreks* to lift the Russian cattle. We had no luck with our venture, and we scattered, one here, one there. I had four Cossacks after me; I could hear the shouts of the Giaurs behind me; in front of me was

a dense forest. I bent low in the saddle, commended myself to Allah, and for the first time in my life insulted a horse by giving a blow with a whip. He flew like a bird through the thick of the branches: the sharp thorns tore my clothes, the dry boughs of the *Karagach* lashed my face. My horse went leaping over the stumps and breasting his way through the underwood. It would have been better for me to have left him at the edge of the forest, and hidden myself in the forest on foot; but I could not bear to part with him, and fate rewarded me. Several bullets whizzed past my head; I could even hear the pursuing Cossacks galloping on the trail. . . . Suddenly, right in front of me, opened a deep gully; my horse paused an instant, and jumped. He reached the opposite bank, but his hinder hoofs slipped away, and he remained clinging by the fore feet. I let go the reins and jumped into the gully. It saved him; he extricated himself with a spring. The Cossacks saw it all, but not one of them let himself down into the gully to look for me. In fact, they thought I had been dashed to death; and I heard them set off to catch my beast. It made my heart bleed. I crawled along the ravine in the thick grass and peered out. Just there the forest came to an end; several Cossacks were galloping out on the plain, and, right in front of

them—my Karagyoz! They all went after him with a shout, and long, long they chased him for all they were worth—one of them in particular. Twice over it was touch-and-go that he didn't get a lasso round his neck. I shuddered, closed my eyes, and began to pray. In a few moments I opened them, and saw . . . my Karagyoz flying, tail in air, free as the wind, and the Giaurs far away, spread out one behind another, their beasts fairly played out. *Vallach!* It is the truth, the very truth. The next night I was sitting in my ravine, when suddenly—what do you think, Azamat? A horse gallops up to the edge of the gully, snorts, neighs, stamps his hoofs on the ground. I recognized his voice—my Karagyoz; it was he, my comrade, my brother! Since that time we have never been parted.'

"Then I could hear him patting his racer's smooth neck and calling him tender pet names.

"'If I had a stud of a thousand mares,' says Azamat, 'I would give them all for your Karagyoz.'

"'*Iok!* I will not,' answered Kazbich, in a tone of unconcern.

"'Listen, Kazbich,' said Azamat coaxingly. 'You're an honest man, you're a brave *Djigit;* but my father is afraid of the Russians, and won't let me go to the hills. Give me your

horse, and I will do anything you like. I will steal my father's best rifle for you, or his great sword, the one you have so often coveted; it's a genuine *gourda*. Put the edge of it against your hand: it devours flesh of itself—a coat of mail like yours is nothing to it.'

"Kazbich remained silent.

"'The first time I saw your horse,' continued Azamat, 'how he curveted and leapt under you, and his nostrils twitched and expanded, and a shower of sparks flew from the flint beneath his hoofs, something happened inside me that I couldn't understand, and ever since that I have had a disgust for everything. I looked with scorn at the best of my father's horses; I was ashamed to be seen with them. I began to pine with melancholy; I used to sit moping on a rock whole days together, and every minute your black thoroughbred was present to the eye of my thoughts, with his graceful step, the smooth line of his back, straight as an arrow. He would gaze into my eyes with his quick, venturesome eyes, as though he wished to find language and speak. Kazbich, I shall die if you won't give him to me.' Azamat's voice quivered as he said the words.

"I could hear him weeping. I ought to mention, by the way, that Azamat was a particularly plucky boy, and as a rule nothing

could wring a tear from him, even when he was quite young.

" By way of reply to his tears something was audible that sounded akin to a laugh.

" Then I heard Azamat say, in a hard, determined voice, ' You see I mean to stick at nothing. Would you like me to steal my sister for you? She can dance and sing. Oh, how she dances and sings! And her embroidery in gold—it's a marvel to see! There isn't a woman to match her in the house of the Padishah of Turkey. Will you? Wait for us to-morrow night, there, in the valley where the torrent comes down. I will come past with her on the way to the next village—and she is yours. Isn't Bela worth your horse? '

" Kazbich was silent for a long, long time. At last, instead of an answer, he hummed an old song half under his breath,—

' At home in the village fair maidens are plenty ;
Their looks are like starlight in midsummer skies.
'Tis lovely to live with your own sweet-and-twenty,
But dearer my youth and my freedom I prize.

' For gold you may purchase four women for wiving,
But a good horse is dearer than purchase can pay.
Outstripping the blast on the steppe and outstriving,
He'll never forsake you and never betray! ' *

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* *Note by Lermontov.*—I beg pardon of my readers for translating into verse Kazbich's song, which, I need

"In vain Azamat implored him to consent; in vain he wept and blandished and swore. At last Kazbich cut him short impatiently. 'Get along with you, silly boy! What's the good of my horse to you? He would fling you off in the first three steps, and you'd break your silly noddle on a stone!'

"'Fling *me!*' screamed Azamat in a transport of fury, and the steel of his dagger rang on the coat of mail. A powerful hand hurled him off, and he fell against the wattled side of the shed with such force that the wattle shook.

"'Now we're in for some sport,' thought I to myself, and, slipping into the stable, I bridled our horses and led them out to the back door. In two minutes there was a terrific uproar in the hut. This is what happened. Azamat burst in with his tunic torn in pieces, declaring that Kazbich wanted to kill him. Everybody jumped up and made for their weapons—and then the fun began! Such cries, such tumult, such volleys of shots! But Kazbich was already mounted and in the street, wheeling round among the mob like a very devil, and brandishing his sabre.

"'Ugly business this, brawling at the feast,' I said to Gregory Alexandrovich, taking him

hardly say, was delivered to me in prose; but habit is second nature.

by the arm. 'Wouldn't it be best for us to clear out at once?'

"'Oh, wait and see how it will end.'

"'Why, it ends in mischief, there's no mistake about that; it always does with these Asiatics. They blow themselves out with beer, and then comes the cutting and carving.'

"We mounted, and rode quickly home."

* * * * *

"And Kazbich?" I asked impatiently of the Staff-Captain. "What of him?"

"The same as always happens with these people," he answered, as he drank his glass of tea. "He got away, of course."

"And unwounded?" I asked.

"Why, God only knows that! They take a deal of killing, these ruffians. I've seen some of them in action, for example—a fellow stuck as full of holes with the bayonet as a sieve, and still keep on slashing away with his sword." Then, after a short silence, he stamped his foot on the ground and continued: "There's one thing I shall never forgive myself. The devil inspired me, while we rode to the fort, to repeat to Gregory Alexandrovich everything that I had heard as I sat behind the shed. He laughed—just like his cunning; but he turned a bit thoughtful too."

"How do you mean? I can't follow that. I beg you to tell me the whole story."

"Well, I suppose there's nothing for it! I've begun it, so now I must go on. Within four days Master Azamat came riding over to the fort. As usual, he proceeded to visit Gregory Alexandrovich, who had always got something for his sweet tooth. I was present. The conversation turned on horses, and Pechorin began praising Kazbich's horse up to the skies—oh, such spirit, such beauty! a perfect gazelle! Why, really, to hear him talk there wasn't such another horse in the whole world!

"The Tartar boy's small eyes began to sparkle, but Pechorin made as though he saw nothing. I led the conversation on to another topic, but he at once—see?—started again to talk about Kazbich's horse. The same story went on every time Azamat came over to see us. In three weeks' time I observed Azamat looking pale and wasted, like a lover in a romance. And no wonder, either!

"Well, you see, I only understood the whole thing afterwards; but the game was this. Gregory Alexandrovich was screwing him up to sticking point. One time he says to him, 'Azamat, I see that you're desperately gone on that horse, and it's as much as your life is worth if you can't be in sight of him. Now tell me, what would you give anybody who should make you a present of him?'

" ' Everything that he desires,' answered Azamat.

" ' In that case I will get him for you, but on one condition . . . swear that you will fulfil it.'

" ' I swear! but do you swear on your part.'

" ' Excellent! I swear that you shall have possession of the horse; only, in exchange, you must make over to me your sister Bela. Karagyoz will be *kaluim* for her. I hope you're satisfied with the bargain.'

" Azamat was silent.

" ' You will not? No, of course you will not! I thought you were a man, and you are still a child; it's early days for you to be riding on horseback.'

" Azamat fairly kindled at that. ' But my father? ' he said.

" ' Doesn't he go away sometimes? '

" ' He does.'

" ' Agreed, then? '

" ' Agreed,' murmured Azamat, pale as death. ' When? '

" ' The first time Kazbich comes here, he has promised to bring us a dozen sheep. As for the rest, that is my affair. Keep your eyes open, Azamat! '

" Well, there was the business settled between them . . . and a bad business too, if

the truth be told. I told Pechorin so afterwards; but all the answer he vouchsafed me was that the Circassian savage girl ought to be happy to have such a charming husband as him, because, according to their ideas, he was all the same as a husband; and Kazbich was a scoundrel who wanted punishing. Judge for yourself what reply I could make to that. However, at that time I knew nothing of what had passed. Well, one day Kazbich rode over and asked if we were wanting any sheep or honey. I told him to bring them next day. 'Azamat,' said Gregory Alexandrovich, 'Karagyoz is in my hands to-morrow; if Bela is not here to-night, you don't get a sight of your horse.'

"'Good,' said Azamat, and off he went to his village at full speed.

"In the evening Gregory Alexandrovich armed himself and rode out of the fort. How they arranged their affair I don't know. All I can tell you is that at night they both returned, and the sentinel saw that a woman was lying across Azamat's saddle-bows tied hand and foot, and her head muffled in a veil."

"And the horse?" I asked the Staff-Captain.

"Wait a minute, wait a minute! Next day, early in the morning, Kazbich rode up and brought his dozen sheep for sale. Fastening his horse in the shed, he came in to see me.

I treated him to some tea, because, scoundrel as he was, he was all the same my *Konnak*.*

"We stayed gossiping about one thing and another, when suddenly I observed Kazbich shudder and the expression of his face alter. In an instant he was at the window, but the window unluckily looked out on the backyard. 'What's the matter with you?' I asked.

"'My horse, my horse!' he answered, shaking all over. 'I heard the clatter of hoofs.'

"'Why, to be sure, it will be one of the Cossacks riding out!'

"'No! *Ourous Yaman, yaman!*' he roared, and flung himself out of the room headlong, like a mad panther. In two leaps he was already in the yard. At the gate of the fort the sentry tried to bar the way with his rifle, but he bounded past and sped away along the road as hard as he could run. Far away a cloud of dust rose up: it was Azamat mounted on Karagyoz, riding for all he was worth.

"As he ran, Kazbich pulled his rifle out of its case and fired. He stopped motionless for a minute until he had satisfied himself that his shot had missed. Then he uttered a screech, dashed the rifle on a stone, battered it to smithereens, lay down on the ground, and began to sob like a child.

"People collected round him from the fort;

* Friend and guest.

he took no heed of anybody. They stood there some time and talked, and came back again. I gave orders that the money for his sheep should be laid beside him; he would not touch it, but continued lying flat on his face like a dead man. Will you believe me, he lay there till late at night, and right through the night. However, next morning he came into the fort and asked to be told the robber's name. The sentinel who had seen Azamat untie the horse and ride off on him saw no reason for making a secret of it. Kazbich's eyes blazed when he heard the name, and he made off straight for the village where Azamat's father lived.

"What did the father do?"

"Well, you see, the point was just this: Kazbich did not find him at home; he was gone away somewhere for a week, else how could Azamat have succeeded in abducting his sister?"

"I see."

"When the father returned he found no daughter and no son. Cunning young monkey! He saw fast enough that it would go hard with him if he came across the chief, so he disappeared for the time—threw in his lot with some gang of *Abreks*, and, I dare say, lost his mischievous head beyond Terek or beyond Kuban. That's what happens! I confess that

I found I had business enough of my own to look after without troubling myself about Azamat. No sooner did I receive the intimation that the Circassian girl was in Gregory Alexandrovich's quarters than I put on my epaulettes and sword and proceeded there.

"He was lying on the bed in his front room, with one hand beneath his head and the other holding an extinguished pipe. The door into the second room was shut and locked, and the key was not in the lock. I took in all these circumstances at a glance. I began to cough and tap with my heels on the floor, but he pretended not to hear.

"'Mr. Ensign!' I said, with the utmost severity of manner, 'perhaps it has escaped your attention that I am paying you a visit.'

"'Ah! excuse me, Maxim Maximich, won't you have a pipe?' he answered, without getting up.

"'I beg pardon, I am not Maxim Maximich, but your superior officer!'

"'It makes no difference. Won't you have some tea? If you only knew how anxious and worried I am!'

"'I know all about it,' I answered, approaching the bed.

"'All the better. I am not in the mood for a long story.'

"'Mr. Ensign, you have committed an

offence for which I may have to be answerable.'

"'Hullo! What's the trouble? Oh come, we've always managed to be good comrades together.'

"'What's the use of joking? I have to ask you for your sword, sir.'

"'Mitchka, my sword!' he called.

"Mitchka fetched the sword.

"Having now fulfilled my duty, I sat down beside him on the bed, and said, 'Listen, Gregory Alexandrovich: you must confess this is a bad business.'

"'What's a bad business?'

"'Why, your carrying off Bela. That young rascal Azamat! Come, own up!' I said to him.

"'But since I am fond of her?'

"Now what answer could I make to that? I was quite nonplussed. All I could say was, after a considerable pause, that if her father should demand her she would have to be surrendered.

"'She will have to be no such thing.'

"'But he knows that she is here.'

"'And how does he know that?'

"Again I was nonplussed. Pechorin got up and said, 'Listen, Maxim Maximich, you're a good fellow. If we surrender his daughter to that old savage, he will either murder her or

sell her. What's done is done. It's no good spoiling sport. Leave her with me, and keep my sword.'

"'Well, show her to me,' I said.

"'She is the other side of that door, but I myself have tried in vain to see her at present. She sits in a corner, closely wrapped up in her veil, and will not speak or look. She's as shy as a wild deer. I have engaged our *Douchanshchitza* to act duenna; she understands Tartar. She will go to her and accustom her to the idea that she is mine, because she is not going to belong to anybody else but me,' he added, striking his fist on the table. I agreed to that. What was there to be done? There are some people like that—you're absolutely bound to agree with them."

"And, in fact," I asked Maxim Maximich, "did she get accustomed to him, or did she languish in imprisonment and pine for her home?"

"Good gracious, why should she pine for her home? The hills were just as visible from the fort as from her village, and she didn't want any more of that old savage. Besides, Gregory Alexandrovich gave her something or other every day. The first few days she said nothing, but haughtily refused the gifts, which then fell to the *Douchanshchitza's* share, and served to heighten the persuasiveness of her

instances. Oh, presents are the thing! What won't a woman do for a bit of flowered stuff? But that's by the way. Well, Gregory Alexandrovich had a long struggle with her, till he learned Tartar and she began to understand our language. Little by little she grew accustomed to look at him, furtively and askance to begin with. She was always melancholy, and used to sing her own songs in an undertone, so that it often made me sad to hear her from the next room. One scene I shall never forget. I was walking by and glanced in at the window. Bela was sitting on the couch, her head drooping down on her breast, and Gregory Alexandrovich stood in front of her. 'Listen, my *peri*,' he said, 'you know that sooner or later you must be mine; then why do you torment me so? Is it that you have a lover among the Tchetchenesses? If so, I will let you go away home instantly.' She shivered almost imperceptibly, and shook her head. 'Or,' he went on, 'do you find me particularly hateful?' She sighed. 'Or does your faith forbid you to love me?' She turned pale, and said nothing. 'Believe me, Allah is one and the same for all peoples; and if He allows me to love you, why does He forbid you to repay the debt?' She looked fixedly in his face, as though she were staggered by this new idea. Her gaze expressed a mingled incre-

dulity and desire to be convinced. Such eyes! They glowed like two fires.

"'Listen, my beloved, my precious Bela,' Pechorin continued, 'you see how I love you. I am ready to sacrifice everything to cheer you. I want to see you happy; if you begin to be sad again, I shall die. Say, will you be more cheerful?' She became pensive, but never took her black eyes off him; then she smiled winningly, and nodded her head in token of consent. He took her by the hand, and tried to persuade her to kiss him. She feebly resisted, and kept repeating, 'Forgive me, forgive me—I must not, I must not.' He continued to insist. She began to tremble and cry, 'I am your prisoner,' she said, 'your slave; in the end you can force me.' And then more tears. Gregory Alexandrovich struck his forehead with his fist, and bolted into the other room. I went to him. He was walking backward and forward gloomily with arms folded. 'What's wrong, old chap?' I said. 'It's a devil and not a woman!' he answered; 'but I give you my word of honour she shall be mine.' I shook my head. 'Will you bet?' said he, 'within a week?' 'Done!' We shook hands and parted.

"Next day he lost no time in sending off an express messenger to Kiezliar to make vari-

ous purchases; quantities of different Persian stuffs arrived—untold quantities.

"'How do you think, Maxim Maximich,' he said to me as he displayed his presents, 'an Asiatic beauty will stand a siege against such batteries as this?' I answered, 'You don't know your Circassian girls; it's a very different thing from Georgians and Transcaucasians—very different. They have their own ways; they're otherwise brought up.' Gregory Alexandrovich smiled and began to whistle a march.

"But it turned out I was right. The presents only produced half an effect. She became more winning, more confiding, but that was all. And so he resolved on a final measure. One day he ordered his horse to be saddled in the morning, dressed himself Circassian fashion, armed himself, and went to her. 'Bela,' he said, 'you know that I love you. I dared to carry you off, thinking that you might love me when you knew me. I was mistaken. Forgive me! I leave you mistress of all I have. If you like, go back to your father—you are free. I have done you a wrong, and I must punish myself. Forgive me! I am going . . . whither? How do I know? Maybe it will not be long before I meet with a bullet or a sword-cut. Remember me then, and forgive me!'

"He turned away, and stretched out his hand

to take leave of her. She did not take his hand, and remained silent. Standing where I did behind the door, I could study her face through the chink. It moved me to pity to see such deadly pallor cover her sweet looks. Hearing no answer, Pechorin took a few steps towards the door. He was shaking, and—shall I tell you?—I think he was in the state of mind to fulfil actually what he proposed in jest. He was that kind of man—God knows him. He had hardly touched the door, though, when she sprang forward, broke into sobs, and fell upon his neck. Will you believe me? as I stood behind the door, I also wept . . . I mean, you know . . . not really wept, but just. . . . Oh, nonsense!"

The Staff-Captain stopped. Presently, pulling his moustaches, he added, "It made me sad to think that there wasn't a woman somewhere to love me like that."

"And was their happiness of long duration?" I inquired.

"Yes. She confessed to us that since that day when first she saw Pechorin he was often in her dreams, and that no man had ever made such an impression upon her. Yes, they were happy."

"How dull!" I exclaimed involuntarily. In fact, I had expected a tragic conclusion, and this was a sudden and unexpected disappoint-

ment. "And did the father never guess that she was with you in the fort?" I continued.

"Why, presumably, he had his suspicions. We learned a few days later that the old man had been killed. This is how it happened."

My attention revived.

"You must know that Kazbich imagined that Azamat had conspired with his father to steal the horse; at least, so I suppose. Well, one day he laid wait for him on the road a couple of miles from the village; the old man was returning from a fruitless search after his daughter. His men were straggling behind (it was getting dark), and he was riding meditatively at a foot's pace, when suddenly Kazbich stole like a cat from behind a bush, leapt up behind him on his horse, felled him to the ground with a stab from his dagger, seized the reins, and was gone! Some of the chief's retainers saw it all from a rising ground; they dashed in pursuit, but couldn't come up with him."

"So he indemnified himself for the loss of his horse and had his revenge," I remarked, wishing to stimulate my companion's memory.

"After all, according to their code," said the Staff-Captain, "he was entirely justified."

I could not help being struck by the capacity of the Russian for adapting himself to the cus-

toms of the peoples among whom he happens to live. I do not know whether it is praiseworthy or deserving of blame this quality of mind; it argues an extraordinary suppleness, and it testifies to that lucid common sense which pardons evil wherever it sees it to be necessary or impossible to abolish.

* * * * *

Meanwhile the tea was all drunk; our long-harnessed horses were getting stiff with cold standing in the snow; the moon, already pale in the west, was ready to bury itself in the black clouds which hung over the distant peaks like scraps of a torn curtain. We came out of the hut. Contrary to my companion's prediction, the weather had cleared, and promised us a fair morning. Systems of stars in marvellous patterns interlaced in the far firmament; one after another they were quenched, as the pale glimmer of dawn diffused itself over the deep lilac-tinted vault, illuminating in succession the craggy mountain-sides buried beneath virgin snows. To right and left opened murky, mysterious depths of blackness; and the mists, curling and winding like snakes, crawled down over the folds in the neighbouring hills as though they felt and dreaded the near approach of day.

It was as serene in heaven and earth as it is in a man's heart at the moment of his morning prayer, only from time to time a cold breath

blew from the east, lifting the horses' manes, which were covered with hoar-frost. We set out on our journey; the efforts of five miserable screws drew our vehicles along the tortuous road to Gût-Gora. We followed behind on foot, and propped the wheels with a stone when the horses were exhausted. It seemed as if the road led to heaven. Far as the eye could reach it was always rising and rising, until at last it ended in the cloud which since overnight had rested on the summit of Gût-Gora, like a kite waiting for its quarry. We crunched through snow knee-deep; the air became so rare that breathing was difficult; the blood kept running to one's head; but, in spite of all the discomfort, a peculiar joyous feeling diffused itself in every vein, and it put me in high spirits to think I was so far above the world: a childish feeling (I do not dispute it); but when we remove from the conditions of society and draw near to Nature, unconsciously we turn into children—everything adventitious drops away from the soul, and she becomes afresh what she once was long ago, and shall be again at some future date. Any one who has had the luck (as I have) to roam over desolate mountains, to gaze with long familiarity upon their fantastic forms, and to swallow great draughts of the reviving air which their gorges exhale, will understand my desire

to translate, to chronicle, to portray these enchanting pictures.

Well, at length we achieved the ascent of Gût-Gora, and halted to look about us. A damp cloud hung over the summit, with the menace of approaching storm in its chilly breath; but eastwards all was so clear and golden that we (that is, the Captain and I) completely forgot it. Yes, the Captain too. In simple hearts the sense of the beauty and grandeur of Nature is a hundredfold stronger than in us artistic enthusiasts who can use paper and words to express ourselves.

I said to him, "I suppose you are hardened to these magnificent pictures?"

"Yes; about as much as it is possible to harden yourself to the hiss of a bullet—that is, enough to conceal the involuntary beating of the heart."

"I have heard, on the contrary, that that is a music which grows to be a positive pleasure to some old warriors."

"Well, if you like, I suppose it is a pleasure, but for the very reason that it makes the heart move quicker.—Look!" he added, pointing to the east, "that beats everything!"

And indeed it has seldom ever been my fortune to behold such a panorama. Beneath us lay the Koishaurskaya Valley, cut by the Aragva and another stream, like two silver

threads; a bluish haze crept along it, trying to escape from the warm rays of morning into the next defile; to right and left, crests of mountains intersecting and reaching away, one higher than another, and all covered with snow and with underwoods. Away and away it was all mountains, but no two crags were alike; and all those snows were now flaming beneath the red flush so cheerfully and brilliantly that it seemed as though to remain there were to live for ever. The sun hardly showed above the dark blue mountains in the background, which only a practised eye could distinguish from a thundercloud; but above the sun was a blood-red streak which engaged my comrade's particular attention. "I told you," he exclaimed, "that we should see some weather now. We must push on, and, with luck, it will catch us at the Krestovaya. . . . Drive on," he shouted to the drivers.

They placed chains on the wheels instead of skids to keep them from running away, seized the horses by the bridles, and began the descent. There was rock wall on our right, and on the left such a precipice that a whole village of Ossetes, who lived at the bottom of it, looked like a swallow's nest. I trembled to think how often at dead of night some courier drives by this place at full speed on his jolting equipage without even dismounting, on a road

where two carriages cannot pass! One of our drivers was a Russian peasant from Yaroslav, the other an Ossete. The Ossete got down and proceeded to lead the wheeler by the bridle with all possible precautions, having first unharnessed the unmanageable beast; but our happy-go-lucky thoroughbred Russian never so much as dismounted from his seat. When I remarked to him that he might at least take a little care for my trunks' sake, which I had no wish to climb down that abyss after, he answered me, "Oh, your honour! Please God, we shall get along just as well as the others; we're not the first, anyhow!" And he was right. We might, of course, not get by safely; still, all the rest had got by safely. And if everybody would reason a little more, they would satisfy themselves that life is not worth taking so much trouble about. . . .

But possibly you would like to hear the end of Bela's history? Now, in the first instance, I am not writing a novel, but sketches of travel; consequently I cannot make the Captain tell his story sooner than he did in fact begin to tell it. So you must wait, or, if you like, turn over a few pages. I do not recommend you, though, to do that, because the passage of the Krestovaya (or, as the learned Gamba calls it, the *Mont S. Christophe*) is worthy of your curiosity. Well, we descended the Gût-Gora into

the Tchertova Valley. The "Devil's Valley!" What a romantic name! Already you begin to see a nest of the Evil Spirit niched amidst inaccessible cliffs. . . . You are quite mistaken. The name *Tchertova* Valley is derived not from *Tchort*, a devil, but from *Tcherta*, a frontier, because the boundary of Georgia was here at one time. This valley was encumbered with snowdrifts, which reminded me vividly enough of Saratov, Tambov, and other charming spots in our native country.

"Well, there's the Krestovaya," said the Captain, as we emerged from the Tchertova Valley.

He pointed to a col which stood shrouded in snow. A stone cross showed up black on its summit, and a barely perceptible track led past it, which they use only when the side road is too deep in snow. Our drivers declared that there was no block yet, and, to spare the horses, took us round. At the turn of the road we were met by five more Ossetes, who offered us their services. They clung on behind the wheels, and with a loud cry set about hauling and staying up our *teliéjka*.

The road was really terrific. On the right hand, masses of snow hung over our heads, apparently ready to break away into the valley at the first stirring of the wind. The narrow road was partly hidden in snow, which in some

places gave way up to our knees, and in others had been turned to ice by the operation of bright suns and nightly frosts, so that we ourselves had hard work to creep along it, and the horses floundered. On the left hand yawned a deep cleft, in which a headlong torrent now hid itself beneath an icy crust and now burst frothing over black boulders. It took us a good two hours to get over the Krestovaya—a mile and a quarter in two hours! And meanwhile the clouds descended, the hail and the snow raged; the wind came rampaging up out of the valley, roaring and hissing like the brigand Solovey; the stone cross was soon hidden in the mist which swept over from the east in rolling volumes, each denser and closer than the last.

By the way, there is a strange but general tradition which obtains concerning this cross, that it was put up by the Emperor Peter the First when he crossed the Caucasus; whereas, in the first place, Peter only went into Daghestan; and, in the second place, there is on the cross an inscription in bold letters to say that it was erected by order of General Yermolov, and precisely in the year 1824. But, records notwithstanding, the tradition has so impressed itself that you really don't know what to believe; the more so, because we have learned not to put too much faith in records.

We had now to come down three miles and a half of glazed rocks and slushy snow to reach the stage of Koba. The horses were exhausted, and we were half starved with the cold. The blizzard howled louder and louder, just like our own winter at home, only its wild strains were more sorrowful and melancholy. "And you, *ma pauvre exilée*," I thought to myself, "weep over your dry, illimitable steppes! *There* you have room to stretch your chilly wings, but here one feels the suffocating confinement of the eagle screaming and dashing himself against the iron bars of his cage."

"Bad business," said the Captain. "Look! all round there is nothing but mist and snow to be seen, and one's ready at any moment to roll over a precipice or tumble into a hole; and I dare say the Baidara is in a playful mood, and if so, it's ten to one you never find your way out. Oh, this Asia! What with the people and what with the streams, there's no getting any peace."

The drivers shouted and scolded and thrashed the horses; but the brutes snorted and jibbed, and couldn't be got to budge for the world, despite the eloquence of the *knout*. At last one of the men said, "Your Honour, we shall never get to Koba now; won't you give the order to turn off to the left while it

is possible? Look, there's something black showing half-way up the hill; surely—yes, it is huts; that's where travellers always stop to wait for better weather. The men say they'll lead the way if you will give them *vodka*-money," he added, pointing to the Ossetes.

"I know that, my good friend, I know that without your telling me," said the Captain. "Just like the beasts! They're delighted to play any trick if they can get a tip to spend on *vodka*."

"You must confess, though, that without them we should be even worse off than we are," I urged.

"It's all the same," he muttered, "it's all the same. Guides, indeed! They've a sharp enough instinct when there's anything to gain by it. As if you couldn't find the road without them!"

Well, we turned off to the left, and after great trouble reached a miserable shelter consisting of two huts built of blocks and rubble, and surrounded by a wall of like construction. The ragged owners of the place welcomed us cordially. I afterwards learned that the Government pays them and victuals them on condition of their receiving storm-bound travellers.

"All for the best," I said, as we sat down by the fire. "Now you can tell me your

story about Bela. "I'm sure it didn't end there."

"How are you so sure about that?" said the Captain, and winked and smiled a knowing smile.

"Because it is not according to the order of things. What began with the marvellous ought not to end in the commonplace."

"Ah, you've guessed."

"Delighted to hear it."

"You may think it delightful, but I assure you it is a painful memory to me. Poor Bela! She was a sweet child. I came at last to regard her as a daughter, and she loved me. I must tell you that I have no family at home. I have had no word of father or mother for twelve years, and it didn't occur to me soon enough to provide myself with a wife; and now, you know, it isn't for my time of life. So I was glad to find somebody to make a pet of. Poor little Bela! Sometimes she would sing you a song or dance you a *lezgienka*. How she did dance! I've seen our Government ladies, and once I was at a grand party in Moscow twenty years ago; but what are they? Not in it at all! Gregory Alexandrovich dressed her up like a doll, and petted her, and pampered her; and she improved in looks wonderfully while she was with us; the sunburn disappeared from her hands and face,

the blush came into her cheeks. She used to be so gay, and full of merry tricks and jokes, and all for me—God have mercy on her!"

"But what happened when she heard of her father's death?"

"We concealed it from her for a long time, till she became accustomed to her position; and when we did tell her, she wept a bit for a couple of days and then forgot. For four months everything went consummately well. I dare say I've told you already that Gregory Alexandrovich was passionately fond of hunting. Before this he was crazy about going after boar and goat in the forest; but now he never so much as went outside the ramparts of the fort. Well, one day I observed him getting pensive and moody again; he walked up and down his room with his hands clasped behind his back. After that, without saying anything to anybody, he went out shooting, and disappeared for a whole morning. This happened several times, then more and more frequently. Then I said to myself, 'This will never do; I'm sure a black cat has jumped into the middle between those two.' One morning I went in to visit him. I can see it all as if it was before my eyes now! Bela was sitting on the bed in a black silk tunic, so pale, poor soul, so wretched, that I was frightened.

"'Why, where's Pechorin?' I asked.

"'Gone hunting.'

"'Did he go out to-day?'

"She made no answer, as though the effort of speaking were painful to her, until at last with a heavy sigh she said, 'No; yesterday.'

"'Nothing has happened to him?'

"She answered through her tears, 'Yesterday I thought and thought all day long, and fancied all kinds of disasters; sometimes it seemed to me that a wild boar had wounded him, sometimes that a Tchetcheness had kidnapped him and carried him away into the hills. But now I think that he does not love me.'

"'Indeed, my dear, you could not imagine anything worse than that.'

"She still wept; but presently she lifted her head proudly, dried her tears, and continued, 'If he does not love me, then what is there to stop him from sending me away home? I put no constraint upon him. But if it is going on like this I shall go away of myself. I am not a slave; I am a chief's daughter.'

"I tried my hand at remonstrance. 'Listen, Bela. You know he cannot sit here for ever, as if he were sewed to your petticoat. He's a young man, and likes a run after his game:

he comes and goes. But if you mean to mope and sulk you will very soon weary him.'

"'True,' she answered, 'true. I will be cheerful.' And with a laugh she picked up her tambourine and began to sing and dance and skip round me. Only that didn't last long either. She sank down again on the bed, and covered her face with her hands. What was I to do with her? I was never much in the way of dealing with women, you know, and I kept thinking and thinking how to console her, and I couldn't think of any way. We both remained some time silent. It was a most awkward situation. At last I said to her, 'Would you like to come for a stroll on the rampart? The weather is delightful.' It was September, and that happened to be a marvellous day, brilliant and not sultry. All the mountains were as distinct as if they were within arm's reach. We came out and walked to and fro on the rampart in silence. At last she sat down on the turf, and I sat down beside her. Really, it is ludicrous to recall! There was I dancing attendance on the girl like a sort of nurse!

"Our fort stood on high ground, and the view from the rampart was beautiful. On one side the broad plain, seamed by several ravines, terminated in forest, which extended up to the very ridge of the hills; here and there you saw the smoke of a village or the movement of a

drove of horses. On the other, a little stream ran, and, adjoining it, a thick covert of bushes that clothed the flinty outliers of the main chain of the Caucasus. We sat at the corner of a bastion so that we commanded a full view on both sides. As I was contemplating, somebody came riding out of the forest on a gray horse, and, approaching nearer and nearer, halted at last on the far side of the little stream, about a furlong distant from us, and began to wheel his horse round and round like mad. What was the meaning of that? 'Look a minute, Bela,' I said; 'you have young eyes. Who's that *Djigit?* and what is he come here to play the fool about?' She cast one glance, and exclaimed, 'It's Kazbich!'

"'Oh, the ruffian! How absurd that he should come to us!' I had a good look at the figure. It was Kazbich, with his swarthy scarecrow face, and ragged and dirty as always. 'That's my father's horse!' said Bela, seizing hold of my arm. She was trembling like a leaf, and her eyes flashed. 'Aha!' I thought, 'the robber blood has something to say in you too, my pretty!'

"'Come here,' I said to the sentinel. 'Look to your rifle; if you can pick me off that man yonder you shall have a silver rouble.' 'Ay, ay, sir; only he won't keep still.' 'Order him to stand,' I said in fun. 'Hi! you there, hi!

sonny,' shouted the sentinel, making a gesture with his hand, 'stop a minute! What do you want to keep spinning round for, like a young wolf?' Kazbich actually halted and began to listen. I really thought they were going to start a conversation! But no—my grenadier took aim . . . bang! . . . Missed! the powder only flashed in the pan. Kazbich pressed his horse, and it gave a jump aside. He rose in his stirrups, shouted something in his language, made a menacing gesture with his whip, and vanished.

"'I am ashamed of you!' I said to the sentinel.

"'Your honour!' said the man, 'he started to die; but these cursed people, you can't finish them at one stroke!'

"Four hours later Pechorin returned from his hunting. Bela flung herself on his neck—not a single complaint, not a single reproach for his long absence. Really I was angry with him. 'Good gracious, what are you about, man?' I said. 'Do you know that Kazbich has just been here, the other side of the stream, and we've had a shot at him? Are you in such a hurry to run up against him? These Highlanders are a revengeful race. You think he doesn't guess that you helped Azamat? What's more, I would lay a bet that this time he has recognized Bela. I know that he was

very much smitten with her a year ago—he told me so himself; and if he had had any hopes of raising the regular *kaluim* to buy her with, he would have begun paying his addresses.' Pechorin grew thoughtful when he heard that. 'H'm,' he answered, 'we must be more prudent. Bela, from this day forth, no more walking on the ramparts!'

"That evening I came to long explanations with him. It saddened me to see him so changed towards the poor girl. He spent half the day in hunting; besides that, his manner was cold, he seldom petted her now, and she began to waste away perceptibly; her pretty face was lengthening, her great eyes losing their lustre. Sometimes one would ask her, 'What do you sigh for, Bela? Are you unhappy?' 'No.' 'Do you want anything?' 'No.' 'Pining for your own people?' 'I have no people of my own.' It came to this that sometimes you could get nothing but 'Yes' and 'No' out of her for a whole day. But I am forgetting: this is not what I was going to tell you. Well, Pechorin answered, 'Listen, Maxim Maximich. I have an unhappy character; whether my bringing up has made me so or God created me so, I don't know; all I know is that if I am the cause of unhappiness to others, I suffer quite as much unhappiness myself. Of course, that is poor consolation for them, but the fact

remains. In my first youth, from the moment when I escaped from the tutelage of my relations, I set myself to enjoy furiously all the pleasures that money can buy ; and, of course, those pleasures became repugnant to me. Then I went into the *grand monde*, and soon society sickened me equally. I fell in love with beautiful *mondaines*, and I was loved. But their love only tickled my imagination and self-conceit ; my heart was left empty. I tried reading and study, but the sciences bored me just as much. I saw that neither glory nor happiness depends upon them, because the very happy people are ignoramuses, and glory only means luck ; you must have the knack for it, that's all. Then I became melancholy. Presently I received orders to go to the Caucasus, and that was the happiest moment of my life. I hoped that *ennui* could not live among the bullets of the Tchetchenesses. In vain ! Within a month I was so familiar with the noise of them, and with the nearness of death, that really I paid no more attention to them than to a mosquito. And I grew more melancholy than before, because I had lost almost my last hope. When I saw Bela in her home, when for the first time I clasped her knees and kissed her black hair, I thought—like a fool !—that she was an angel sent to me by a merciful Providence. I was disillusioned

again. The love of a savage girl is a good deal better than the love of aristocratic ladies; but the stupidity and simplicity of the one bore you as much as the coquettish tricks of the others. I love her still, if you like; I am grateful to her for some moments of exquisite bliss. I will give my life for her; but I am bored with her. Fool or scoundrel, I don't know which I am; but really I deserve pity, perhaps more than she. My soul has been vitiated by the world, there is no quieting my imagination, no satisfying my heart; everything is too small for me. Pain is just as familiar and stale to me as pleasure, and I find life more and more of a void every day. There is only one resource for me—to travel. As soon as it shall be possible I mean to start, not for Europe, though—God forbid!—I shall go to America, Arabia, India. I dare say I shall die on the road somewhere. Anyhow, I am convinced that this last consolation will take a long time to exhaust, with the help of bad weather and bad roads.'

"He talked long in this strain, and his words impressed themselves on my memory, because it was the first time that I heard such things from a man of five-and-twenty; and, I pray God, it may be the last. Marvellous! Tell me, I beg you," added the Captain, turning towards me—"probably you have been in

the capital and lately—are all the young men there like this ? "

I answered that there were plenty of people who talk in this style, that probably some of them were speaking the truth ; moreover, the fashion of disillusion, like any other fashion, began in the highest ranks of society, and spread downwards into the lower (which wear out what their betters have cast off), and that nowadays those who are the most *ennuyés* in real earnest, study to dissemble their unhappiness as though it were a vice. The Captain did not apprehend these subtilties, but shook his head and smiled his knowing smile.

" And is it all a French fashion this *ennui ?* "

" No ; English."

" Ah, that accounts for it," he answered ; " why, they've always been known for arrant drunkards ! "

I was reminded involuntarily of a certain lady in Moscow who pronounced the opinion that Byron was nothing more than a drunkard. But the Captain's remark was pardonable : in order to become a teetotaller, he had managed to convince himself that all misfortunes in the world proceed from drinking.

Meanwhile he continued his narrative as follows :—

" Kazbich did not show himself again. Only, I don't know why, I could not get out of my

head a notion that he had not ridden up for nothing, and that he had some devilry on hand.

"Well, one day Pechorin persuaded me to come out and have a day at the wild boar with him. For a long time I refused—wild boar wasn't much in my line! However, he succeeded in dragging me with him, all the same. We took five soldiers, and rode off early in the morning. Till ten o'clock we poked about the reed-beds and poked about the forest, and never saw a beast. 'Oh, let's go back,' I said; 'what's the good of sticking to it? It's turned out an unlucky day, that's plain.' But Gregory Alexandrovich would not go home without bagging something, in spite of the sultry heat and fatigue. He was just that sort of man; if he set his heart on a thing, you must give way—you could see that his mammy had spoilt him when he was a child! Finally at twelve o'clock we found a damned boar—paf! paf! No luck! He got away into the reeds. A regular unlucky day it was; nothing went aright. So we rested a bit, and then made for home.

"We were riding single file, in silence, the reins loose on our horses' necks, and were within quite a short distance of the fort, though the undergrowth masked it from us. Suddenly—a shot! We glanced at each other; the very same suspicion had struck us both. We

dashed off at full speed in the direction of the shot and looked. The soldiers were collected in a knot on the rampart, and they were pointing towards the plain. There was a horseman flying at a breakneck gallop, holding something white on his saddle. Gregory Alexandrovich gave a scream that would have done credit to any Tchetcheness, pulled out his rifle, and away he went, and away I went after him!

"Luckily, as the sport had been so poor, our horses were not tired. They went as if they would burst away from their saddles, and we were gaining every instant—nearer and nearer. After a time I recognized Kazbich, but I could not make out what it was that he held in front of him. I turned and called to Pechorin, 'It's Kazbich!' He threw a glance at me, nodded, and gave his horse a cut with the whip.

"Well, at last we were within rifle-shot of him; either Kazbich's horse was exhausted, or he was not so well mounted as we. Anyhow, in spite of every effort, his beast could hardly get along. I expect he was thinking of his Karagyoz at that moment! I saw Pechorin taking aim, still at full gallop. 'Don't fire!' I shouted to him; 'save your powder—we'll be up with him in a minute!' Oh, these young fellows! They always lose their heads at the wrong moment! He did fire. The

bullet broke the horse's hind leg. The beast took another dozen steps by a frantic effort, floundered, and came down on its knees. Kazbich jumped off, and then we saw that what he held in his arms was a woman wrapped up in a big veil. It was Bela, poor Bela! He screamed something at us in his own language, and lifted his dagger over her. There was no time to lose; I fired in turn, at random. Actually the bullet hit him in the shoulder, because he dropped his arm suddenly. When the smoke cleared, there lay the wounded horse on the ground and Bela beside him; but Kazbich, flinging away his rifle, had taken covert in the bush. He climbed up a rock like a cat. I would have liked to fetch him down out of that, but there was no powder ready. We jumped off our horses, and made for Bela. Poor child! there she lay motionless, and the blood was pouring out of her wound in streams. The blackguard! He had not only stabbed her to the heart—at least he might have finished her off with one stroke—but in the back: a regular blackguard's blow! She was senseless. We tore off her veil and bound up the wound as best we could. But it was in vain for Pechorin to kiss her cold lips. Nothing could bring her back to herself.

"Pechorin mounted. I lifted her from the ground and placed her on his saddle some-

how ; he clasped her in his arms, and we rode back. After a few minutes' silence he said to me, ' Excuse me, Maxim Maximich, we shall never get her home alive like this.' ' True,' I said, and we put the horses to their best pace. A crowd was awaiting us at the gate of the fort. We carried the wounded woman carefully into Pechorin's quarters, and sent for the doctor. He was drunk ; but he came, looked at the wound, and pronounced that she could not live more than a day. But he was mistaken."

" She recovered ? " I asked, catching the Captain's arms in an involuntary movement of joy.

" No," he answered ; " but the doctor was so far wrong that she survived two days."

" Tell me, though, by what means Kazbich got hold of her."

" This is how it was done. In spite of Pechorin's prohibition, she went outside the fort to the stream. It was very hot weather, you know. She sat on a stone and dangled her legs in the water. Kazbich crept up stealthily, pounced upon her, stopped her mouth, dragged her into the bush, jumped on his horse, and off with her ! She was just able meanwhile to utter a scream. The sentinels took the alarm and fired, but missed ; and at that moment we turned up."

"But why did Kazbich want to carry her off?"

"Why, good gracious! these Circassians are a nation of robbers—known for it. Leave anything about and they can't help pinching it. They may be no use for other purposes, but, as thieves—universal thieves—I take off my hat to the Tcherkess! Besides, he had been in love with her for a long while."

"And Bela died?"

"She died, but only after suffering long tortures. We fairly wore ourselves out trying to save her. About ten o'clock in the evening she recovered consciousness. We were sitting beside the bed; she just opened her eyes and began to call Pechorin. 'I am here, close to you, my *djanenka*' [that means "own little soul"], he answered, and took hold of her hand.

"She said, 'I am dying.'

"We began to console her, saying that the doctor hoped to cure her without fail. She shook her head and turned to the wall. She did not wish to die.

"At night she began to wander; her head burned; now and then cold shudders of ague ran all through her body. She uttered disconnected speeches about her father and her brother; she wanted to be in the hills or at home. Then she talked, still raving, about

Pechorin; she called him all sorts of tender names; sometimes she reproached him for not loving his *djanenka* any more.

"He listened to her in silence, his head buried in his hands; but the whole time I never observed a tear on his eyelashes. Whether he was actually unable to weep, or dominated himself, I do not know; but, for my part, I tell you it was the most piteous thing I ever saw in my life.

"In the morning her delirium passed off; she lay for an hour without moving, dead white, and in such utter collapse that it was hardly possible to detect her breathing. After this she rallied, and began to talk; but what do you think she talked about? Such a thought to come into her mind when she was at death's door! She began to lament that she was not a Christian, and that her soul could never meet Gregory Alexandrovich's soul in the other world, and that some other woman would be his mate in Paradise. It came into my mind to baptize her before she died, and I proposed it to her. She stared at me, undecided, and it was long before she could get a word out to answer me; at last she answered that she would die in the faith she had been born in. A whole day passed in this way. How she altered in that day! Her white cheeks fell hollow; her eyes grew big, ever so big; her lips burned.

She felt a fiery heat inside as though she had a red-hot iron in her breast.

"Another night came on; we never closed an eye, never left her bedside. She suffered horribly; groaned, and no sooner the spasm was past but she made an effort to assure Gregory Alexandrovich that she was better; she tried to persuade him to go and sleep, kissed his hand, and would not let it go from hers. Before morning she began to feel her death agony come on; she flung herself about, and tore off the bandages; the bleeding broke out afresh. When the wound was bound up again she was quiet for a minute, and began asking Pechorin to kiss her. He fell on his knees beside the bed, lifted her head from the pillow, and pressed his lips to hers, which were already turning cold. She clasped him fast round the neck with trembling arms, as though she would yield up her soul to him in that kiss. No, she did well to die! What would have happened to her if Gregory Alexandrovich had forsaken her? And it was bound to have come to that sooner or later.

"Half the next day she was quiet, silent, and submissive when the doctor tortured her with fomentations and draughts. 'Excuse me,' I said to him, 'didn't you yourself say that she must infallibly die? If so, what's the use of your remedies?' 'Better, all the same, Maxim

Maximich,' he answered, 'to have one's conscience easy.' A pretty sort of conscience!

"After midday she fell into a raging fever of thirst. We opened the window, but it was more sultry outside than in the room. We put ice round the bed, but nothing was of any use. I knew that that unbearable thirst was a sign that the end was near, and I told Pechorin so.

"'Water! water!' she said with a fainting voice, and lifted herself up in bed. He turned as white as a sheet, seized a glass, filled it, and offered it to her. I covered my face with my hands, and began to say a prayer—I don't remember what prayer it was. Yes, my friend, I have seen plenty of deathbeds—in hospital and on the battlefield—but it's not the same thing, not the same thing at all! Now, I will tell you candidly what saddened me was that, just when she was dying, she never once remembered me. Of course, I loved her like a father. Well, God pardon her! And if the truth be told, what was I that she should remember me just when she was dying?

"She had hardly finished drinking the water when she felt easier; but in another three minutes she was gone. They put a mirror to her lips, and it was undimmed.

"I took Pechorin away from the room, and we went out on the rampart. For a long while we paced to and fro regularly, without speak-

ing a word, our hands clasped behind our backs. His face betrayed nothing unusual. My heart was heavy enough; in his place I should have died of grief. At last he sat down on the grass and began to draw something in the sand with his finger. I wanted, rather for the sake of decent feeling, you know, to console him, and I began saying something. He raised his head and laughed. . . . It made a chill run all through me, that laugh. . . . I went to make arrangements for her grave. To tell the truth, it was partly to distract my thoughts that I occupied myself with that. I had a bit of *termalama*, which I wound round the grave, and I adorned it with the Circassian silver lace which Gregory Alexandrovich had bought for her.

"Next day, early in the morning, we buried her at the back of the fort by the stream, close to the place where she had sat for the last time. There are now white acacias and elder-bushes growing all around her grave. I should have liked to put up a cross. There were difficulties, though, you see: she was not a Christian, after all."

"And what became of Pechorin?" I asked.

"Pechorin was ill for a long time after—fell away to a shadow, poor chap. From that day Bela was never mentioned, though. I saw it would only be disagreeable to him, so what

was the good? Three months later he was appointed to the —th Regiment, and left for Georgia. We have never met since then. . . . By the way, it comes back to me now, somebody told me not long ago that he had returned to Russia, but there was no mention of a regiment in his recall. Anyhow, it takes a long time getting any news of our comrades."

After this he launched out into a lengthy dissertation on the inconvenience of receiving news a twelvemonth late—I dare say because he wished to smother painful recollections. I did not interrupt him, but listened.

* * * * *

Within an hour it appeared possible to start. The storm had abated, the sky was clear, and we set out. On the road I involuntarily turned the conversation to Bela and Pechorin again. "Did you never hear," I asked, "what became of Kazbich?"

"Of Kazbich? Why, really, I don't know. . . . Oh, I did hear that on the right flank of the *Shapsougs* there was one Kazbich, a hero in a red tunic, who rides about at a snail's pace in the thick of our volleys, and makes a very polite bow when a bullet buzzes near him. Is it possible it can be the same man?"

At Koba we parted company with Maxim Maximich. I was travelling post-haste, and he could not keep up with me on account of

his heavy baggage. We never expected to meet each other again, but we did meet, and, if you like, I will tell you how it happened; but that is a story in itself. But will you first allow that Maxim Maximich is a person deserving of interest? If we agree on that point, I shall be amply recompensed for a narrative which has, perhaps, been too much prolonged.

II.

MAXIM MAXIMICH.

On parting company with Maxim Maximich I posted along speedily through the Terek and Darzal gorges, breakfasted at Kazbek, drank tea at Larsa, and hurried on to Vladikavkaz for supper. I spare you a description of mountains, the ejaculations which convey nothing, the word-paintings which evoke nothing (least of all to those who have not been to the places), and the statistical observations which no possible person will read.

I stopped at the inn where all travellers stop, and where, nowadays, there is nobody to take charge of your orders for roast pheasant and boiled cabbage soup, because the three pensioners who have charge of the place are so idiotic or so drunk that it is impossible to get anything out of them.

They informed me that I must wait there three days because the *okasia* (Facility) was not yet come from Yekaterinograd, and conse-

quently could not start on the return journey thither. . . . A queer sort of Facility! But a poor jest makes cold comfort for a Russian, and I thought I would pass the time in writing down Maxim Maximich's story about Bela, little imagining that it was to be the first link in such a long chain of narratives. You see how, sometimes, a trifling accident entails appalling consequences! . . . But perhaps you do not know what an "Okasia" is? It is an escort consisting of half a company of infantry with guns, which convoys passenger caravans through Kabarda from Vladikavkaz to Yekaterinograd.

The first day I spent in great boredom; on the second, early in the morning, who should come driving up to the door in a post-chaise but Maxim Maximich! We greeted each other like old friends. I offered him the use of my room, which he accepted *sans façons* —indeed, the old wag slapped me on the back and screwed up his mouth into some semblance of a smile. Maxim Maximich had a profound acquaintance with the science of cookery; he was a marvellous hand at roasting a pheasant, he had the happiest touch for pouring out the cucumber sauce, and I am bound to confess that but for him we should have been reduced to a very meagre diet.

A bottle of Kakhetinsky helped us to forget

the frugal paucity of our dinner menu (namely, one dish, all told), and after smoking a pipe we sat down, I at the window and he by the heated stove, for the day was damp and cold. We remained silent. What subjects were there for us to talk about? He had already told me everything about himself that was remarkable, and I had nothing to relate to him. I looked out of window. A multitude of low hovels scattered along the bank of the Terek, which flows here in a broadening volume, twinkled from among the trees; in the farther distance the blue mountains rose in a jagged wall, and Kazbek overlooked them with the glance of his white prelatic head. I was mentally taking my farewell of them, full of regret.

We sat thus for a long time. The sun was sinking behind the cold crests, and a whitish mist began to spread in the valleys, when the sound of a carriage bell and the shout of a driver were heard in the street. Several vehicles full of filthy Armenians drove up to the door of the inn, and behind them an empty travelling *calèche;* the easy lightness of its motion, the luxury of the fittings, and the stylishness of it suggested something foreign. Behind it walked a man with big moustaches, in a *vengerka* jacket, rather well dressed for a valet; but there was no mistaking his vocation when you saw the swashbuckling manner in

which he knocked the ashes from his pipe and shouted at the driver, evidently the pet servant of an indolent gentleman—a sort of Russian Figaro.

I called to him out of the window, "Hullo, my boy, what's this? Has the Okasia come, or what?"

For answer he gave me rather a haughty stare, adjusted his cravat, and turned away. An Armenian, who was walking by his side, smiled, and answered for him that the Okasia was, in fact, there, and would start back to-morrow morning.

"Praise God for that!" said Maxim Maximich, who had advanced to the window at that moment. "There's a wonderful calash!" he added. "No doubt some *Chinovnik* (Government swell) going to Tiflis on official business. Evidently doesn't know what our little hills are like! No, my boy, you're joking. That's not our style. These roads would shake even an English carriage to pieces."

"But whatever it is, let's go and find out."

We went out into the passage. At the end of the passage the door of a side room was open, and the valet with the help of the driver was dragging a trunk into it.

"Harkee, my lad," the Captain asked him, "whose is that wonderful calash, eh? Whew! what a beauty!" The valet muttered some-

thing to himself without turning round as he unfastened the trunk. Maxim Maximich got angry. He touched the fellow roughly on the shoulder and said, " I'm speaking to you, my lad."

" Whose calash ? My master's."

" And who is your master ? "

" Pechorin."

" Who ? Who d'you say ? Pechorin ? Oh, good God ! . . . Didn't he serve in the Caucasus ? " cried Maxim Maximich, catching me by the sleeve. His eyes sparkled with joy.

" I believe he did ; but I've not been with him long."

" There now ! There now ! . . . Gregory Alexandrovich ? That's his full name ? I was friends with your master," he added, slapping the valet so heartily on the shoulder that the stroke made him reel.

The man frowned and said, " Be so good, sir—you are disturbing me."

" Why, what's the matter with you, lad ? Don't you know, your master and I are dear friends, old messmates ? Where is he stopping ? "

The servant informed him that Pechorin was stopping to sup and sleep at the house of Colonel N——.

" But he'll be down here this evening, won't he ? " asked Maxim Maximich ; " or, rather

—look here, my boy; couldn't you go and take a message to him? You might just go and say to him that Maxim Maximich is here . . . and tell him—oh, but he knows it. I'll give you sixpence for a drink."

The valet made a contemptuous face when he heard the smallness of the promised sum, but he assured Maxim Maximich that he would perform his commission.

"He'll come post-haste—be sure he will!" said the Captain to me with a triumphant air. "I'm going to the door to wait for him. Oh, the pity that I am not acquainted with Colonel N——!"

So he sat down on a bench at the door, and I went off to my room. I confess that I waited with a good deal of impatience for this Pechorin to appear. Although, on the evidence of the Captain's narrative, I had not formed a very favourable impression of the man, still certain features in his character appeared to me remarkable.

An hour elapsed. One of the pensioners brought in the boiling samovar and teapot. I called out at the window, "Maxim Maximich, ain't you going to have some tea?"

"Thanks. I don't want anything."

"Oh, come and have a cup! Look, it's getting late and cold."

"It's all right—thanks."

"Very well, as you please."

I began drinking my tea alone. Before another ten minutes were past, in comes the old fellow. "Well, you were right," he said. "Much better have a cup of tea. I've had enough of waiting there. Why, it's ever so long since the chap went to find him; but no doubt something has detained him."

He did not take long to swallow his cup of tea, and, refusing a second, went out to the door again. He showed some agitation. It was evident that the old fellow was rather chagrined by Pechorin's indifference, all the more because he had so lately been boasting to me about his intimacy with him. And it was now a good hour since he had assured me that his friend would arrive post-haste at the mere mention of his name.

It was late and dark when I opened the window again, and began calling out to Maxim Maximich that it was time to go to bed. He only murmured something between his teeth. I repeated the invitation, and he made no answer.

So I wrapped myself up in my greatcoat and lay down on the sofa, leaving the candlestick on the stove. I was soon dozing, and should have gone sound asleep if Maxim Maximich had not disturbed me by coming in very late. He threw down his pipe on the

table, and began walking to and fro in the room, and flinging bits of wood into the stove; at last he lay down, but for a long time he kept coughing and spitting and fidgeting.

"Bugs biting you?" I asked.

"Yes, bugs . . ." he answered, with a heavy sigh.

Next morning I awoke early, but Maxim Maximich was before me. I found him at the door again, sitting on the little bench.

"I have to go to the Commandant," he said, "so will you be good enough to fetch me in case Pechorin comes?"

I undertook to do so, and he hurried off as if his limbs had had the strength and agility of youth restored to them.

The morning was fresh and splendid. Golden clouds stood piled above the peaks like an added rank of aerial mountains. In front of the inn door a broad, open square extended; beyond it was the bazaar, seething with people because it was Sunday; barefooted Ossete boys, carrying on their shoulders double wallets full of honeycomb, kept circling round and round me. I cursed them. They imitated me. I was beginning to share the worthy Captain's restlessness. Before another ten minutes were past, the person we were waiting for made his appearance at the end of the square. He was walking with Colonel N——, who, after con-

ducting him to the inn, took his leave and returned to the fort. I immediately sent a pensioner to fetch Maxim Maximich. The valet came out to meet Pechorin, announced that they were just going to put the horses to, handed him a box of cigars, received some orders from him, which he began to bestir himself to execute. His master smoked a puff or two of his cigar, yawned twice, and took a seat on the bench on the other side of the door. I must now draw you his portrait.

He was of middle height. His slender, well-proportioned body and broad shoulders argued a powerful constitution, qualified to endure all the fatigues of a nomadic existence and any varieties of climate, no more to be broken by the debauchery of life in the capital than by the tempests which rage within the soul. His dusty velvet coat, only fastened by the two lower buttons, left visible the dazzling whiteness of his linen, which betrayed a dandy's fastidiousness. His soiled gloves seemed to be made on purpose to show off his graceful aristocratic hands: when he took one glove off I was amazed at the slenderness of his dead-white fingers. He walked with a careless, indolent carriage, but I remarked that he did not swing his arms as he walked, which is a sure sign of a certain secrecy in a man's character. (However, this is my private opinion, founded

on my own observation ; I do not in the least wish to force you to take it on trust.) When he sat down on the bench, the uprightness of his figure collapsed as though there were no bone at all in his spine. The posture of his whole body now expressed a sort of nervous feebleness ; he sat as the thirty-year-old coquette in Balzac sits on her luxuriously-padded easy-chair after an exhausting ball. At first sight of his face I would not have given him more than twenty-three years, though on second thoughts I was ready to allow him thirty. There was something childish about his smile. His skin had a kind of feminine softness. His pale, high-bred forehead was picturesquely relieved against blond hair, naturally curly ; only by long scrutiny could you discern the intersecting wrinkles, though I dare say they were far more sharply stamped in moments of anger or emotional strain. The light colour of his hair notwithstanding, he had black moustaches and eyebrows, which are points of good breeding in a man, just as a black mane and black tail are in a white horse. To complete the portrait, I will mention that his nose was slightly turned up, his teeth of dazzling whiteness, his eyes brown. I must say a few words more about his eyes.

In the first place, they did not laugh when he laughed. Did you ever remark this pecu-

liarity in certain people? It denotes either a bad temper or a deep-seated habit of melancholy. They shone from beneath the half-dropped eyelashes with a kind of phosphorescent light, if the expression is permissible. It was not the reflection of an ardent soul or a playful imagination; their brilliance was like the brilliance of a polished steel surface, dazzling but cold. His glance was fitful, but piercing and grave; it left a disagreeable impression of unscrupulous inquisitiveness, and might have been called insolent if it had not been so imperturbably serene. Perhaps all these observations only suggested themselves to me because I knew some particulars of his life; perhaps his appearance would have produced an entirely different impression on another; but as you are not going to hear about him from any one else but me, you must perforce content yourself with my representation. I will say, in conclusion, that he was, take him altogether, not ugly, and that he had one of those original countenances which especially please women.

The horses were already harnessed; every now and then their bells jangled under the archway; and the valet had already come to Pechorin twice to say that all was ready, but still no Maxim Maximich. Luckily Pechorin was absorbed in meditation, his eyes fixed on

the blue jagged range of Caucasus, and apparently without a thought of his journey. I went up to him and said,—

"If you are disposed to wait a little longer, sir, you will have the satisfaction of seeing an old friend."

"Ah, to be sure!" he answered suddenly, "they told me yesterday evening; but where is he?"

I turned towards the square, and descried Maxim Maximich bustling along at top speed. In a few moments he had joined us. He could hardly breathe; the sweat was running down his face; moist locks of gray hair escaping from under his hat stuck to his forehead; his knees shook. He wanted to fall upon Pechorin's neck, but Pechorin held out his hand quite coldly, but with an affable smile. The Captain was taken aback for an instant, then he seized the proffered hand eagerly in both his own; he still could not get a word out.

"My dear Maxim Maximich, this is indeed a pleasure! Well, how are you getting on?" said Pechorin.

"So it's you! It's you!" murmured the old man, with tears in his voice. "How many years! How many days! And where are you off to now?"

"I am going to Persia—and beyond."

"But not just this moment? Oh, wait a

little, my *dear* friend! Not part again at once? It's so long since we met."

"My time's up, Maxim Maximich," was the answer.

"Good God! Good God! Where can you be off to in such a hurry? I did so want to have a crack with you—so many things to ask you about. Hullo! I see you've left the service? How's that? What have you been up to?"

"I got tired of it," said Pechorin, smiling.

"And do you remember the times we had in that fort? Grand country for sport, wasn't it? I say, what a mighty hunter you used to be in those days. Remember the shooting? And Bela?"

Pechorin paled, the least shade, and turned away.

"Yes, I remember," he said, and almost instantly yawned a forced yawn.

Maxim Maximich pressed him to stay with him another couple of hours. "We'll have a capital dinner," he said; "I've a brace of pheasants, and the Kakhetinsky is excellent here—not like that stuff you get in Georgia, you know, but the best brand. We'll have a bit of a crack, eh? You'll tell me all about your life at Petersburg, eh?"

"My good Maxim Maximich, there's really nothing to tell. You must excuse me, but my

time's up, and I'm in a hurry. Thanks for not having forgotten me," he added, and with that took him by the hand.

The old fellow knitted his brows; he was saddened and angered, though he made an effort to dissemble it.

"Forgotten!" he muttered; "I have never forgotten anybody. Well, God be with you. I never thought we should meet like this."

"Come, that'll do, that'll do," said Pechorin, and embraced him cordially. "I'm still the same as ever, ain't I? Why, there's no help for it; every man has his own road to go. Shall we ever have the luck to meet again? God knows!" and so saying, he took his seat in the vehicle, and the driver began to gather up his reins.

Suddenly Maxim Maximich shouted, "Stop, stop!" and caught hold of the carriage door. "I quite forgot; I have still got your papers, Gregory Alexandrovich, and I drag them about wherever I go. I thought I should find you in Georgia, and now look where it has pleased God that we should meet! What shall I do with them?"

"Oh, anything you like," said Pechorin. "Good-bye!"

Maxim Maximich called after him, "So it's Persia next, is it? When do you return?"

The *calèche* was already a good way off, but

Pechorin made a sign with his hand, which might perhaps be translated into the following phrase—" Most likely not at all! Why should I ? "

The sound of the little horse-bell and the clatter of wheels on the flinty road had long been out of earshot, but the poor old fellow still stood in the same place, absorbed in deep thought. At last he spoke, making great efforts to assume an indifferent air, although every now and again a tear of regret would twinkle under his eyelashes. " Well," said he, " the fact remains: we were friends, but what are friends in these days ? What has he to do with me ? I am not rich, I am nothing in rank ; even in years we are a most ill-matched pair. Just look what a swell he's become since he went back to Petersburg again ! What a calash ! and the luggage ! and the valet so proud ! " These words were uttered with an ironical smile. " Tell me," he continued, turning to me, " what do you make of it ? Eh ? What the devil does he want with going off to Persia now ? Ridiculous ! Good God, how ridiculous ! Well, I always knew that he was a capricious fellow you couldn't put your trust in. But still, really, it is a pity his turning out so badly. Yes, there's one thing I've always said, and that is that there's no good in a man who forgets his old friends."

With that he turned away to conceal his agitation, went into the yard to see about his vehicle, and made a great show of scrutinizing the wheels of it. But the tears kept brimming up in his eyes every other minute.

"Maxim Maximich," I said, coming up to him, "what are those papers which Pechorin left you?"

"God only knows! Some diary or other."

"What do you mean to do with them?"

"Do with them? Why, have them made into cartridges."

"Better let me have them."

He looked at me in astonishment, muttered something between his teeth, and began to rummage in his trunk. Presently he brought out a writing-book, which he flung scornfully on the ground; then a second, and a third, until ten of them had shared the same fate. There was something childlike in the bitterness of his vexation. I felt the pathos as well as the ridicule of it.

"There! That's the lot!" he said; "I wish you joy of your find!"

"And I may make what use I please of them?"

"Print them in the newspapers, if you like! What does it matter to me? Why, you don't take me for a friend or relation of his, do you? True, we did live a long time under

one roof, but what does it matter whom I lived with ? "

I seized the papers, and lost no time in removing them, fearing that the Captain might repent. Presently word was brought us that the Okasia was starting in an hour, and I ordered them to put to. The Captain came into the room when I was already putting on my hat ; he was evidently not prepared to start. There was a cold, constrained look in his face.

" Why, Maxim Maximich, you don't mean to say you're not coming ? "

" No."

" Why ? What's up ? "

" Oh, I haven't seen the commandant yet, and I have got some service things I must dispose of."

" But I thought you had been to him already ? "

" Yes, I did go, but " (he stammered as he said the words) " he wasn't at home, and I didn't wait."

I understood his meaning. The poor old fellow, perhaps for the first time in his life, had sacrificed the service for a personal exigency —as the official language has it. And this was his reward !

" Very sorry," I said, " very sorry, Maxim Maximich, that we must part for the time."

" The idea of uneducated old fellows like me

running after you! All you young men are in society—you're so proud. We live under fire of Circassian bullets, and meanwhile you are all over the place, and then when we meet again, you're actually ashamed to shake hands with 'our brother.'"*

"I have not deserved these reproaches, Maxim Maximich."

"Oh, I'm just talking in general, you know; that's another matter. I wish you every happiness, and good luck to your journey."

We parted very dryly. Maxim Maximich had turned into the regular, mulish, grumpy Staff-Captain—and for what reason? For the reason that when he wanted to throw himself on Pechorin's neck, Pechorin, from absent-mindedness or whatever the cause might be, had only offered to shake hands with him. It is a sad enough spectacle when a young man loses his best hopes and ideal dreams, when the rosy veil of gauze is withdrawn through which he viewed human actions and feelings; yet there is hope that he may exchange his old illusions for new ones, no less transitory, though none the less delicious for that. But a man of Maxim Maximich's years, what shall he exchange them for? Whether a man will or not, the heart grows hard, and the soul is closed up.

I went away alone.

* In a military sense—*i.e.* "messmate."

III.

PECHORIN'S DIARY.

PREFACE.

I LEARNED not long afterwards that Pechorin had died on his return from Persia. This news delighted me greatly, for it gave me the right to print this journal. If I have taken occasion to put my own name to this strange production, I can only pray my readers not to deal too hardly with me for the innocent fraud.

And this is a proper moment for me to expose some of the reasons which induced me to give to the public these sentimental secrets of a man that I was never acquainted with. Had I been his friend, there would have been no difficulty; every one is prepared for the furtive indiscretions of the candid friend. But this was a man I never set eyes on but once in my life—the meeting was the merest incident of travel—and, consequently, I am not

able to cherish towards him that inexplicable aversion which (under the mask of friendship) only awaits the death or the misfortunes of the beloved object to break upon its head in a hail-storm of reproaches, good counsels, mockeries, and regrets.

As I read these pages, I satisfied myself of the man's sincerity, who could so mercilessly confront his weaknesses and vices with the light of day.

Perhaps the history of a human soul, though it be only a little soul, is a matter scarcely less curious and profitable than the history of a whole people, especially when it results from the self-study of a ripe intelligence, and is chronicled without any vainglorious desire to excite interest or astonishment. The defect of Rousseau's "Confessions" is that he wrote them for his friends.

I had then no motive, beyond the wish to be of service, for printing these fragments of the diary which had accidentally fallen into my hands. Although I have altered all the proper names, the persons mentioned will probably recognize themselves, and they will possibly now discover the man's justifications for things which at the time they blamed in his conduct. He has now no more to do with this world; and we almost always forgive when we understand.

I have included in this volume only what concerns Pechorin's visit to the Caucasus. But there remains a bulky notebook still in my hands, which contains the narrative of his whole life. Some day or other that also shall be submitted to the judgment of the world; but at present I dare not, for many grave reasons, assume that responsibility.

I do not know if any of my readers have the curiosity to ask what is my personal opinion of Pechorin's character. My answer to the question is the title of this book. "Just your wicked irony!" they will say. I know not.

I.

Taman.

Of all the seaside places in Russia, Taman is without exception the filthiest hamlet. I all but died of starvation there; and, as if that were not enough, they did their best to drown me as well.

It was late at night when I arrived there in a post *teliéjka*. The driver halted his weary *troika* team at the door of the only stone-built house, which stands near the entrance to the place. A sentinel, hearing the sound of the horse-bell, called out in surly, drowsy tones, "Who goes there?" A sergeant and a *desyatnik* appeared. I announced myself to them as an officer going to join my division on active service, under Government orders, and proceeded to inquire for suitable quarters. The *desyatnik* conducted us into the town. At every cottage we tried for a billet the answer was the same, "No room here!" It was cold; I had not slept for three nights; I was tired,

and began to lose my temper. "Take me anywhere, you rascal; take me to the devil, but take me somewhere!" In answer to my loud objurgations, the man began to scratch his head, and said, "There is still one *phatera;* but your honour won't like it—it's so nasty." Not understanding the full significance of his last word, I ordered him to go ahead; and after long wanderings through squalid alleys, where nothing was to be seen on either side but rotten wooden bulkheads, we came to a small shanty right on the edge of the sea.

The full moon shone upon the thatched roof and white walls of my proposed lodgings; near its door, which was fenced by a drystone wall, stood, cheek by jowl, another hovel smaller and more antique than the first. The cliff dropped sharply to the sea almost under its very walls; deep blue waves were beating below with an unintermittent murmur. The moon looked quietly upon the unpeaceable element, which nevertheless owns allegiance to her; and I was able to discern by her light, far out from shore, two vessels whose black rigging was etched motionless like cobwebs against the pale verge of the horizon. I thought to myself, "Boats in the harbour! Good! To-morrow I'll go to Gelendjik!"

I had with me a Line Cossack, who was doing duty as my servant; I ordered him to put down

my trunk and let our guide go. Then I proceeded to call for the owner. Silence. I knocked. Still silence. What was the meaning of it? At last a boy of fourteen crawled out of a shed.

"Where's the goodman?"

"There isn't any."

"What! there isn't any goodman at all?"

"None at all."

"And what about the goodwife?"

"Gone to the village."

"Who's going to open this door for me?" and, as I said it, I pushed against it with my knee.

It opened of itself, and a puff of frousty air came out of the cottage. I struck a match, and held it close to the boy's face; it illuminated a pair of *white* eyes. He was blind, stoneblind from birth. He stood before me without stirring, and I had time to study the features of his face.

I plead guilty to a strong prejudice against all blind, deformed, deaf, dumb, legless, armless, hunchbacked, etc., etc., persons whatsoever.

I have observed by experience that there is always a kind of uncanny correspondence between the outward man and his soul, as if the loss of a limb entailed on the soul the loss of some part of its activities. Well, as I was

saying, I began to scrutinize this blind boy's face. But what can you expect any one to decipher in a face which has no eyes? I stared long at him with an involuntary compassion, when suddenly a just perceptible smile moved along the line of his thin lips. I cannot tell why, but this made a very disagreeable impression on me. A suspicion came into my head that this blind boy was not so blind as he seemed. I tried in vain to satisfy myself that the cataract which veiled his eye could not be counterfeit; indeed, what object could there be for counterfeiting? There was nothing for it; reasoning with myself did no good. I am often inclined to conceive these prejudices. I asked him if he was the goodman's son.

"No."

"Then what are you?"

"A poor orphan."

"Has the goodman any children?"

"No. He had a daughter, but she was drowned along with the Tartar."

"Who is the Tartar?"

"The devil only knows. The Crimean Tartar—the boatman from Kertch."

I then entered the cottage. Two benches, a table, and an enormous chest beside the stove—that was all the furniture. Not so much as an ikon on the wall. This was a bad sign. The sea breeze blew in at the window, which

was broken. I pulled out a wax candle from my trunk, lit it, and began arranging my things. I put my sword and rifle in a corner of the room, my pistol on the table; I spread my thick cloak on one bench, and the Cossack his on the other; in ten minutes he was snoring. I could not get to sleep; the boy with the white eyes kept revolving before me in the darkness.

About an hour passed thus. The moon shone in through the window, and the light played upon the earthen floor. Suddenly the bright band which streaked the floor was cut by a shadow. I raised myself a little, and glanced at the window. Again something went past, and vanished God knows whither. I could not suppose that the creature (whatever it was) plunged over the cliff perpendicularly, but there was no other way of exit apparent. I got up, put on my tunic, armed myself with a dirk, and very softly stole out of the hovel. I found myself confronted with the blind boy. I concealed myself against the wooden bulkhead, and he walked past me with a sure but cautious step. He carried something under his arm—a sort of bundle. Presently he turned in the direction of the port, and began to descend by a narrow rocky path. "*In that day the dumb shall sing aloud and the blind shall see.*" The text came into my head as I followed after

him, at such an interval as not to lose sight of him.

Meanwhile the moon began to disappear in clouds, and a mist rose over the sea ; the light at the stem of a neighbouring boat scarcely showed a glimmer through it. On the beach shone a white surf, which every instant threatened to capsize the craft. Clambering down with difficulty, I had got past the steep part of the cliff, when I saw the blind boy halt for a moment, then (arrived at the bottom) turn to the right. He skirted the edge of the water so closely that it looked as if a wave must seize him and carry him off ; but evidently this was not the first time he had taken this walk, if I might judge by the perfect assurance he showed in stepping from stone to stone and avoiding the holes. At last he came to a standstill, as if listening for something, sat down on the ground, and put down his bundle by his side. Hidden behind a projecting rock, I kept him under close observation. Not many minutes had elapsed when a white figure appeared from the opposite direction. It advanced towards the blind boy, and sat down beside him. As they talked together, the wind now and then carried the words of their conversation to me.

" Well, Blindeyes," said a feminine voice, " it's blowing hard. Yanko won't come."

"Yanko is not afraid of a storm," was the answer.

"The weather is getting thicker than ever," said the feminine voice. Again the tone of voice was regretful.

"When the weather is thick it's all the better chance to slip past the patrol-boat."

"But if he gets drowned?"

"Why, then, you'll have no new ribbons to wear at church on Sunday."

A silence followed. One thing struck me as odd. The blind boy had talked to me in Little Russian dialect, but now he was speaking proper Russian.

"There! you see I was right," the blind boy began again, clapping his hands as he said it. "Yanko isn't afraid of sea, or wind, or fog, or coastguards. Hark! that isn't the water makes that beating sound; you can't deceive me—that's his long oars."

The woman jumped up and began to peer out over the sea with an appearance of anxiety.

"You're wrong, Blindeyes," she said; "I see nothing."

I strained my eyes in an effort to discern far away anything that might bear some resemblance to a boat, but I confess I failed. Another ten minutes passed. Then a black speck appeared in the midst of the huge waves; it looked now bigger and now smaller again.

Slowly surmounting the crest of a billow, and swiftly plunging down again into the trough, a boat was approaching the shore. It must be a bold mariner, thought I, who ventures to cross the straits on such a night as this, thirteen or fourteen miles. And there must be a pretty strong incentive for him to risk it. So thinking, I looked at the wretched craft. It made my heart beat faster to watch her. Surely she could not live it out. But no, she dived like a duck; and with a rapid stroke of the oars, as if she were flapping her wings, she darted out of the abyss amid the spouting fountains of spray. Oh, thought I, now she is bound to be dashed full against the shore and knocked to smithereens on the rocks. Not a bit of it. She turned her head adroitly, and ran into a little creek unscathed.

There disembarked a man of middle height, wearing a Tartar's sheepskin hat. He made a sign to the others with his hand, whereupon all three of them set about hauling some stuff out of the boat. The weight of the cargo was so great that to this day it is a puzzle to me why the boat did not sink with it. Each proceeded to shoulder a bundle; and off they went away along the shore, and soon were lost to sight. I made my way home; but I confess all these strange circumstances had excited my nerves, and I awaited the day with

impatience. My Cossack was greatly astonished when he awoke to find me already fully dressed, but I did not vouchsafe him any explanations. I spent some time at the window admiring the blue sky all beflecked with scraps and tatters of cloud, and the distant shore of the Crimea—a long lilac-tinted band ending in a rock, on whose summit glistened a white lighthouse. Then I repaired to the fort Phanagoria to get my orders from the Governor when to leave for Ghelendjik.

But, unluckily, his Excellency could give no definite instructions; there were no boats in the harbour but coastguard craft and merchantmen, which had not yet begun to take in their cargo.

"Perhaps a mail packet may be here in three or four days," said he, "and then we'll see."

I returned to my quarters cross and angry. My Cossack met me at the door with a terrified face.

"This is a bad business, your honour," he said.

"Yes, brother. God knows when we shall get out of this hole."

At that he grew still more agitated, and leaning close to me whispered,—

"There's something uncanny about this place. I met a Black Sea corporal to-day whom I know; we were mates last year.

When I told him where we were stopping, he says to me, 'Brother, that's an uncanny place. The people are the wrong sort.' And indeed, sir, what do you make of that blind boy? He walks alone everywhere, even into the bazaar to get bread and water. You can see they know all about him here."

"Yes, yes; but tell me, though, what matters more—has the goodwife appeared yet?"

"To-day, while you were away, the old lady and her daughter both came."

"Daughter? She has no daughter."

"Well, God knows what she is if she is not her daughter. Anyhow, the old lady is sitting in the cottage now."

I entered the hovel. The stove was burning brightly, and a meal cooking upon it—a very sumptuous meal for poor people. The old woman had one answer to make to all my questions—"she was deaf and couldn't hear." What was one to make of it? I turned to the boy, who was sitting by the stove poking sticks into the fire.

"Now then, you blind young devil," said I, taking him by the ear, "speak. Where were you off to last night with a load on your back, eh?"

Instantly the blind boy broke out into tears and cries and moans.

"Where did I go? I didn't go anywhere with a load. What sort of a load?"

This time the old lady heard, and began muttering and grumbling.

"They're always inventing some slander to hurt poor folks. What's he done that you should harm him? What's he done to you?"

I went out in disgust, firmly resolved to discover the key of this mystery.

I wrapped myself up in my cloak, and sat down on a stone in the yard, gazing into the distance. Before me lay outstretched the sea, still unpeaceable after last night's storm. The monotonous murmur of it sounded like the stir and hum of some busy town; it put me in mind of old times, and carried my thoughts away northward to the wintry capital. Musing, I became so overwhelmed in recollections that I quite lost all sense of the present.

About an hour must have passed thus—perhaps longer.

Suddenly a sound, as it were of singing, fell upon my ear. Yes, it was a song, and a sweet female voice; but where was it coming from? I listened more attentively. The air was melodious, now drawling and melancholy, now vehement and lively. I peered all around me; nobody was to be seen. Again I strained my hearing to discover. Now the sounds seemed to fall from the sky. I lifted up my eyes.

There, on the roof of my cottage, stood a girl in a striped dress, with long hair flying loosely about her—a regular water-nixie. Shading her eyes with her hand against the sunlight, she was gazing fixedly into the distance. Sometimes she laughed and talked to herself, sometimes she struck up her song again. I remember every word of it by heart.

"White sails that go gliding
Across the green sea,
Like things unbeholden
So fair and so free!

"But there lies with the shipping,
Beside the big hulls,
A boat with no rigging
But one pair of sculls.

"The winds are skylarking;
What's up with the weather?
The old craft make sail
And fly hither and thither.

"I'll make a low curtsey
And say to the sea,
'Hands off the wee boat
That's belonging to me!'

"Her cargo is gems,
And a roaring young spark
Is the laddie that drives her
Alone in the dark."

It came into my head in an instructive flash

that I had heard this same voice last night. I reflected upon it for a minute. When I looked at the roof again, the girl had vanished. Suddenly she darted past me, singing a snatch of something else, snapping her fingers as she ran, and bolted inside to the old woman. Then began a quarrel between them. The old woman got angry, and the girl laughed aloud. Then in another instant there was my nixie skipping back again. When she came to where I was, she stopped and stared me hard in the face, as though surprised at my presence. Then she hurried away with an air of unconcern, and went quietly away to the harbour. This was only the beginning of the game. She kept haunting my quarters all day long; the skipping and the singing never ceased an instant. The extraordinary creature! But queer as was her behaviour, there was nothing in her features to suggest idiotcy—quite the reverse; the gaze she fixed on me was shrewd and alert. Also, her eyes were apparently endowed with a kind of magnetic quality. They seemed always to be awaiting and inviting overtures on my part. Yet the moment I began to speak she darted off, smiling artfully.

Really I never saw a woman like her; she was anything but beautiful, but then I have certain prejudices of my own even in respect of beauty. There was plenty of *breed* about

her, and breed goes for a great deal in women as it does in horses. This discovery belongs to modern France. It—breed, I mean, not young France—displays itself chiefly in the gait, the hands, and the feet ; the nose in particular is often an indication. A straight nose is a greater rarity in Russia than a shapely foot.

To look at her, I would not have given my songstress more than eighteen years. There was much in her which I thought enchanting—an uncommon elasticity of figure ; a peculiar, quite individual carriage of the head. She had long flaxen curls, which streamed like a golden cascade over the rather sunburnt skin of her neck and shoulders, and she had a superlatively straight nose. Although I deciphered something savage and suspect in her sidelong glances, in spite of something indefinable in her smile, still—such is the force of a prejudice—I was enraptured at the straightness of her nose. I imagined I had found Goethe's Mignon—that fantastic creation of German fancy. Indeed, there was a certain agreement between the two types—the same rapid transitions from extreme mobility to complete motionlessness ; the same enigmatical language, the same skips, the same strange singing.

In the evening I stopped her at the door, and the following conversation took place between us :—

"Tell me, my pretty, what were you doing up on the roof to-day?"

"Looking which way the wind blows."

"What business is that of yours?"

"Where the wind blows from, happiness blows from."

"What? You don't mean you were singing a welcome to happiness?"

"Where there is singing there is happiness."

"But suppose you were to sing yourself into trouble?"

"Oh, what does it matter? If it won't be better, it must e'en be worse; and when bad's there, good can't be very far away again."

"Who taught you that song?"

"Nobody taught it me. It just comes into your head, and you begin to sing it. He that hath ears can hear it; anybody who is not meant to hear it can't understand."

"And what's your name, little songstress?"

"Ask the man who baptized me."

"And who was that?"

"How should I know?"

"I never saw such a child for secrets; but there's one thing I know about you"—she did not change countenance, did not so much as move her lips at this—"I know that you were down on the beach last night."

And with that I most gravely retailed to her all that I had seen, thinking to disconcert her.

Not a bit of it. She burst out into a loud fit of laughter.

"You have seen much and know little, and you'd better keep what you do know close under lock and key."

"And suppose, now, I were to take it into my head to let on to the Governor?"

I put on a very serious, even a stern manner. She suddenly hopped away, struck up singing, and hid herself like a bird scared out of covert. My last remark had not been happily chosen. I did not apprehend its consequences at the time, but eventually I had cause to rue them.

As soon as it grew dusk I ordered my Cossack to heat the tea-kettle, bivouac fashion, lit a candle, and sat at the table smoking a travelling pipe. I had just finished a second tumbler of tea when suddenly the door creaked, and I heard a slight rustle and a footstep behind me. I jumped and turned round. It was she, the nixie.

She sat down opposite me, softly and silently, and fixed her eyes upon me. I cannot tell why, but her gaze seemed to me extraordinarily tender; it recalled one of those glances which used to play such tyrannous havoc with my life in old days. Apparently she was waiting for me to make advances; but I remained silent, filled with an inexpressible tumult of feelings. Her complexion had a pale, lack-lustre effect,

which denoted her inward agitation ; her hand strayed aimlessly up and down the table, and I observed a slight tremor in it. Her heart heaved so violently that it seemed to arrest her breathing.

I began to be annoyed by this pantomime, and was preparing to break the silence with a very commonplace remark—namely, by inviting her to have a glass of tea—when she suddenly started up, flung her arms round my neck, and delivered a wet, passionate, smacking kiss on my lips. I saw all dark before my eyes, my head reeled, I seized her in my embrace with all the strength of a young passion ; but she slithered out of my arms like a snake, whispering in my ear, " To-night, when every one's asleep, come to the shore," and she darted out of the room as quick as an arrow.

She upset tea-kettle and candle in the passage as she went. " The girl's a devil," exclaimed the Cossack, as he spread himself out on the straw and did his best to comfort himself with the remains of the tea. His words were the first thing that recalled me to myself.

Two hours later, when everything was quiet in the harbour, I waked my Cossack, telling him, " If I fire my pistol, come down to the beach at your top speed."

He opened his eyes very wide, and answered mechanically, " Ay, ay, your honour."

I stuck a pistol in my belt and went out. She was waiting for me at the edge of the descent, her clothing more than scanty: a little handkerchief caught in her pliant figure at the waist.

"Follow me," she said, taking me by the hand, and we began to descend.

I cannot understand how I escaped breaking my neck. However, arrived somehow or other at the bottom, we turned to the right—the same way where I had followed the blind boy overnight. There was now no moon—only a couple of stars like two beacon lights twinkled in the dark-blue vault. A heavy swell kept rolling up, one wave after another, with a quiet, even rhythm, scarcely lifting a solitary boat which was moored to the shore.

"Let's get into the boat," said my companion.

I hesitated, being no great fancier of *promenades sentimentales* on the water; but there was no time to get out of it. She sprang on board and I after her, and before I knew what I was about we were adrift.

"What's the meaning of this?" I asked angrily.

"The meaning of this," she answered, as she made me sit down on a bench and threw her arms about my waist—"the meaning of this is that I love you."

Her cheek rested against mine; I felt her ardent breathing on my face.

Suddenly something fell into the water with a splash. I clutched at my belt—the pistol was gone. Oh, the horrible suspicion that stole into my heart at that moment, and made the blood race up into my head. I glanced round; we were more than one hundred and twenty yards from the shore, and I cannot swim. I tried to unlace her grasp, but she clawed hold of my coat like a cat, and by a sudden violent effort almost threw me overboard. The boat came within an ace of capsizing; but I recovered myself, and a desperate struggle was engaged between us. Rage might have lent me strength, but I soon perceived that I was no match for my antagonist in dexterity.

"What are you about?" I shouted, and I put such severe pressure on her slender hands that the fingers cracked, but she did not utter a cry; her snake-like nature was insensible of pain.

She answered, "You saw. You mean to tell"—and with a supreme exertion she forced me fairly to the gunwale. There we both hung half out of the boat; her long hair touched the water. It was the decisive moment. I planted my knee firmly on the bottom of the boat, and seized her by the hair with one hand,

by the throat with the other. She relaxed her grip of my coat, and in an instant I had tumbled her into the water.

It was pretty dark. Twice her head flashed out among the sea froth, and after that I saw no more. I found half an old paddle in the bottom of the boat, and somehow or other, after long exertion, succeeded in gaining the harbour. As I made my way along the shore to the cottage I turned my eyes involuntarily to the spot where the blind boy had waited for the nocturnal navigator yesterday. The disc of the moon had rolled further up the sky by now, and I fancied I could distinguish a white object sitting by the shore. Moved by curiosity, I crept near and lay down on the grass by the edge where the ground dropped away sheer. By craning my neck a little, I had from the cliff a good survey of all that was going on below. I was not much surprised (nor altogether sorry) to descry my water-nixie. She was wringing the foam out of her long tresses; her drenched linen threw the lithe, high-breasted figure into strong relief. Presently a boat appeared in the distance and rapidly approached. Just what had happened yesterday was repeated. A man disembarked from it, wearing a Tartar hat, but with hair clipped in Cossack style, and a big knife sticking out of his belt.

"Yanko, it's all up," she said.

There followed a long dialogue between them, but spoken so low that I could not catch a word of it. At last, raising his voice, Yanko said, "But where's Blindeyes?"

"Gone to fetch it," was the answer.

Not many minutes later the blind boy appeared, carrying on his back a bag which they stowed in the boat.

"Harkee, Blindeyes," said Yanko, "look after the place—you know? There's some good stuff there. Tell ——" (I couldn't catch the name) "that I won't work for him any more. Things have taken a nasty turn; he's seen the last of me. Dangerous now. I am off to look for a job elsewhere. He won't find another chap like me, though, in a hurry. And you can tell him, too, that if I'd been better paid for my pains, Yanko wouldn't have thrown him over. My road lies wherever the wind blows and the sea roars." Then after an interval of silence he continued, "She's coming with me. She can't stop here. Tell the old woman it's time she departed this life. She's done her time. One can have too much of a good thing. Anyhow, she won't see us any more."

"And what about me?" said the boy in a piteous voice.

"What have I to do with you?" was the answer.

Meanwhile my nixie jumped into the boat and beckoned with her hand to her comrade. He put something in the boy's hand, adding, "There, that's to buy gingerbread with."

"Is that all?" said the boy.

"All right, here's more for you."

The money dropped, and rang on a stone as it fell. The blind boy did not pick it up.

Yanko took his seat in the boat. The wind was blowing offshore; they hoisted a small sail and scudded away fast.

The white sail glinted long in the moonlight amidst the dark waters. Still the blind boy sat on the beach, and a sound like sobbing came to my ears. It was he; he wept long, ever so long, until I felt quite sorry for him.

Why had fate thrown me into the quiet orbit of these smuggling gentry? Like a stone flung into an unruffled pool, I had disturbed their tranquillity; and, like a stone, I had very nearly gone to the bottom myself.

I turned back homeward.

In the entrance a candle flickered in a wooden platter, all but extinguished. My Cossack, notwithstanding all orders, was fast asleep, grasping his rifle in both hands. I left him in peace, took the candle, and went into the cottage.

Alas! my money-box, my sabre with the silver mountings, my dagger from Daghestan

(the gift of a friend)—all had disappeared. Now I guessed what was in that confounded boy's load. I shook the Cossack none too gently till he awoke. I cursed and stormed at him, but it was no use to be angry. It would have been too ridiculous to complain to the authorities that I had been robbed by a blind boy, and all but drowned by a girl of eighteen. Thank heaven, I got the chance of leaving in the morning, and I quitted Taman.

What was the end of the old woman and the blind boy I know not. What did the happiness or suffering of mere human beings matter to me—to me a travelling officer—once I secured my pass "to proceed under instructions from Government"?

II.

Lady Mary.

I drove into Piatigorsk yesterday, and took up my quarters on the outskirts of the town, in a very high situation at the foot of Mashuk; so near him that if there came a thunderstorm I shall have the clouds touching my roofs. At five o'clock this morning, when I opened the window, my room was filled with the smell of the flowers which grow in our modest garden. Sprays of cherry-blossom look in at my window; sometimes the wind strews my writing-table with their white petals. I have a marvellous view on three sides: westwards, the blue mass of Beshtu, with his five heads, "like the last cloud of the retreating storm;" to the north rises Mashuk, like a shaggy Persian cat, and hides all that quarter of the sky; eastwards the prospect is more cheerful—the neat, fresh-looking little town lies displayed before me in a gay motley of colours, full of the movement

of a *ville de bains* and the stir of a cosmopolitan crowd. But yonder, far away, the mountains are piled in a blue, misty amphitheatre, and at the verge of the horizon runs a silver chain of snow peaks, beginning with Kazbek, and ending with the double summit of Elbruz. Yes, life is good to live in a country like this! A sort of joyous sensation diffuses itself in all my veins. The air here is as pure and delicate as a child's kiss, the sun is warm, the skies blue—what more can one ask? Why should there be any such thing as passions, desires, and regrets in such a place? . . .

However, time's up. I must be going to the Elizabeth Spring, where they say everybody who is taking the waters assembles in the morning.

* * * * *

I descended into the midst of the town and walked by a boulevard, where I met some deplorable groups of people slowly making their way uphill. For the most part they were the families of country squires in the Steppes; this much might be conjectured at first sight from the threadbare, old-fashioned coats of the men and the elaborate costumes of their wives and daughters. Evidently the whole *jeunesse* of the Spa is exactly known and inventoried by them, because they glanced at me with a tender curiosity. The St. Petersburg cut of my coat

misled them for a moment, but they soon observed that I wore the epaulettes of an officer, and turned away in disgust.

The wives of the local magnates—the hostesses of the waters, so to speak—were more graciously inclined. They have lorgnettes. They do not judge a man so much by a uniform, accustomed as they are in the Caucasus to find a warm heart behind regimental buttons, and educated brains under a white forage-cap. These ladies are charming—and it is such a durable charm; year by year relays of fresh admirers succeed the old. Perhaps this is the secret of their inexhaustible sweetness. As I made my way up the narrow footpath to the Elizabeth Spring, I overtook and passed a crowd of civilians and soldiers, who (as I afterwards learned) form a peculiar caste among the generality of those who wait for the stirring of the waters. They drink, but not water; they walk little, just an occasional saunter. They play cards, and pay each other visits till they're bored to death. They practise the dandy affectations; they strike a literary attitude when they dip the plait-shielded glass into the well of blue sulphurous water. The civilians wear light-blue stocks; the military have little frills showing over their collars. They evince a profound contempt for the provincial ladies, and sigh for the drawing-

rooms of high life in the capital, where there is no admittance for such persons. . . .

At last here are the Wells. They have built a red-roofed Bathhouse on the open ground near them, and beyond that an arcade where one can walk in rainy weather. A few wounded officers are sitting on a bench, with their crutches beside them. They look pale and wretched. A few ladies are strolling to and fro in the square with short steps, waiting for the waters to take effect; two or three pretty faces among them. Here and there amongst the vineyard alleys, which cover the slope of Mashuk, twinkles the gaily-chequered hat of some fair votary of solitude—solitude *à deux* —for beside every such hat I observed either an officer's cap or else the circular abomination which adorns the civilian's crown. Those who like a view were to be seen perched on the steep rock where the pavilion called the "Golden Harp" stands, training their telescopes upon Elbruz; amongst them two tutors, with their precious charges undergoing a cure for scrofula.

I halted, out of breath, on the ledge, and leaning against a corner of the building, was beginning to survey the picturesqueness of the surroundings, when suddenly I heard a familiar voice say, "Hullo, Pechorin! How long have you been here?"

Turning round, I saw Groushnitzky! We embraced each other. He is an old service friend of mine. He had a bullet wound in his leg, and came to the waters a week before me.

Groushnitzky is a cadet. He has only served a year, and he wears his thick military great-coat with a peculiar sort of dandyism. He has the Military Cross for the campaign in Georgia. He is well built, swarthy, and black-haired; by his face you would give him twenty-five years, though in fact he is scarcely twenty-one. He throws back his head when he speaks, and he is always curling his moustaches with his left hand—with his right he supports himself on a crutch. His talk is rapid and mannered; he is one of those people who have a magnificent phrase prepared for every occasion in life, are simply insensible to beauty, and gravely dress themselves out in distinguished feelings, lofty passions, and exclusive sufferings. Their delight is to produce an effect; they are always distractedly in love with some romantic young provincial creature. In their old age they either turn into respectable landlords or end as drunkards—sometimes both. Their souls have many estimable qualities, but not a spark of poetry in them. Declamation was Groushnitzky's passion; he would knock you silly with words the moment the conversation got outside the circle of everyday ideas. I was

never a match for him. He does not answer your objections; he does not listen. As soon as you have stopped, he starts off on some long tirade which is supposed to have some relation to what you have been saying, but in fact is nothing more than a continuation of his own speech.

He is very severe: his epigrams are often amusing, but never exactly right; he never kills with a single word; he does not know the weak side of people, because he has been occupied with himself all his life. His great ambition is to be the hero of a romance. He has so often tried to convince others that he is a creature not intended for this world—a victim destined for some mysterious suffering—that he has almost convinced himself of it. That is why he wears the thick military great-coat with such an air! I have seen through him, and he does not like me on that account, although outwardly we have kept on friendly terms. Groushnitzky passes for a remarkably brave man: I have seen him in action. He brandishes his sabre, shouts aloud, and hurls himself forward, rolling his eyes. Not much like Russian bravery!

Well, I do not love him: I feel that sooner or later we shall meet where there is no room to pass, and it will go hard with one of us two.

His visit to the Caucasus is simply the con-

sequence of his fanatical romanticism. I am convinced that on the eve of his departure from the parental village, he told (with dark looks) some pretty damsel of the neighbourhood "that he was going off not so much for service reasons as in search of death, because" —and here doubtless he covered his eyes with his hand, and then continued, "No! *You*"—perhaps something even more tender—"must never know it; your pure soul would be shocked! And yet why so? What am I to you? Can you understand me?" etc., etc., etc.

He himself has told me that the reason which made him enter the —th Regiment remains an eternal secret between him and Heaven.

However, Groushnitzky can be very agreeable and amusing when he cares to throw off his mantle of melodrama. I was curious to see him with women. "That," said I to myself, "is when he puts his best foot foremost!"

We met like old friends. I began to ask him questions about the sort of life one leads at the waters, and about any notable persons who were in the place. He answered with a sigh,—

"We lead a very prosaic life. One drinks the waters in the morning, and one feels languid, as invalids do; one drinks wine in the

evening, and feels as well and hearty as the best. There is some female society, but one does not get much comfort out of them. They play whist, they dress abominably, and they talk appallingly bad French! This year there is a Princess Ligovsky with her daughter from Moscow; but I have not made their acquaintance. My military greatcoat acts like a brand of reprobation; the interest it excites is as crushing as charity."

Two ladies passed us at this moment, and advanced to the well, one elderly and the other young and well-made. I could not see their faces for their hats, but they were dressed according to the strictest canons of good taste, nothing overdone. The second had on a *closed* dress of *gris de perles;* a light silk handkerchief was tied round her graceful neck; little *couleur-puce* boots fitted so close over the arch of her slender foot that any person uninitiated in the secrets of beauty would certainly have cried out—but in admiration. There was something maidenly in her easy, well-bred gait. It baffles definition, but you take it in at a glance. When she walked past us she exhaled one of those subtle inexpressible fragrances which sometimes perfume a pretty woman's letters.

"There's Princess Ligovsky," said Groushnitzky, "and her daughter Mary, which she

pronounces in the English way, *Meri*. They've only been here three days."

"And you know her Christian name already?"

He answered, "Yes, I happened to overhear it," and blushed somewhat as he said it. "I confess I am not anxious to make acquaintance. These *grandes dames* look down upon us army chaps as if we were savages. What does it matter to them if there is a brain beneath the infantry officer's cap and a heart under his overcoat?"

"That poor overcoat!" I said, laughing. "But who's the gentleman who is approaching them and proffering them the glass so obsequiously?"

"Oh, that's a dandy from Moscow called Raëvich. He's a gambler; you can see that in an instant by the enormous gold chain which hangs across his blue waistcoat. And what a bludgeon of a stick! He looks a regular Robinson Crusoe—just the beard for the part and his hair cut *à la moujik*."

"Have you quarrelled with the whole human race?"

"I have had good enough cause."

"Oh, indeed?"

The ladies left the well, and were just opposite to us at this moment; Groushnitzky made haste to strike a dramatic pose with the help

of his crutch, and, raising his voice, answered me in French. "*Mon cher, je hais les hommes pour ne pas les mépriser, car autrement la vie serait une farce trop dégoûtante.*"

The pretty young lady turned and directed a long, curious look at the declaimer. The expression of her look was quite indefinable; but it was certainly not sarcastic, upon which I inwardly congratulated him.

"The Lady Mary is a very pretty girl," I said to him. "She has such velvet eyes—regular velvet. I advise you to use that expression when you speak of her eyes. The upper and lower lashes are so long that the sunlight cannot reflect itself in the pupil. I love those eyes with a gleam in them; they are so soft they seem to stroke you. Other good points about the face too. But, I say, has she teeth? That's very important. What a pity that she didn't smile at your elaborate phrase!"

"You speak of this pretty little princess as if you were detailing the points of an English mare," said Groushnitzky indignantly.

"*Mon cher*," I answered, doing my best to assume his key, "*je méprise les femmes pour ne pas les aimer, car autrement la vie serait un mélodrame trop ridicule.*"

And so saying, I turned and left him. I walked for half an hour in the vineyard alleys,

among limestone rocks and the plants which hang from them. Then the heat began to be scorching, and I hastened home. As I passed the sulphur spring, I halted in the covered arcade to get a fresh breath in its shadow, and chance made me the spectator of a very curious scene. The positions of the actors were as follows: Madame la Princesse was sitting with the Moscow dandy on a bench in the arcade, both of them engrossed, it seemed, in a serious conversation. The daughter (she had probably just drunk her last tumblerful) was pacing meditatively in front of the well. Groushnitzky was at the same well; nobody else was in the place.

I approached and took cover in a corner of the arcade. At that moment Groushnitzky let drop his glass on the sand, and began making painful efforts to stoop and pick it up. His wounded leg crippled him. Poor fellow! how he did strive and strain and prop himself upon his crutch, and all in vain! His expressive features were eloquent of his sufferings.

Lady Mary saw all this better than I could. Quicker than a bird she was beside him; stooped down, picked up the tumbler, and handed it to him with a gesture full of indescribable charm. Then, blushing extremely, she cast a glance round the arcade; but as soon as she had satisfied herself apparently

that mamma had seen nothing, she recovered her self-possession. She was already far away by the time Groushnitzky could open his mouth to thank her. In another moment she left the arcade with her mother and the dandy; but as she passed Groushnitzky, she put on a look of the gravest possible decorum. Not so much as a turn of her head; she never even remarked the passionate glance with which he never ceased to pursue her until the party had descended the hill and her form was lost to sight in the boulevard of lime trees. Ah! that was her hat showing a bright speck of colour down in the street! She turned in at the door of one of the best houses in Piatigorsk; her mother followed her, taking leave of Raëvich at the door.

The poor tortured cadet only now became aware of my presence.

"You saw?" said he, grasping me tightly by the hand: "a regular angel!"

"What makes you say that?" I asked, with a face of the most guileless simplicity.

"Do you mean to say you didn't see?"

"Oh yes, I saw; she picked up your glass. If the attendant had been there he would have done the same, and have been a bit quicker about it too, in the expectation of a tip. However, it was very natural that she should take pity on you; you made such an appalling

face when you put your weight on your shot leg."

"But didn't you feel touched if you really saw her at the moment when her soul was shining out in her face?"

"No."

It was a lie, but I wanted to provoke him.

I have an innate passion for contradiction; my whole life has been simply a series of dismal or disastrous inconsistencies between heart and mind. The mere presence of an enthusiast is a douche of cold water to me; and I think a few hours in the company of a slow-blooded, phlegmatic person would turn me into a passionate visionary. Then I must also confess that a disagreeable but familiar feeling stole slyly into my heart at that instant; that feeling was jealousy! I say it outright—jealousy, because I am accustomed to keep nothing back in confession to myself; and I doubt whether any young man can be found who on meeting a pretty woman who engages his attention and his fancy, and on discovering in a sudden revelation that she prefers to distinguish another man, equally unknown to her—I doubt, I say, whether there exists the young man (of course, I mean living in the gay world and accustomed to pamper his egotism) who would not experience an unpleasant shock.

We walked downhill in silence, Groushnitzky

and I, and then along the boulevard past the corner of the house into which the beauty had disappeared. She was sitting at the window. Groushnitzky seized me by the hand, and aimed at her one of those tender, troubled glances which have so little effect on women. I directed my lorgnette upon her, and observed that she smiled at his glance, whereas my impudent lorgnette made her seriously angry. And, after all, how dare a common Caucasian soldier-man train his glass upon a Moscow princess?

May 13.

The Doctor came to see me to-day; his name is Werner, but he is a Russian. Nothing to be astonished at in this. I once knew an Ivanov who was a German.

Werner is a man for many reasons remarkable. A sceptic and a materialist, like nearly all doctors, he is at the same time a genuine poet—a poet in act always and often in word, though he never wrote two lines of verse in his life. He had studied all the living chords of the human heart as one studies the veins in a corpse, but he never learned how to make use of his knowledge; just as the most eminent anatomist may be unable to cure you of a fever. In private, Werner was in the habit of amusing himself at the expense of his patients,

but I have seen him shed tears over the death-bed of a common soldier. He was poor, his imagination dreamed of millions, but he would never go a step to gain money. He has sometimes told me that he would rather do a favour to an enemy than to a friend, because in this case it would mean a waste of benevolence, whereas in the other hatred is increased in proportion to the magnanimity of your antagonist. He had a wicked tongue; his epigrams made more than one worthy personage appear in the light of a common fool. His rivals, the other doctors of the spa, were jealous of him, and put about a report that he drew caricatures of his patients; the patients were furious, and almost all gave him up. His friends—that is, all the really decent fellows serving in the Caucasus—tried in vain to rehabilitate his fallen credit.

His exterior was one of those which at first sight make a disagreeable impression, but which eventually you will like, when the eye has had time and learned to distinguish the imprint of a cultivated and lofty spirit in the irregular traits. There have been cases of women falling in love with such men to distraction, so that they would not have exchanged their ugliness for the daintiest and most delicious of Endymions. One must do women justice; they have an instinct for spiritual beauty, which

is perhaps the reason why people like Werner love women so passionately.

Werner was short and thin, as weak as a child; he had one leg longer than the other, like Byron. By comparison with his body his head looked enormous; he wore his hair close-cropped; and the irregularities of his skull would have struck a phrenologist by the peculiar combination of contradictory inclinations. His small, black, restless eyes sought to penetrate the secrets of your thought. His dress showed signs of good taste and neatness. His spare, nervous, slender hands were arrayed in light yellow gloves; coat, cravat, and waistcoat were all black.

The *beau monde* called him Mephistopheles; he pretended to be angry at the nickname, but, in fact, it was gratifying to his vanity. He and I understood each other quickly, and came to stand on agreeable terms of companionship, because I have no aptitude for friendship; of two friends one is always the other's slave, though neither of the pair will often admit this. Slave I cannot be, and it is a tiresome business to be the master under these conditions, because a certain degree of deception is involved. Besides, I have servants and money of my own. It was on the following occasion that we got on a footing of mutually agreeable companionship. I met Werner at S——'s in the midst

of a numerous and noisy circle of young men. The conversation at the end of the evening took a philosophical, metaphysical turn; they were talking of *certainty*—everybody was *certain* of this, that, and the other.

"For my part," said the Doctor, "I am certain of one thing only."

"And that is?" I asked, desirous of hearing an opinion from one who had said nothing all this while.

"And that is," he answered, "that sooner or later, one fine morning, I shall die."

"I have the advantage of you," I replied, "besides that I have the further certainty that one foul evening I had the misfortune to be born."

Everybody thought we were talking nonsense, but really nothing more reasonable than these two remarks was said by anybody present. From that moment he and I distinguished one another from the ruck. We often walked together, and we would talk upon abstract subjects with the most earnest gravity, being both aware that each was hoaxing the other. Then we would look each other solemnly in the face—as the Roman Augurs did, according to Cicero—and burst out laughing; and after laughing heartily, we used to part well content with our evening.

I was lying on a sofa, my eyes fixed on the

ceiling and my hands behind my head, when Werner came into my room. He sat down in an armchair, placed his walking-stick in a corner, yawned, and remarked that it was beginning to get hot out-of-doors. I said in reply that the flies bothered me, and then we were silent.

Then I said, "My dear Doctor, I beg you to observe how very dull the world would be without fools. Look at us two intelligent people; we know beforehand that we could both argue endlessly about any mortal subject, and for that very reason we don't do it; each knows almost every secret thought of the other; one word means the whole story for us; triple envelopes of armour could not keep us from seeing the core of each other's feelings. For us pathos is ludicrous, and the ludicrous is heartbreaking; in general we really might say that we are quite indifferent to all but ourselves. So there can be no exchange of feelings and ideas between us; we know all we want to know about each other already, and we have no further curiosity. I can see only one resource left, to talk about the news. Tell me a piece of news."

Upon completing this long speech, I shut my eyes and yawned.

He reflected, and then answered,—

"There is an idea at the back of your rigmarole after all."

"Two," I said.

"Tell me one, and I will tell you the other."

"Good! You begin," said I, still staring at the ceiling and smiling inwardly.

"You want to know some news about some one of the visitors at the waters, and I can guess who it is you are concerned about, because questions have already been asked about you in that quarter."

"Doctor, there's no doubt of it, it's no good for us two to talk; we read each other's souls."

"Now for the other."

"The other idea is as follows. I wished to get you to tell me something: firstly, because listening is less fatiguing; secondly, because it does not entail giving oneself away; thirdly, because there is the possibility of hearing curious secrets; fourthly, because highly intelligent people like you prefer listeners to talkers. So now—to the point. What did the Dowager say about me?"

"Are you quite sure it was the Dowager, and not the daughter?"

"Absolutely positive."

"Why?"

"Because the daughter asked after Groushnitzky."

"You have a pretty gift of intuition. The daughter said she was persuaded that young

man in the military greatcoat was an officer who had been broken for duelling."

"I trust you left her in this agreeable conviction?"

"Obviously."

"There's the plot of a story in this!" I exclaimed, transported with delight—"a comedy, and we shall have a good laugh over the *dénouement* of it. Evidently Fate is making an effort to spare me from *ennui*."

"I have a presentiment," said the Doctor, "that poor Groushnitzky will be your victim."

"Well, go on with your account, Doctor."

"The Dowager remarked that your face was familiar to her. I suggested to her that she might, in fact, have met you somewhere at St. Petersburg in Society, and I told her your name. It was known to her. Apparently your fame has been greatly echoed abroad in those quarters. The Princess began to tell stories about your proceedings, doubtless improving her material with Society gossip. . . . The daughter listened with curiosity. In her imagination you stand for a hero of a romance after the modern style. However, I did not let on to the Princess that I knew she was talking nonsense."

"A real friend!" I said, and held out my hand to him. The Doctor shook it cordially, and continued,—

"If you like, I will introduce you."

"Excuse me"—I clasped my hands as I said it—"a hero *introduced?* That won't do. They never make acquaintance in any other way but by saving the Beloved Object from instant death."

"So you do mean to make your addresses to this young lady?"

"On the contrary! Quite the contrary! Doctor, at last I have been too many for you: you do not understand me." I was silent for a moment, and then continued, "I'm sorry for it too, Doctor. I never reveal my own secrets, and I am terribly fond of getting them guessed—because in this way I am always able in case of need to disclaim them. But that's another matter. Now I want you to draw me a portrait of mamma and daughter."

"Well, to begin with, the Princess is a woman of five-and-forty," Werner answered. "Digestion splendid, but blood vitiated—red spots on her cheeks. She has spent the last half of her life at Moscow, and there she is peacefully getting fat. She likes a scandalous anecdote, and she doesn't always mind what she says when her daughter is out of the room. She remarked to me that her daughter is as innocent as a dove. What business was that of mine, eh? I wanted to assure her in reply that she might be easy in her mind, I would

not let the information go any further. Madame's complaint is rheumatism; what the daughter's may be, God only knows. I have ordered them both to drink a couple of glasses of the sulphur water a day and bathe twice a week. The Princess, one can see, is not in the habit of taking charge; she has a profound respect for her daughter's understanding and accomplishments; the girl reads Byron in English, and knows algebra. Evidently the ladies are going in for learning at Moscow, and a very good thing too—our men are for the most part so unattractive that it must be intolerable for an intelligent woman to flirt with them. Madame is very fond of young men; Mademoiselle looks upon them with some contempt—it's a Moscow fashion. Forty-year-old wits are the staple at Moscow."

"You've been at Moscow, Doctor?"

"Yes; I have practised there."

"Well, go on."

"Why, I don't know that there is much more to tell you. . . . Oh, yes, one thing more. The young lady is said to be fond of discoursing upon the Sentiments, the Passions, etc. She has been one winter at St. Petersburg, and didn't like it; she was really not a great success there."

"You haven't seen anybody with them to-day?"

"Haven't I? There was one adjutant, one tight-laced guardsman, and a lady (a new arrival), a relation by marriage of the Princess, very pretty, but supposed to be very ill. Didn't you meet her at the Wells? She is middle-sized, a blonde, regular features, consumptive complexion, and a black mole on the right cheek. It struck me as an uncommonly expressive face."

"A mole!" I muttered between my teeth. "Did you say a mole?"

The Doctor looked at me, put his hand on my heart, and said exultantly, "You know her!" It is a fact that my heart was beating harder than normally.

"Your turn to triumph now," I said. "But I trust myself to you. You will not betray me. I have not seen her yet, but I am sure, by the portrait you draw of her, it is a woman that I was in love with long ago. . . . Do not say a word to her of me. If she asks any questions, express yourself unfavourably about me."

Werner shrugged his shoulders and answered, "As you like."

When he left I was seized with a frightful, crushing sense of depression. Had fate brought us together again in the Caucasus, or was she come here on purpose, knowing she would meet me? . . . And how should

we meet? . . . After all, was it she? My presentiments never deceive me. There is no man in the world over whom the past has such an ascendency as over me. Every recollection of bygone sorrow or joy strikes upon my soul, and evokes the very same notes in echo. I am so stupidly constructed I never forget anything, never. . . .

After dinner, at six o'clock, I went out on the Boulevard. There was a crowd. The Princess and her daughter were sitting on a bench surrounded by young men who paid emulous court to her. I placed myself on another seat at a little distance, stopped two officers of Dragoons whom I knew, and began talking with them of one thing and another. Apparently I succeeded in being funny, because they began to laugh like idiots. Curiosity attracted some of the Princess's adherents to join me, and little by little they all deserted her and came into my circle. I never stopped talking; my anecdotes were droll to the point of absurdity, my jokes at the expense of grotesque passers-by were desperately malicious. I continued to make sport for the public till sunset. Several times the young lady walked past on her mother's arm, escorted by some rickety little old gentleman; several times her glance, as it fell upon me, was eloquent of vexation while it strove to express indifference.

"What is he telling you?" she asked of one of my young people, who had rejoined her out of politeness. "Evidently some very interesting story. Is it his martial exploits?"

She said this pretty loud, probably intending me to hear it and be annoyed.

"Aha!" I said to myself, "you're angry now, and no mistake, my pretty little princi-pessina! Wait a bit, and we shall see."

Groushnitzky followed her like a beast of prey on the trail, and never let her out of his sight. I take my oath, by to-morrow he will be asking some one to introduce him to the mother. And she will be delighted—she is so bored.

May 16.

In the course of a couple of days my affair has made fearfully quick progress. The young lady unquestionably hates me; several epigrams that she has made at my expense have been duly reported to me, very caustic things, but at the same time very flattering. She thinks it fearfully strange that, accustomed to good Society as I am, and acquainted as I am with her St. Petersburg cousins and aunts, I still make no attempt to get myself presented to her. We meet every day at the Wells and on the Boulevard, and I exert all my powers to draw away her adorers—the brilliant adju-

tants, and the pasty-faced Moscovites, and the rest; and I almost always succeed. If there is a thing I have always detested, it is entertaining; but now my house is full every day—dinner-parties, supper-parties, card-parties, and, alas! my champagne triumphs over the spells of her bewitching eyes.

Yesterday I met her at Cheladioff's shop. She was haggling over a marvellous Persian saddle-cloth. She begged her mother to secure it at all costs; it would be such an ornament to her boudoir. I bid forty roubles more for it, and got the rug. I was rewarded by a look which sparkled with the most delicious fury. About dinner-time I ordered my Circassian horse to be led past her window with the clothing on his back. Werner was with them at the time; he told me that the effect of the scene was highly dramatic.

She now wishes to enlist the army in a crusade against me. I actually noticed a couple of adjutants with her who bowed very stiffly to me; however, they dine with me every night.

Groushnitzky has assumed a mysterious air. He walks with his hands clasped behind his back, and recognizes nobody. His leg has taken a sudden turn for the better, and now he hardly limps. He has found an opportunity to get into conversation with the mother,

and pronounce some silly, polite speech to the daughter. Evidently she is not so very fastidious, for she returns his bow with a very sweet smile every time.

Yesterday he said to me, "So you're quite determined you don't want to make acquaintance with the Ligovskys?"

"Quite."

"If you don't mind my saying so, theirs is much the most agreeable house in Piatigorsk. All the best local Society."

"I am sick of Society, even the unlocal. But do you visit there?"

"Not yet. I have spoken to the young Princess a couple of times, not more. One has a kind of shyness, you know, about pushing one's way into a house, though here everybody does it. If I had got my epaulettes, it would be another story."

"Excuse my saying so, but you are far more interesting as you are. Simply you do not know how to use the advantage you have gained. Why, in the eyes of any young lady of sentiment, a common soldier's coat constitutes the wearer of it a hero and a martyr."

Groushnitzky smiled with self-satisfaction, but he said, "What humbug!"

I continued, "I am convinced that the lady is already in love with you."

He blushed up to the ears and bridled. Ah,

Self-love! thou art that lever which Archimedes desired to lift the round world with!

"You are always joking," he said, pretending to be angry. "Why, to begin with, she hardly knows me at all yet."

"Women only love people they don't know."

"Oh, I can't make the least pretension to her favour. Simply I want to have the *entrée* to an agreeable house; it would be very absurd if I were to entertain any hopes. . . . Now, *you*—that's different, you St. Petersburg conquerors. But just look how women dissemble! . . . Do you know, Pechorin, what the lady has been saying about you?"

"Oh, really! has she begun to discuss me with you?"

"Don't congratulate yourself *too* much, though! I just got into conversation with her at the Wells, quite by chance. She had hardly spoken two words to me before she was asking, 'Who is that gentleman with such a hard, disagreeable face? He was with you the day when . . .' and she blushed and would not specify the day, because she recollected her own charming behaviour."

"You need not tell me what day," I answered; "it will be fixed in my memory for ever!" . . .

"Pechorin, I cannot congratulate you; you are very much in her bad books, my friend.

And really it's a pity, because Mary is very sweet."

(By the way, it should be explained that Groushnitzky is one of those people who, when speaking of ladies they barely know, must always be calling them "My Mary," or "My Sophie," if the ladies have been so fortunate as to find favour in their eyes.)

I put on a serious face and replied, "Yes, she might be worse. . . . But, Groushnitzky, look what you're about! Russian ladies live for the most part on platonic affections without having the least idea of matrimony. Now, platonic affections are highly inconvenient things. The young Princess is evidently one of those women who require to be amused; if ever she gets bored in your company for two minutes, you are lost beyond recovery. Your silence must serve to arouse her curiosity, but never last too long; your conversation must never entirely satisfy her; you must constantly be keeping her agitated. She will flout public opinion for your sake a dozen times, and call it sacrificing herself; then, to recoup herself for that, she will begin tormenting you, and the next stage will be just to tell you plainly that she can't abide you. Unless you can gain an ascendency over her, the first kiss will never give you the right to a second. She will coquette with you to the top of her

appetite, and in another couple of years she will go and marry some monstrosity in deference to her mother's wish; then she will proceed to convince herself that she never really loved but one man (that is *you*), but Heaven would not unite the pair because he wore a common soldier's greatcoat, although beneath that rough, thick, gray overcoat there beat a passionate and noble heart."

Groushnitzky thumped the table with his fist, and began to pace to and fro in the room. Inwardly I was laughing so much that twice I could not suppress an actual smile; but luckily he did not see. It is clear he is in love; he is getting more confidential than before. A silver ring has now made its appearance on his hand, done in the local style of *niello* work; it looked very suspicious. I studied it closely, and detected the name MARY engraved in small letters *on the outside*, and beside it the date of the day when she picked up the historic tumbler. I kept my discovery to myself, having no desire to drive him to make confessions. I only wish that he may voluntarily choose me for his confidential agent; then I mean to enjoy myself.

* * * * *

I rose late this morning, and found nobody at the Wells when I went there. It was sultry hot. White, shaggy clouds were rolling rap-

idly down from the snow peaks—sure prognostic of a coming thunderstorm. The head of Mashuk fumed like an extinguished flambeau; gray wisps of vapour hung or crawled like snakes around him, arrested in their downward movement, and, as it were, fettered in the thorn-brakes of his coverts. The air was saturated with electricity. I plunged into one of the vineyard alleys which led to a grotto. I was in very low spirits, thinking of the young woman with the mole on her cheek whom the Doctor had spoken of. . . . Why is she here? Is it she? And what makes me think it is? Or, rather, what makes me so certain it is? Are women with a mole on the cheek so rare? . . . Musing deeply in this strain, I approached the grotto and looked in. On a stone bench in the cold shadow of its vault sat a woman, wearing a straw hat and wrapped in a black shawl. Her head drooped down on her breast, and her hat concealed her face. I was on the point of turning away, not to disturb her reverie, when she looked up suddenly at me.

"Vera!" I exclaimed involuntarily.

She trembled and turned pale. "I knew you were here," she said.

I sat down beside her and took her hand. A long-forgotten stir raced through my veins at the sound of that sweet voice; she looked me full in the eyes with her deep, quiet gaze.

I read mistrust and something like reproach in her eyes.

"It is long since we saw each other," I said.

"It is long, and we are both so much changed!"

"And, consequently, you do not love me now?"

"I am married," was her reply.

"Again? Well, that consideration was in existence a few years ago, but in the meanwhile——"

She withdrew her hand from mine, and her cheek kindled.

"Perhaps you love your second husband?"

She turned away and gave no answer.

"Or he is very jealous?"

Silence.

"What is it, then? He is young, good superlatively, really so, and he is rich, and you are afraid."

I glanced at her, and was horrified to see the look of profound despair on her face; tears were sparkling in her eyes.

At length she murmured, "Tell me, does it give you great pleasure to torment me? I ought to hate you. Since the day we first knew each other I have nothing but suffering to thank you for."

Her voice was on the point of breaking; she leaned toward me and dropped her head upon

my breast. I thought to myself, "Perhaps that is the special reason why you love me. Joys may be forgotten, but sorrows never are."

I embraced her closely, and we remained a long while so. At last our lips approached each other's, and fused in a fiery, intoxicating kiss. Her hands were cold as ice, but her head burned. Then one of those dialogues began between us which have no meaning on paper, which there is no repeating—nay, which there is no remembering, because the significance of voices alters and consummates the significance of the words, as in Italian opera.

She is strongly against my making acquaintance with her husband. He is that little rickety old fellow of whom I had a glimpse on the Boulevard; she married him for her son's sake. He is rich, and he suffers from rheumatism. I have not permitted myself to make any pleasantry whatever at his expense. She respects him like a father, and intends to deceive him like a husband. Queer thing, the human heart in general and the female variety in particular!

Vera's husband, Semen Vassilievich H——v, is a distant connection of Princess Ligovsky, and lives next door. Vera is often at the Princess's house; I suggested to her that she should make acquaintance with the Ligovskys, and cultivate the daughter, in order to draw

off attention. In this way my designs will not be liable to any disturbance, and I shall amuse myself. Amuse myself! . . . Yes, I have passed that stage of the interior life when one is only seeking for bliss, when the heart feels the necessity for loving some object passionately with might and main; now all I want is to be loved, and that only falls to the lot of few men. Indeed, I believe I should be content with a single permanent attachment. What a pitiful condition to fall into!

One thing I have always been a stranger to. I never made myself the slave of the woman I loved; on the contrary, I have always acquired an irresistible power over their wills and hearts, without any effort whatever on my part.

Why is this? Is it because I never set great value on any one, and they are afraid every moment that I shall slip out of their hands? Or is it just the magnetic ascendency exercised by a powerful organism? Or has it simply not been my luck to meet a woman of tenacious character?

I must confess I do *not* like women of character. But that is their affair!

True, I now recollect something; once and once only I loved a strong-willed woman whom I could never conquer. We parted enemies. And yet who knows but what we might have

parted otherwise if I had met her five years later?

Vera is ill, very ill, though she will not allow it. I am afraid she is in a consumption or the disease they call *fièvre lente*, not a Russian complaint at all, and we have no name for it in the language.

* * * * *

The storm detained us in the grotto, and lasted a good half-hour. She neither made me swear vows of fidelity, nor asked if I had loved others since the days when we parted. She trusted herself to me with the old unconcerned self-abandonment, and I will not betray her; she is the one woman in the world I could never find it in me to betray. I know we must soon separate again, and perhaps for ever; we shall go by different roads to the grave; but her memory will abide intact in my soul. I have always kept repeating this to her, and she believes me, though she says the contrary.

At last we separated. My eyes pursued her long, until her hat was lost to sight among the rocks and bushes. My heart ached in grips of agony as though this were a first parting. And oh, how I rejoiced at the feeling! Can it be that youth, with her wild, wholesome tempests, has taken the fancy to revisit me? Or is this her parting glance, her farewell gift —a keepsake for memory? Really it would

be ridiculous to imagine that I look like a boy any more, though my face is pale perhaps, but still fresh, my limbs are still lithe and supple, my hair thick and curly; there is fire in my eye and ferment in my blood.

On returning home I mounted my horse and went for a gallop on the steppe. I love a gallop on a fiery horse through tall grass, with the wind of the wilderness in my face; to swallow down the generous fragrant air in thirsty gulps; to strain my eyes into the dim distance, endeavouring to descry the misty outline of objects which every instant makes clearer and clearer. Whatever littleness may be in my heart, whatever uneasiness oppress my mind, it all melts away for the moment. My soul is at ease and light; the bodily movement succeeds in vanquishing the mental. There was never woman's looks that I could not forget at the sight of the curly hills blazing with the glamour of a southern sun, at the sight of the blue sky, or when I hear the noise of a torrent tumbling from rock to rock.

I believe the Cossacks, yawning on their watch-tower, when they see my aimless random career, must be puzzled to explain the meaning of what they see; by my dress they take me for a Circassian. In fact, I have been told that in Circassian dress I look more like a Kabardene than many Kabardenes do. I am

an absolute dandy in all that concerns that noble, warlike, native costume: not an inch of superfluous lace; arms of costly simplicity but perfection of finish; hat of beaver-nap, not too long and not too short; legs cased in gaiters and *tcherevik;* boots of the most punctilious fit possible; white *beshmet* cloak; dark brown *tcherkeska.* I studied long to master the highland seat on a horse. Nothing flatters my vanity so much as a compliment on my good taste in equipage for the Caucasian style of horsemanship. I keep four horses — one for myself and three for my friends, so that I may not be bored by solitary excursions on the plains. They are always glad to take my horses, and they never keep me company in my rides.

It was already six o'clock in the evening, when I remembered it was dinner-time. My horse was fairly exhausted. I made my way on to the road which leads from Piatigorsk to the German colony, where the visitors at the waters often go for a picnic. The road was winding among bush and dipping into small gullies, where noisy streams gush down beneath a sheltering fringe of tall grasses. The gray masses of Beshta, Snake Mountain, Iron Mountain, and Bald Mountain rise all round to form an amphitheatre. Descending one of the gullies —a *Balka*, to give them their local designation—

I halted to water my horse; at the same moment a noisy and brilliant cavalcade came in sight on the road—ladies in black or blue riding habits, and gentlemen in a mixture of Circassian and Niejegorod style, in the midst of whom rode Groushnitzky and Lady Mary.

Ladies at the waters still believe in the possibility of a Circassian raid in broad daylight. Probably this is why Groushnitzky had fastened a sword and a pair of pistols outside his uniform greatcoat; he looked highly ridiculous in this heroic rig.

A tall bush concealed me from their view, but through the leaves I could see everything, and conjecture by the expression of their faces that their conversation was of the sentimental order. At length they approached the descent. Groushnitzky seized the lady's horse by the bridle, and at this point I caught the conclusion of the dialogue.

She said, "And do you want to stay all your life in the Caucasus?"

Her cavalier replied, "What is Russia to me? A land where thousands of people will look on me with scorn because they are richer than I; while here a soldier's coarse coat has been no obstacle to my making your acquaintance."

"Quite the reverse," said she, blushing.

Groushnitzky's face reflected his gratifica-

tion. He continued, "Here the course of my life is a noisy and rapid, but unobserved, torrent, in the thick of brigands' bullets; if God would but send me every year one radiant glance from a woman's eye, one glance like that——"

They came abreast of me just as he spoke the words. I gave my horse a cut with the whip, and bounded out of the covert of the bush.

"*Mon Dieu, un Circassien!*" screamed the lady, terrified.

To reassure her feelings completely I answered in French, with a slight bow, "*Ne craignez rien, Madame, je ne suis pas plus dangereux que votre cavalier.*"

She was quite thrown out of countenance. Why? At the mistake she had made? Or because my answer struck her as impertinent? I should have liked the last hypothesis to be the true one. Groushnitzky flung a glance of displeasure at me.

* * * * *

Late that evening—that is to say, at eleven o'clock—I went out for a stroll in the lime alley on the Boulevard. The town was asleep, lights twinkled in only a few windows. The outliers of Mashuk made a dark barrier against the sky on three sides; a cloud of sinister presage sat on his summit. In the east the

moon was rising, and in the far distance there glimmered a silver fringe of snow peaks. The call of the sentinels broke intermittently on the murmur of the hot springs as they gushed away into the night. Now and again the clattering tramp of a horse was heard in the street, accompanied by the creaking of a tilted wagon and the lugubrious notes of a Tartar song. I sat down on a bench and fell into a muse. I felt the urgent want of a friendly ear to pour out my thoughts into; but whose? "What is Vera doing now?" thought I. I would have given a great deal to press her hand at that moment. I was roused by a sudden noise of quick, uneven steps. Groushnitzky—actually!

"Where do you spring from?"

"Princess Ligovsky's," he answered, with an air of importance. "What a voice Mary has!"

"Do you know," I said, "I wouldn't mind betting that she doesn't suspect that you are a cadet, and takes you for an officer broken to the ranks."

He answered carelessly, "Perhaps so. What does it matter to me?"

"Oh, not at all. I merely mention it as——"

"Oh, but let me tell you something. Are you aware that you've made her frightfully angry? She considers that it was a piece of

unheard-of impertinence on your part. I am doing all that I can to assure her that you are too well bred and too well mannered for it to be possible that you intended to insult her. She declares that you have a most insolent expression, and are very conceited."

"She is not mistaken. But don't you feel inclined to constitute yourself her champion?"

"I am sorry that I have no right at present."

"Oho!" thought I to myself; "plain enough, he has hopes."

"Well, anyhow, it's a bad lookout for you," he continued; "it won't be at all easy for you to make acquaintance now. Such a pity! one of the most agreeable houses I know anywhere."

I smiled inwardly.

"The most agreeable house for me at this moment is my own." I yawned as I said it, and rose to go.

"You might as well confess that you're disappointed."

"Nonsense! If I choose, I shall be at the Princess's to-morrow evening."

"We shall see."

"All right. To gratify you, I mean to make acquaintance with Lady Mary."

"Yes—if she will speak to you."

"I shall wait for a moment when your conversation fatigues her. Good-night!"

"Well, I'm going for a stroll. I'm not a bit sleepy now. I say, why shouldn't we go to the restaurant? there'll be playing there. I feel a craving for some strong excitement just now."

"I wish you all the losing luck," and with that I went home.

May 21.

Nearly a week has passed, and still I have not made acquaintance with the Ligovskys. I am waiting for a convenient occasion. Groushnitzky follows the young lady about everywhere like her shadow. They have interminable talks; when is she going to get bored with him? Her mother pays no attention to it because marriage is out of the question with him. Maternal logic! But I have observed two or three tender looks exchanged; it is about time to put an end to this.

Yesterday Vera appeared at the Wells for the first time. She has never left the house since the time we met in the grotto. We dipped glasses at the same time, and as she stooped down she said to me in a whisper, "You wouldn't care to make acquaintance with the Ligovskys? It is the only place where we can meet."

Reproaches! What a nuisance! Still, I have deserved them. Anyhow, here's my

chance. To-morrow there is a subscription ball in the big room of the restaurant, and I mean to dance a mazurka with Lady Mary.

May 29.

The big room of the restaurant was transformed into a brilliant assembly room. Every one was collecting there by nine o'clock. The princess and her daughter were among the latest to appear. Many of the ladies scanned them with a jealous and malicious eye, because Lady Mary dresses with good taste. Those who consider themselves to be the local aristocracy dissembled their envy and pressed closely round her. How is it that wherever women are gathered together there are instantly a higher and a lower circle formed?

Groushnitzky was standing by a window in the thick of the crowd, with his face right against the panes, never taking his eyes off his goddess. As she walked past, she gave him a hardly perceptible inclination of the head. He beamed like a sun.

The dancing began with a *polonaise*, and after that they struck up a valse. There were a jingling of spurs and a picking up of trains, and the couples began to circle.

I was standing behind a solid lady overshadowed with a headgear of pink plumes.

The gorgeous amplitude of her dress recalled the days of farthingales, but the variegated unevenness of her skin suggested the blessed period when ladies wore patches of black taffeta. A clasp was employed to disguise a very large wart on her neck. She was talking to her partner, a Captain of Dragoons: "That Lady Mary Ligovsky is a perfectly insufferable girl! Look how she bumped against me and never begged my pardon; she turned round and stared at me through her lorgnette. *C'est impayable!* What right has she to give herself such airs? Some one ought to give her a lesson."

"No difficulty about that, I'm sure," replied the obliging Captain, and made his way into another room.

I immediately went up to Lady Mary and asked for a dance, availing myself of the freedom allowed by the etiquette of the place, which permits one to dance with a lady without introduction.

She could hardly restrain herself from smiling and displaying the pride she felt in her triumph. However, she soon managed to assume a perfectly indifferent, even a severe, expression of face. She put her hand negligently on my shoulder, slightly inclined her head on one side, and off we went. I never felt such a lithe, voluptuous waist. Her delicious breath

caressed my face; sometimes a lock of hair, detached from its companions by the whirl of the valse, slipped against my burning cheek. . . . We danced three rounds—she valses admirably well. Then she got out of breath, her eyes swam, and her half-parted lips could scarcely murmur the prescribed "*Merci, Monsieur.*"

After a few minutes' silence I put on my most suppliant look and said, "Lady Mary, I have been told that, though we are entire strangers, I have had the misfortune to incur your displeasure—that you thought me impertinent. I hope this is not true?"

"And so now you mean to confirm me in that opinion?" she answered, with a little ironical pout (which, by the way, is very becoming to a quick, mobile face like hers).

"If I did presume in any way to offend you, you must now let me take the much greater liberty of begging your pardon. I am very anxious to show you that you have been mistaken in your estimate of me."

"You will find that rather a hard task."

"Why?"

"Because you never come to our house, and these dances are not likely to be repeated often."

As much as to say (thought I to myself) that their door is for ever closed to me. I answered, with a little vexation, "But, you know,

one must never reject the repentant sinner, else despair may make him twice as great a sinner as before, and then . . ."

The end of my sentence was lost in a burst of laughter and a great stir among the people near us. I turned round to see what was the matter. A knot of men was standing a few paces away, and amongst them the Captain of Dragoons who had manifested hostile intentions against my poor partner. He was extremely pleased with himself about something, rubbing his hands, laughing, and leering at his companions. Suddenly from among their number emerged a gentleman—a civilian by his dress—with long moustaches and a red face. He bent his uncertain steps in the direction of Lady Mary. The man was drunk. To her great confusion, he halted opposite her, folded his hands behind his back, fixed a turbid gray eye upon her, and in a hoarse soprano uttered the words,—

"*Permettez* . . . all right. Yes, you know . . . I mean, you are my partner for the mazurka."

She answered, "As you please, sir," in a trembling voice, and looked all round with eyes of entreaty. Alas! her mother was far away, and none of her partners was near: one adjutant apparently saw it all, and plunged into the crowd to avoid being concerned in a scene.

"Hullo!" said the drunken gentleman, winking at the Captain of Dragoons, who was encouraging him by signs—"not satisfied? Once more I have the honour to engage you *pour mazur*. . . . You think I'm drunk, I dare say. Not a bit of it! Perfectly under control, I can assure you."

I saw that she was ready to swoon with terror and indignation. I walked up to the drunken gentleman, took him pretty roughly by the arm, and looking hard into his face, invited him to retire, "because," I added, "this lady has long been engaged to dance the mazurka with me."

"Oh, it is of no consequence . . . another time, then," said he, and went off, grinning, to join his shamefaced companions, who then proceeded to remove him into another room.

My reward was a look, a deep, marvellous look.

She went to her mother and told her the whole story. The Princess hunted me out from among the crowd and thanked me. She remarked to me that she had known my mother, and been dear friends with half a dozen of my cherished aunts.

"I don't know how it has happened that we have never made your acquaintance all this time," she added, "but you must confess it is altogether your fault. You avoid everybody. Oh, I never saw anybody so *farouche* as you!

I hope the air of my drawing-room will be a cure for your spleen. *N'est-ce pas?* "

I answered her with one of those phrases which everybody should always have ready at call for such occasions.

The quadrille lasted a fearful time. At last the band began to play the first notes of a mazurka, and Lady Mary and I sat down together. I made not the least allusion to the drunken gentleman, or to my former behaviour, or to Groushnitzky. The impression produced on her feelings by such a disagreeable scene gradually dissipated itself, and her face regained its charming bloom. She showed herself possessed of quite a pretty wit; but her remarks, though somewhat quizzical, made no pretension to be cutting; she was lively and at her ease, and every now and then her observations were profound. I gave her to understand (in a highly embarrassed phrase) that I had long been fascinated by her.

She made me a little bow with her head and blushed somewhat; then, lifting her velvet eyes at me, she said with a forced laugh, " You are an extraordinary man! "

I explained that the reason why I had not cared to make acquaintance was that she was surrounded by so dense a throng of worshippers that I was afraid of sinking wholly out of sight.

"You need not have been afraid; they are all bores."

"All? Surely not all?"

She looked hard at me, as though making an effort of recollection. Again she coloured rather, and finally pronounced emphatically, "All."

"Even my friend Groushnitzky?"

"Is he a friend of yours?" she asked, betraying a slight hesitation.

"Yes."

"Well, I won't class him among the ranks of the bores."

I laughed and said, "But among the ranks of the unfortunate?"

"Really! Do you think it a joking matter? I should like to see you in his place."

"Why, I was a cadet once, and I assure you it was quite the happiest time in my life."

She said quickly, "He isn't a cadet, is he?" and then added, "But I thought . . ."

"What did you think?"

"Nothing. . . . Who's that lady?"

The conversation went off on another tack, and the subject was not mentioned again. The mazurka ended, and we parted *au revoir*. The ladies left the ball. I went to supper, and ran against Werner.

"Aha!" said he, "there you are! Still determined that the only way you will make a

lady's acquaintance is by rescuing her from actual death ? "

" I have done better than that," I answered —" rescued her from fainting in a ballroom."

" How was that ? Tell me about it."

" No, you must guess—you who can guess all the secrets in the world."

May 30.

I was walking on the Boulevard about seven o'clock in the evening. Groushnitzky caught sight of me a long way off and came towards me ; a kind of ludicrous glamour of triumph sparkled in his eyes. He gripped my hand tightly, and said in a tragical tone,—

" I thank you, Pechorin. . . . You understand me ? "

" No, I don't. But in any case there is no need for gratitude," I answered, not being able to find in my conscience that I had done him any benefit.

" What ? You don't ? And how about yesterday ? You surely have not forgotten ? . . . Mary told me all about it."

" Oh ! Then am I to suppose that you have all things in common already—gratitude included ? "

Groushnitzky assumed his important manner, and began, " Listen. I must request you not to make jokes about my passion, if you wish

to remain friends with me. You see, I am desperately in love with her, and I think—nay, I trust—she also loves me. I have a request to make of you. It is that you will be there in the evenings now—promise me to take note of everything. I know you are experienced in these matters ; you understand women better than I do. Ah, women, women ! who does understand them ? Their smiles gainsay their glances ; their words promise and invite, but the tone of their voice rebuffs. They can penetrate and seize the inmost secrets of your thought, and yet they are blind to the most palpable hint. Look at Lady Mary : yesterday, when her eyes rested on me they were burning with passion, and to-day they are quite lack-lustre and cold."

" Perhaps it is an effect of the waters," I replied.

" You *will* see the bad side of everything ! Materialist ! " he added scornfully. " Well, let's try another *matter*."

And he was so much delighted with his miserable pun that he recovered his good temper.

At nine we went together to call upon the Princess.

As we passed Vera's window I saw her sitting beside it. We shot a rapid exchange of glances, and she entered the Ligovsky boudoir soon

after us. I was introduced to her by the Princess as a cousin of her own. There was tea, many guests to drink it, and a general conversation. I exerted myself to gain the good graces of our hostess, and my sallies were so successful that several times she laughed herself out of breath. Lady Mary wanted to laugh too, but curbed herself in order to keep up the character she affects. Gravity is what she considers becoming to her, and perhaps she is not mistaken. Groushnitzky was evidently much delighted to see her take no infection from my gaiety.

After tea every one went into the drawing-room.

As I passed Vera I said to her, "Are you satisfied with my obedience to your orders?"

She answered me by a look overcharged with love and gratitude. I am familiar with those looks, but I have never allowed my happiness to consist in them.

The Princess made her daughter sit down to the pianoforte, and every one begged her to sing something. I remained silent, and, availing myself of the confusion, withdrew to the window with Vera, who wanted to tell me "something very important for us both." (It turned out to be nonsense.) Meanwhile Lady Mary was vexed by my indifference; this much I was able to conjecture by a single

angry, brilliant glance. Oh, I am wonderful at understanding that language — the mute, expressive, summary, powerful language of the eyes! She began to sing. Her voice is not bad, but she cannot sing. Anyhow, I didn't listen. Groushnitzky, with his elbows leaning on the piano in front of her, devoured her with his eyes, and kept saying, half aloud, "*Charmant! Délicieux!*"

"Listen," said Vera. "I don't wish you to make my husband's acquaintance, but you absolutely must win the good graces of the Princess. You can easily do it—you can do anything you want to do. This is the only place where we shall meet."

"The only?"

She blushed, and continued, "You know I am your slave. I have never known how to gainsay you. And I am going to be punished for it; you are going to give me up. But at least I wish to save reputation—not for my sake; you know that very well. Oh, I implore you, do not, as you used to do, torture me with unreal suspicions and pretended coldness. I dare say I shall die before long; I feel that I grow weaker day by day, and in spite of that, I cannot think about the future life. I can only think about you. . . . You men never understand how delicious a look or a pressure of the hand can be, but I—

I vow it is the truth—I feel such a profound, extraordinary pleasure when I listen to your voice, that even the fiery kisses are not worth it."

Meanwhile Lady Mary finished singing. A tumult of applause broke out around her. I went up to her after all the rest and made some careless remark upon her voice. She made a face, pouting out her under lip, and dropped a quizzical curtsey.

"I am all the more flattered," she said, "because you did not listen to me at all. But perhaps you do not like music?"

"On the contrary, I am very fond of it, especially after meals."

"Groushnitzky is right in saying you are a most prosaic person. I see your taste for music has a gastronomical motive."

"You are mistaken again. I am not a *gourmand* at all, but a particularly coarse feeder. But music after a meal is a soporific, and sleep after a meal is wholesome; consequently it is for medical motives I like music. Now in the evening it is quite different. It agitates my nerves too much, makes me either too sad or too cheerful. Either is intolerable, without real cause for sadness or cheerfulness; and, besides, sadness in society is ridiculous, and excessive mirth is bad manners." . . .

She did not stop to hear me out, but went

off and sat by Groushnitzky, and a more or less sentimental dialogue began between them. But apparently her answers to his sage observations were distracted and off the point (though she made efforts to look like an attentive listener), because now and then he would look at her in astonishment, puzzled to guess the cause of the inward agitation which every now and then reflected itself in her restless glances.

But I have guessed your secret, my pretty lady! Beware! That's the coin you mean to pay me out in, is it? Prick my self-esteem? You will not succeed there. And if you mean to declare war on me, I shall be merciless.

Several times in the course of the evening I made express attempts to join in their conversation, but she met my remarks very dryly, and finally I departed with a show of vexation. Her ladyship was triumphant, Groushnitzky likewise.

You are welcome to your triumph, my friends, but make haste about it; you have not long to triumph. How do I know that? I have a presentiment. . . . When I first make acquaintance with a woman, I always divine by an infallible instinct whether she is going to fall in love with me or not.

I spent the remainder of the evening with Vera, and we talked of old times to heart's

content. . . . Why is she so fond of me? Really, I don't know. And it is all the more extraordinary in a woman who understands, as she does, all my petty foibles and all my ugly passions. . . . Has evil such an enticing power?

I left with Groushnitzky. When we got out into the street, he grasped me by the hand, and said, after a long silence,—

"Well, what do you make of it?"

It was on the tip of my tongue to answer, "You're a fool;" but I restrained myself, and merely shrugged my shoulders.

June 6.

All these days I have stuck faithfully to my game. Lady Mary begins to have a fancy for my conversation. I have told her some of the strange adventures of my life, and she begins to regard me as no ordinary man. I scoff at everything, especially sentiment. This begins to scare her. When I am there she dares not let herself go into sentimental arguments with Groushnitzky, and sometimes she even replies to his rhapsodies by a quizzical smile; but whenever Groushnitzky comes up, I put on a face of humble resignation and leave the pair alone. The first time she was glad, or pretended to be; the second time she was annoyed with me; the third time with him.

She remarked to me yesterday, "You have a very modest opinion of yourself. What makes you think I prefer Groushnitzky's company to yours?"

I replied that my friend's happiness required the sacrifice of my pleasure.

"And mine," she added.

I looked her steadily in the face, and recognized the earnestness of her expression.

After this I did not speak a word to her for a whole day. Yesterday she was pensive and preoccupied; this morning at the Wells still more pensive and preoccupied. When I went up to her she was listening absent-mindedly to Groushnitzky, who appeared to be descanting on the beauties of Nature; but no sooner did she catch sight of me than she burst out laughing (most inappropriately), and then pretended she had not seen me. I removed a little way off and studied her unobserved. Twice she turned away from her companion and yawned. Not a doubt of it, Groushnitzky bores her. I shall not speak to her for another couple of days.

June 13.

I sometimes ask myself what motive I have for so doggedly courting the affections of a young girl whom I have no wish to seduce, and no design to marry. What is the object

of such feminine coquetry? Vera loves m more than Lady Mary ever will. If I though of her as the impregnable beauty, then, per haps, the difficulties of the enterprise migh have allured me. . . . But that is not the cas at all. Consequently, this is not the restles craving for love which torments us in the year of first youth, and flings us from one woma to another until we find the one who canno endure us; then constancy begins, real, in finite suffering, such as might be expressed i mathematics by a line falling from a point int space; the secret of its infinity lies in th very impossibility of attaining the object whic would be its term.

What is there to make all this fuss about Jealousy of Groushnitzky?

Poor boy! he is not worth jealousy at all Or is it the result of that vile but irresistibl feeling which prompts us to destroy our neigh bour's pleasant illusions just for the pett satisfaction of saying to him (when he come to us in despair, asking what there is left tha he can put faith in),—

"My friend, I have been through it all and, as you see, I eat my regular meals an sleep soundly none the less, and I trust know how to die without a cry or a tear"?

No, the fact is there is something immensel delectable in taking possession of a young

half-opened soul. It is like a flower whose finest perfume is exhaled on meeting the first sunbeam; it must be plucked for a moment, the fragrance of it tasted to heart's content, and then flung away on the road. Somebody else may pick it up! I am conscious in myself of an insatiable appetite which swallows up all that it encounters in its path. I look upon the sufferings or the joys of others solely in regard to myself as so much food to sustain my spiritual strength upon. I am positively incapable of putting myself blindly under the domination of any passion. Ambition has been crushed in me by the weight of circumstances; but it has broken out in another aspect, for ambition is nothing but thirst for power, and my prime gratification is in subjecting everything around me to my will. To arouse the feelings of love, devotion, passion—is not this the first sign and also the highest triumph of power? To be the creative cause of suffering and of joy to another person, without possessing any actual title to such authority—is not this the choicest delicacy that pride can feed upon? And what is happiness but gratified pride? If I esteemed myself a better and a mightier than any other man in the world, I should be happy; if everybody loved me, I should discover in myself endless sources of love. Evil engenders evil: our first suffering

initiates us into the satisfaction of inflicting torture on others. The idea of evil cannot enter a man's head but he must simultaneously conceive the desire for putting it into execution. "Ideas are organic creatures," as somebody has said; their birth gives them form, and form for them means action. The man whose head gives birth to most ideas is the man who exercises most action upon his fellows. This is why a genius nailed down upon the board of bureaucratic routine must either die or go out of his mind, just as surely as a heavy-built, full-blooded man must die of apoplexy if he be condemned to a sedentary life and denied sufficient exercise.

The passions are simply the rudimentary stage of ideas; they are incident to the heart's youth, and only a fool supposes their commotions will last him all his days. Many a calmly-flowing river begins in turbulent cascades, but none of them continue leaping and foaming all the way down to the sea. Nay, this calm often betokens a great but suppressed strength; fullness and depth of sentiment or of thought do not comport furious outbursts. Rather the soul, in suffering and enjoyment alike, never fails to call herself to a rigorous account, and remains convinced of the necessity that things should be so. She knows that the thunderstorm saves her from withering

under the unabated glare of the sun. She imbues herself with the law of her own life; she sometimes pets and sometimes chastises herself, like a dearly-loved child; and only from this supreme condition of self-knowledge can man rise to form an estimate of the Divine justice.

On reading over this page, I see that I have digressed very far from my subject. But what does it matter? I write this journal for myself, and, consequently, anything I may chance to throw into it will become a precious memorial for me some day.

* * * * *

Groushnitzky met me, and threw himself on my neck; he has got his commission. We toasted the event in champagne. Doctor Werner came up behind him and said,—

"I don't congratulate you."

"Why?"

"Because the ranker's coat suited you very well, and you must admit that the uniform of an officer in a foot regiment worn here at the waters does not make the wearer any the more interesting. You see, hitherto you have been an exception, but now you fall under the common rule."

"Talk away, Doctor, talk away! You don't interfere with my rejoicing." And then Groushnitzky added, speaking into my ear, "He does

not know what hopes my epaulettes have len me. . . . O my epaulettes! my epaulettes the little stars on you are stars to guide m course! . . . No, I'm perfectly happy now!"

"Will you come for a walk with me to th *Proval?*" * I asked him.

"I? I shan't dream of showing myself t Lady Mary until my proper coat is ready."

"Would you like us to break your good new to her?"

"No, if you please, don't mention it. I want to surprise her."

"By the way, how are things going on i that quarter?" He became disconcerted, and thought for a minute; he wanted to brag and draw the long bow, but he felt a scruple; yet, on the other hand, he was ashamed to confess the truth. "Is she in love with you? What d'you think?"

"Is she in love? My dear Pechorin, what an idea! And from you! How *could* she— so soon? And even if she is in love with me, a really ladylike person doesn't go and say so."

"Capital! And probably (to use your expression) a really gentlemanlike man must also keep his passion a secret?"

"Ah, worse luck, yes, old fellow. Still, there's always a way of doing a thing. Many things may be guessed without being said."

* Hole or Punch Bowl.

"Quite true. Only love read in the glances of the eye is not binding upon any woman, whereas a spoken word. . . . Look out, Groushnitzky—she'll jilt you."

"*She?*" he answered, raising his eyes to heaven with a smile of intense satisfaction. "I'm sorry for you, Pechorin. . . ."

And he went out.

In the evening a numerous company took its way on foot to the *Proval*.

According to the opinion of the local professors, this *Proval* is nothing but an extinct crater. It is to be found on the slope of Mashuk, three-quarters of a mile outside the town. A narrow path leads to it through bushes and rocks. As we went steeply uphill I offered Lady Mary my arm; she took it, and did not let it go during the whole of the rest of the walk.

Our conversation opened with slander. I proceeded to review the catalogue of our acquaintance, present and absent, and first pointed out their ludicrous, then their bad side. My bile was stirred. I began in jest, and ended in downright malice. At first she was amused, but she ended by getting rather frightened.

"You are a terrible man," she said. "I would rather come across an assassin's knife in a forest than under that tongue of yours. I beg you in sober earnest, if ever it comes into

your head to speak evil of me, to take your best blade and cut my throat instead. I don't think it would cost you a great effort."

"Do I look like a murderer?"

"Worse."

I reflected for a moment, and then, putting on an air of profound emotion, I said,—

"Ah, such has been my destiny from my very childhood! Everybody has deciphered in my face the tokens of bad qualities which *were* not there. But I was credited with them, and they came. I was reserved; people accused me of deceitfulness, and turned me into a dissembler. I was deeply sensitive of good and evil; nobody petted me, every one outraged my feelings, and the result was that my temper was soured. I would remain gloomy while other children were chattering and full of mirth; I felt myself their superior; I was given the position of inferiority, and it made me jealous. I had the heart to love all the world, and nobody understood me, so I learned how to hate instead. My youth passed cheerlessly, at enmity with myself and the whole creation. For fear of ridicule, my best feelings shrank away into the depths of my heart, and died there. I told the truth, and I was disbelieved, so I took to lying. I studied the world and the mainsprings of society till I became a past master in the art of life, and

I saw that other men with no accomplishments enjoyed *gratis* all those advantages which I courted so indefatigably in vain. Then despair grew up in my breast—not the sort of despair which can be cured by a pistol bullet, but a cold, impotent despair masked beneath an amiable air and a benevolent smile. I underwent a moral mutilation; one half of my soul existed no longer—it shrivelled, it wilted, it died. I plucked it out and threw it away, letting the other half move, and live, and do duty for both. Nobody noticed anything, because nobody knew anything of the existence of the destroyed half; but now you have awakened the memory of it, and I have recited you its epitaph. Many people think all epitaphs ridiculous; I do not—especially when I recollect what sleeps beneath them. However, I do not ask you to share my opinion; if you think these outpourings ridiculous, pray laugh at them. I promise you it will not offend me in the least."

I met her eyes at this moment; tears were starting in them. Her arm, which rested on mine, was trembling, and her cheeks burned. It was all pity for me! Compassion, the sentiment which makes such an easy prey of women, had fixed its claws in her unpractised heart. Throughout the whole of that walk she continued absorbed in preoccupation, and never

attempted to flirt with anybody—an important symptom.

We reached the *Proval*, and the ladies left their escorting gentlemen ; but she did not let go my arm. The brilliant sallies of the local young men failed to move her to laughter ; the steepness of the abyss over which she stood did not frighten her, though the other ladies squeaked and covered their eyes.

On the return journey I did not renew the conversation on such sombre topics, but her answers to my empty questions or witticisms were short and absent-minded.

I asked her at last, " Have you ever been in love ? " She looked steadily and hard at me and nodded assent, then relapsed into her pensive mood again. It was plain that she had something to say, but did not know how to begin ; her breast was heaving. . . .

How did it happen ? A muslin sleeve is a slender defence ; an electric shock passed from my arm into hers. Most passions begin in this way, and we often make a great mistake in supposing that a woman loves us for any physical or moral attractions we may possess. These prepare and dispose her heart to receive the sacred fire, but it is always the first contact that has the decisive effect.

When we got back from our walk, she said to me with a forced smile,—

"I have been very *nice* to you to-day, haven't I?"

With that we separated.

She is dissatisfied with herself, and accuses herself of coldness. Ah! that is a first and principal triumph. To-morrow she will want to reward me. I know every move by heart; that is what makes it so dull.

June 12.

I have now seen Vera. She annoyed me by her jealousy. It seems that Lady Mary took it into her head to entrust her with her *secrets de cœur:* a happy selection of a *confidante*, I must say.

Vera said to me, "I can guess what it all points to. You had better tell me straight out now that you love her."

"But supposing I do not love her?"

"Then why persecute her, and frighten her, and disturb her imagination? Oh, I know you well enough! Listen. If you want me to believe you, come to Kieslovodsk within a week from now. We shall be removing thither the day after to-morrow. The Princess stays on longer here. Take rooms next door to us; we shall be living in the big house near the Spring, on the mezzanine. Princess Ligovsky has the rooms below; but next door is a house belong-

ing to the same landlord, and not yet let. . . . Will you come ? "

I promised I would, and sent that very day to engage the rooms.

Groushnitzky came to see me at six o'clock, and announced that his uniform would be ready to-morrow, in time for the ball.

" At last I shall dance a whole evening with her ! What a lot I shall have to tell her ! " he added.

" When is the ball ? "

" Why, to-morrow. Don't you know about it ? It's to be a grand function ; the local authorities have undertaken the management of it. . . ."

" Well, what d'you say to a turn on the Boulevard ? "

" Not for worlds, with this disgusting coat ! "

" Oh, so you've lost your affection for it ? "

I went out alone, and meeting Lady Mary, engaged her for the mazurka. She seemed surprised and delighted. " I thought you never danced," she said, " unless when you couldn't help it, like the last time," and she smiled very pleasantly as she said it.

I cannot discover that she is at all aware of Groushnitzky's absence.

I said to her, " There is a pleasant surprise in store for you to-morrow."

" How is that ? "

"It's a secret. You must guess for yourself at the ball."

I finished the evening at the Princess's, where I found no other visitors except Vera, and one very agreeable old gentleman. I was in good vein, and improvised a number of extraordinary stories. Lady Mary sat opposite me and listened to my nonsense with such deep, intense, nay, devoted interest, that I felt quite ashamed. What is become of her liveliness, her coquettishness, her caprices, her self-sufficiency, that scornful smile, that air of detachment and indifference? Vera took it all in. Profound vexation was reflected in her worn and wasted face; she sat in shadow by the window, sunk in a huge easy-chair. I was sorry for her.

Then I went on to relate the whole dramatic story of my acquaintance with her, and our love—of course disguising it all under imaginary names. I put so much life into the description of my fondness, my anxieties, my transports, I set her behaviour and character off in such an advantageous light, that, willy-nilly, she was obliged to forgive me my flirtation with Lady Mary. She rose, joined our circle, and grew animated, and it was two o'clock in the morning before we remembered that we were under Doctor's orders to go to bed by eleven.

June 13.

Groushnitzky revealed himself to me half an hour before the ball, in all the glory of an infantry officer's full dress coat. A little bronze chain was attached to the third button, and from it there depended a double lorgnette. His epaulettes (which were of incredibly large size) were tilted upwards in the style of a Cupid's wings; his boots creaked; in his left hand he carried his cap and a pair of light-brown kid gloves, and his right kept working away at the little curls of his frizzled top-knot. His face expressed a mixture of fatuity and diffidence. His gorgeous externals and the swagger of his gait made me want to burst out laughing; but that would not have agreed with my purposes. He threw down his cap and gloves on the table, and began to smooth out his gloves and preen himself before a looking-glass. An enormous black handkerchief twisted into a towering stock-frame whose bristles supported his chin, rose nearly two inches clear about his collar; but this did not seem to him enough, and he hoisted it as high as his ears. The severity of this exertion (his coat collar was cut very tight and uneasy) suffused his face with blood.

"Well, I'm told you are getting on famously with my little Princess," he said in a quite

unconcerned manner, and without looking at me.

"*Where we poor fools drink tea*," I answered, quoting the favourite adage of one of the most ingenious scapegraces of old days, celebrated by Poushkin.

"I say, would you mind telling me, is the set of my coat nice? Oh, confound that Jew! It's murderously tight in the armpits! Oh, by the way, have you got any scent?"

"Gracious! Do you want more? You reek of *pommade de roses* already."

"Never mind; you might let me have some."

He proceeded to drench his neckcloth, pocket-handkerchief, and sleeves.

"Do you mean to dance?" he asked me.

"I don't think so."

"I am afraid I may have to begin the mazurka with Lady Mary, and I hardly know a single figure."

"But have you engaged her for the mazurka?"

"Not yet."

"Look out that you are not forestalled."

"You're right there!" he said, striking his forehead. "Good-bye! I am going to waylay her now at the entrance."

He snatched up his cap and bolted.

Half an hour later I set out. The street

was dark and empty, but there was a crowd of people round the assembly rooms, or inn if you prefer it. The windows were brightly illuminated, and the evening breeze wafted sounds of a polka to me. I walked slowly, being in low spirits. Is all my destiny in this world (I thought to myself) to destroy the hopes of others? Ever since I first began to live and to act, Fate has employed me in the catastrophe of other people's dramas as though nobody must die, nobody be driven to despair without my having a hand in it. I have always been the necessary person for the fifth act; willy-nilly, I have always been cast for the sorry part of the executioner or the traitor. What can Fate have to gain by it? Did she destine me for an author of bourgeois tragedies and family romances, or a collaborator in purveying stories, for—shall we say a library of agreeable and instructive reading? How can I tell? Plenty of people who, when they begin their lives, imagine that they will end them like Alexander the Great or Lord Byron, remain second-class clerks in an office all their days instead.

Upon entering the ballroom I took covert in a crowd of men, and began to make my observations. Groushnitzky was standing beside Lady Mary, and saying something to her with great fervour; she listened absent-

mindedly; her eyes wandered, and she held a fan to her lips. Impatience was depicted in her face, and her glances were on the look-out for something all the time. I quickly approached from behind to overhear their conversation.

"You torture me," Groushnitzky was saying; "you are dreadfully altered since last I saw you."

"And you are altered too," she answered, throwing a rapid glance at him, in which he had not the wits to detect the irony.

"I? I altered? Oh, never! You know that it is impossible. A man who has once seen you must bear your divine image about with him for ever after!"

"Please stop that!"

"And why will you not listen now to the professions which you received so graciously a little while ago, and so many times?"

She laughed and said, "Because I dislike repetitions."

"Oh, I have been bitterly deceived! I thought, like a fool, that at least these epaulettes gave me the right to hope. No! Better if I had remained for ever in that poor, despised, ranker's *chineille*, to which perhaps I was indebted for your notice!"

"Really, your *chineille* was ever so much more becoming."

I came up at this moment, and bowed to her. She blushed a little, and made haste to say,—

"Isn't it true, Monsieur Pechorin, that Monsieur Groushnitzky looked ever so much better in his rough gray *chineille?*"

"I do not agree with you," I answered. "His officer's uniform makes him look younger still."

This stroke was too much for Groushnitzky. Like all boys, he wanted to make himself out to be old, and he fancied that there were profound traces of passion charactered in his face, which were as good as a hallmark of maturity. He threw me a furious look, stamped his foot, and made off.

"Now you must confess," I said to Lady Mary, "that, extremely ridiculous as he always was, it is not so long ago that you did think him interesting—in his rough gray *chineille?*"

She dropped her eyes, but said nothing.

Groushnitzky followed her about the whole evening, and danced either with her or *vis à vis*. He devoured her with his eyes, sighed deeply, and wearied her with entreaties and reproaches. By the end of the third quadrille she positively hated him.

"I did not expect this from you," he said.

He came up to me and took me by the arm.

"What?"

"Are you dancing the mazurka with her?"

He asked the question in a most solemn tone.

"She has confessed it to me."

"Why, what's the matter? There was no secret about that."

"Ah, to be sure! To be sure! Just what I might have expected from such a baggage—a regular flirt. But I will have my revenge!"

"Reproach your *chineille* or your epaulettes if you like, but why blame the lady? Is it her fault that she doesn't like you better?"

"Then why did she give me hopes?"

"Oh no! Why did you conceive any hopes? Forming a wish to succeed, that's a thing I can understand; but who is fool enough to *hope?*"

"You've won your bet, but not altogether," he said with a malicious smile.

The mazurka began. Groushnitzky would ask no one but Lady Mary; other gentlemen kept doing the same every moment. Evidently a plot against me. So much the better; she wants to talk to me, and they interfere with her, and it only makes her want to talk to me twice as much as before.

I pressed her hand twice; the second time she drew it away without saying a word.

"I shall sleep badly to-night," she said to me, when the mazurka was over.

"You must blame Groushnitzky for that."

"Oh no!" And her face became so anxious, so sad, that inwardly I pledged my word I

would kiss her hand that evening without fail.

The company began to disperse. As I put her into her carriage, I suddenly seized her little hand and pressed it to my lips. It was dark, and nobody could see.

I returned to the ballroom well content with myself. A party of young fellows were supping at a big table, and Groushnitzky among them. They all held their tongues when I came up. Evidently they had been talking about me. Many of them have a score to settle with me from the former ball, the Captain of Dragoons in particular; but now it looks as if there were a regular hostile gang formed against me under the command of Groushnitzky. He has such a valiant, bravado style about him.

Delighted. I love my enemies, though hardly in a Christian sense perhaps; they amuse me and help my circulation. To be always on the alert, to watch every glance, the significance of every word, to guess their designs, to baffle their plots, to pretend to be deceived, and then suddenly, at one stroke, demolish a huge laborious edifice of ingenuity and cunning—come, I call that life!

In the course of supper, Groushnitzky whispered and exchanged signs with the Captain of Dragoons.

June 14.

Vera went off with her husband to Kieslovodsk this morning. I met their carriage as I was on my way to Princess Ligovsky's. She gave me a nod ; her expression was reproachful.

Who is to blame ? Why will she not give me the chance of a meeting *tête-à-tête ?* Love is like fire ; it goes out if it does not get fuel. But perhaps jealousy may do what entreaty cannot.

I sat with the Princess for a solid hour. Mary did not appear ; she is ill. She was not on the Boulevard in the evening. The gang was collected there again, armed with eyeglasses, and looking quite formidable. I am glad she is ill ; they would have played her some impertinent trick or other—Groushnitzky with dishevelled hair and a look of desperation. There is no doubt he is seriously offended, wounded in his self-esteem particularly. But, really, there are people whose very despair is amusing.

As I returned home I felt a sense of something wrong, something missing. I have not seen her ! She is ill ! Am I really in love after all ? What nonsense.

June 15.

At eleven o'clock in the morning, the hour

when Princess Ligovsky is usually perspiring in the Yermoloff bath, I walked past her house. Her daughter was sitting pensively at a window; she fled at the sight of me.

I walked into the ante-chamber, and found nobody there; so availing myself of the free and easy ways of this place, I pushed on and entered the drawing-room without being announced.

Lady Mary was standing at the piano; a dull pallor overspread her pretty features. She leaned with one hand on the back of an easy-chair, and her hand was almost shaking. I approached softly and said, "You are angry with me?"

She lifted her eyes, fixed them on me in a dark, profound gaze, and merely shook her head. Her lips wished to say something, but could not; her eyes filled with tears, and she sank into the chair, covering her face with her hands.

Taking her by the arm, I asked, "What is the matter?"

"You have no consideration for me! Oh, leave me!"

I took a few steps. She sat upright in the chair, and her eyes were flashing. I stopped with my hand on the door-handle, and said, "I beg your pardon, Lady Mary. I have behaved like a madman. It shall not happen

again. I will take good care of that. Why should you know all that has been happening in my soul since that time? You shall never know, and it is better so for you! Good-bye!"

As I went out, I thought I heard the sound of weeping. I roamed till evening on foot among the environs of Mashuk, got fearfully tired, and, when I reached home, flung myself on my bed in utter exhaustion. In the evening I had a visit from Werner, who put me this question: "Is it true that you are going to marry Lady Mary Ligovsky?"

"What makes you ask that?"

"It's the talk of the town. All the invalids are taken up with this important piece of news. But then invalids are such queer people—they know everything!"

A trick of Grouslnitzky's, I thought to myself.

"To prove to you the untruth of these reports, Doctor," I answered, "I will reveal to you in confidence that I am leaving for Kieslovodsk to-morrow."

"Her ladyship also?"

"No; she stays on here for another week."

"So you are not going to be married?"

"Doctor! Doctor! Just look at me! Do I look like a married man, or anything approaching one?"

"I don't say that. But, you know, there

are positions," he continued, with a crafty smile, "when a man of honour is obliged to marry; and there are mammas who, to say the least of it, do not take pains to obviate such positions. So I advise you, as a friend, to be more careful. The air of the baths here is very dangerous. Haven't I seen beautiful young people who deserved a better fate go straight from this place to the marriage wreath? Why, can you believe it? attempts have even been made to marry me! There was, in fact, a local mamma who had a very anæmic daughter. I had the misfortune to remark that marriage would revive the roses in the young lady's face, whereupon, with tears of gratitude, she offered me her daughter's hand and her whole fortune! But I answered that I had no aptitude for it."

Werner went away in the full conviction that he had given me a fair warning. I gathered from his words that there are various mischievous reports current in the town about me and Lady Mary, for which Master Groushnitzky shall not go scot-free.

June 18.

I have been at Kieslovodsk three days. I see Vera every day at the Wells, and on the promenade. In the morning when I awake (pretty late), I sit at the window and train my eyeglass on her balcony. She has already long

been dressed, and is awaiting the prearranged signal; we meet, as if by accident, in the garden which descends from our houses to the Wells. The vigorous mountain air has restored her colour and strength; Narzan is not called the *Heroes' Spring* for nothing.

People who live here maintain that the air of Kieslovodsk produces a tendency to fall in love, and that all the romances which begin under the shadow of Mashuk find their last chapter here. Really, the whole place breathes solitude; secrecy and mystery everywhere; the thick shades of the lime walks declining upon a stream which drops thundering and foaming from slab to slab, and rends itself a passage through the heart of the green hills; the ravines which break and fork in every direction, full of dusk and silence; the rich aromatic softness of the air, which is overburdened with exhalation from the tall southern grasses and the white acacias; the drowsy, musical, never-ceasing noise of the ice-cold brooks which meet at the end of the valley, race for a while in friendly emulation, and at last tumble into the Podkoumok. The gorge expands on that side, and becomes a green, open dale, with a dusty strip of road winding along it. Every time I look that way, I fancy that I descry a carriage, and that there is a little pink and white face peering out of the carriage

window. Plenty of carriages have passed up the road, but never that one.

The suburb behind the fortress has grown into a popular quarter. At the restaurant, built on the hill a few yards away from my lodgings, lights begin to twinkle in the evening between the double rows of poplars, and the noise and the clink of glasses resound till midnight. Nowhere is Kakhetinsky and mineral waters drunk in such quantities as here.

Groushnitzky is to be seen hectoring about the eating-house with his gang constantly; he hardly acknowledges me when we meet. He only arrived here yesterday, but he lost no time in getting into a row with three old women who wanted to enter the bath before him. Certainly he has no luck; he is enveloped in malign influences.

June 22.

At last she is come! I was sitting at the window when I heard a sound of hoofs and wheels, and my heart thrilled. What is the meaning of this? Is it possible that I am in love? I am such an idiotically mal-contrived creature that anything may be expected of me.

I dined with them. The mother looked very sweet at me; she is never away from her daughter now. That's bad. I have to thank Vera's jealousy of Lady Mary for *that* blessing.

Is there anything that a woman will stick at in order to hurt a rival? I remember she first fell in love with me because I was in love with somebody else. There is nothing so paradoxical as a woman's mind; it is very difficult to persuade a woman of anything—they have to be worked up to persuade themselves. The process of reasoning by which they get rid of their prejudices is very original. To master their dialectic you must invert all the rules of logic you were taught in the schools. For example:

Usual Style.—This man loves me; *but* I am a married woman, therefore I must not love him.

Feminine Style.—I must not love him, because I am a married woman; *but* he loves me, therefore . . . A few dots, because at this point the reasoning stops, and leaves it to dots to say the rest; and they can express most things. They represent the language of the eyes—and of the heart, in cases where this organ exists.

Suppose these jottings ever fall under a woman's eyes, "What slanders!" she will exclaim, and be very indignant. Ever since poets have written and women have been their readers (for which the deepest gratitude is owing to the women), they have so often been called angels that in their simplicity of heart they have

believed the compliment in earnest, forgetting that poets were willing to make a demigod of Nero if they were paid for it.

It may seem inappropriate that I should speak of them with such bitterness, I who have no one but them in the world to love me, I who am always ready to sacrifice peace, ambition, life itself for their sake. Yet it is not merely a passing fit of low spirits and slighted self-esteem that prompts the effort to strip them of that magic veil which even a practised eye finds it wellnigh impossible to penetrate. No, all that I say of them is the lore which

> "The mind's cold observations ascertain
> And the heart studies in the schools of pain."

Women ought to like that men should know them as thoroughly as I do, because I love them a hundred times more since I have given up being afraid of them and understood their little weaknesses.

By the way, it was only the other day that Werner was comparing women with the enchanted forest which Tasso describes in his "Jerusalem Delivered": "Take but one step into it, and—Lord help us! The terrors that fly round your head from every side—duty, pride, decorum, public opinion, ridicule, contempt. You must shut your eyes and go forward without flinching. Then these monsters

will gradually disappear, and a bright peaceful pleasance unfold before you, with green myrtles blooming upon it. So it is only a poor creature whose heart quakes at the first steps, and he turns back."

June 24.

This evening has been rich in events.

A couple of miles from Kieslovodsk, in the valley where the Podkoumok runs, there are some rocks called The Ring; it is a natural archway, standing on the top of a high hill. The setting sun throws his last fiery glances on the world through the orifice. A numerous riding party set out to look at a sunset through the rocky casement; nobody, if the truth were told, gave a single thought to the sun. I rode beside Lady Mary. As we were returning home, we had to ford the Podkoumok.

These mountain streams, even the small ones, are peculiarly dangerous because the bottoms are as shifting as a kaleidoscope. They change every day under the action and force of the water—where there was a boulder yesterday there will be a hole to-day. So I took her horse by the bridle and led it into the water, which was not above the knee; and we proceeded to advance gently, aslant to the current. It is well known that in crossing a rapid stream one ought not to look at the water, because it

turns the head giddy in a moment. I forgot to warn Lady Mary of this. Just when we got to midstream, where the current was swiftest, she suddenly collapsed on the saddle, and said in a failing voice, "I feel ill." Instantly I leaned over to her, and put my arm round her waist.

"Look upwards!" I whispered. "It is nothing; only don't be afraid. I am with you."

She recovered herself, and tried to get free from my arm; but I clasped her delicate, slender figure all the tighter. My cheek was all but touching her cheek, which was flaming.

"What are you doing to me? Oh, my God!" she exclaimed.

I paid no heed to her agitation and terror; my lips touched her tender cheek. She shuddered, but said nothing. We were riding last of the party, and nobody saw. When we reached the bank, everybody trotted on. She held in her horse, and I stayed with her. My silence evidently disquieted her, but I vowed I would not utter a word—from curiosity. I wanted to see how she would get out of an embarrassing situation.

At last, and there were tears in her voice, she said, "Either you despise me, or you love me very much! Surely you cannot mean to amuse yourself at my expense, to make havoc

of my soul, then leave me. That would be so mean, so low, that the mere idea of it—oh no! Tell me!" she continued, in tones of the tenderest trustfulness—"tell me, you do not see anything about me which excludes respect? You have behaved with a freedom that I *must* forgive you; I *must*, because I allowed it. Answer! Speak to me! I want to hear your voice!"

There was so much feminine impatience in her last words that I smiled involuntarily; luckily, it was beginning to get dark.

I made no answer.

"You are silent," she continued. "Perhaps you want me to tell you first that I love you."

I held my tongue.

She went on, "Is that what you want?" turning sharply to me as she said the words.

There was something terrible in the resoluteness of her eye and her voice.

I answered "Why?" and shrugged my shoulders.

She gave her horse a cut with the whip, and went off at full speed along the narrow and dangerous road, so suddenly that I only managed to overtake her when she had joined the rest of the party. All the way home she talked and laughed incessantly. There was something febrile in her gestures and movements.

She never once looked at me. Everybody took note of her extraordinary high spirits.

The Princess cast a glance at her daughter, and was inwardly delighted; but the fact is simply that her daughter has an attack of hysterics: she will pass a sleepless night and she will weep.

The thought of it yields me an inexplicable satisfaction; there are moments when I understand the feelings of a vampire. And yet I pass for a good enough sort of fellow, and take some pains to get that name!

The ladies went in with the Princess on dismounting. I was so restless that I went for a gallop in the hills to clear my thoughts, which were whirling in my head. It was a rosy-coloured evening that breathed an exquisite freshness. The moon was rising behind the dusky peaks. The silence of the valley echoed back every thud of my horse's unshod hoofs. I watered him at the falls, and myself breathed in two great draughts of the delicious southern night before starting on my homeward journey. I rode through the suburb. The lights in the windows were beginning to be extinguished; the sentinels on the fortress rampart and the Cossacks in the surrounding outposts were shouting their long drawling challenges to each other.

In one of the houses of the suburb, built

on the edge of the ravine, I was struck by an unusually bright illumination. From the same place at intervals came a loud, confused sound of voices; the noise and the clamour made it plain that this was a military merry-making. I dismounted, and quietly approached the window. An imperfectly fitting shutter afforded me a view of the revellers and a hearing of their conversation. They were talking about me.

The Captain of Dragoons, inflamed with liquor, rapped with his fist on the table to gain the attention of the company, and then said, "Gentlemen, what about it? Pechorin must be put in his place! These St. Petersburg swells always think a lot of themselves till you give them one on the nose. He fancies he's the only person who ever knew anything about high life because he always carries a clean pair of gloves and wears polished boots."

"And how about that conceited smile? Well, I don't care; I believe he's a coward, all the same—yes, a coward!"

"I think so too," said Groushnitzky. "He likes to get out of a hole by passing it off as a joke. I've often said things to him which would make another man cut me in pieces, there and then; but Pechorin always turned it off on the ludicrous side. Of course, I have never actually called him out, because that

was his affair; and he never cared to commit himself."

"Groushnitzky has got an old score against him, because he cut him out with the Princess's daughter," said somebody.

"What nonsense! Why, it's quite true I was more or less on terms of acquaintance with her; but I gave it up almost at once, because I have no notion of marrying, and it does not suit my principles to compromise a girl."

The Captain of Dragoons spoke again. "Yes, I believe he is an arrant coward—I mean Pechorin, not Groushnitzky. Groushnitzky is a fine fellow, and a particular friend of mine."

"Gentlemen, is there nobody here to stick up for him? Nobody? Capital! All the better. All right! What do you say to a trial of his courage? You'll get great sport out of it."

"All right; but how's it to be managed?"

"Now, just listen. Groushnitzky has a particular grudge against him, so the chief part belongs to Groushnitzky. He shall pick a quarrel about any trifle, and call Pechorin out. Stop a bit; this is where the game begins. He calls Pechorin out. Good! All that business of the challenge, the arrangements, the conditions, to be as solemn and terrifying as

possible. I'll take care of that part. I'll be your second, my boy. Good! Now for the kink. We'll load the pistols with blank. Oh, I promise you, we shall have Pechorin showing the white feather. I'll place them at six paces, deuce take me, but I will! Agreed, gentlemen?"

"Splendid idea! Agreed, agreed! why not?" was the volley of exclamations all round the table.

"Well, Groushnitzky, what do you say to it?"

I was awaiting his answer anxiously. A cold fury possessed me at the thought that but for this accident I might have been made a laughing-stock for these fools. If Groushnitzky had refused to agree, I would have thrown myself on his neck! But after a considerable silence he rose in his place, reached out his hand to the Captain, and said very gravely, "Done; I agree."

It would be difficult to describe the transports of enthusiasm into which the honourable company let themselves go.

I turned home shaken by conflicting emotions. The first was regret. Why do they all hate me so? Why? Have I injured any one? No. Or am I one of those people the mere sight of whom is enough to arouse dislike? Then I felt a venomous rage gradually inundate my heart.

"Take care, Master Groushnitzky!" I said to myself, as I paced to and fro in my room. "I am not a man to play these tricks upon. You may have to pay dear for the applauses of your foolish companions. I am not your plaything."

The whole night I did not sleep, and I got up in the morning as yellow as an orange.

Next day I met Lady Mary at the Well. She scanned me closely, and said, "You are ill." I answered that I had not slept.

"No more have I. And I blamed you—wrongly, perhaps? But explain yourself, and I can forgive you all."

"All?"

"All. Only tell me the truth, and be quick. You see, I have been thinking a great deal, trying to explain or justify your behaviour. Perhaps you are afraid of opposition on the part of my family. There is no need. When they know"—her voice shook—"I shall get their consent—or your own position; but you know I can sacrifice anything to a man I love. Oh, answer me quick! Be merciful! You do not despise me? Say that you do not despise me!"

She clasped me by the arm.

The Princess walked past us with Vera's husband; she saw nothing. But any of the promenading invalids could see us, and they

are the most inquisitive of all inquisitive gossips. I made haste to release my arm from her passionate grasp, and replied, "I will tell you the whole truth. I shall not justify or explain my behaviour. I do not love you."

Her lips paled a little. In a hardly audible voice she said, "Leave me." And with a shrug of the shoulders I turned away and went.

June 25.

There are times when I despise myself. Is this why I despise others as well? I have become incapable of an honourable impulse; I am so afraid of being ridiculous in my own eyes. Another man in my place would have proffered Lady Mary *son cœur et sa fortune*. But I should have to speak the word *marry*, and it is a word which has a kind of magical effect upon me. However passionately I may be in love with a woman, she has only to make me feel that I ought to marry her, and good-bye to love! My heart turns to stone, and nothing can warm it again. I am ready for any sacrifice short of that. I will stake my life, my honour even, twenty times over; but I will never give up my liberty. Yet why do I prize my liberty so highly? What good is it to me? What have I to look to? What have I to expect of the future? Nothing, just

nothing, if the truth be told. This is a kind of instinctive dread of mine, an inexplicable foreboding. There are people who have an unaccountable horror of spiders, or cockroaches, or mice. Mine is like theirs. Shall I confess? When I was quite a child, an old woman told my fortune to my mother: she prophesied that a wicked woman should be my death! It impressed me deeply at the time, and I conceived an invincible hostility to the whole female sex. All the same, something warns me that her prediction will come true; anyhow, I shall do my best to put it off as long as possible.

Yesterday there arrived a conjurer called Apfelbaum. Upon the doors of the restaurant was to be seen a long advertisement setting forth to the most honourable public that the most celebrated and astonishing conjurer, acrobat, chemist, and optician would have the honour to give a magnificent performance this day, at eight o'clock in the evening, in the great hall of the principal assembly rooms (*alias* the eating-house). Tickets, two and a half roubles each.

There was a great gathering to go and see the astonishing juggler. Even Princess Ligovsky took a ticket for herself, notwithstanding her daughter's indisposition.

I walked past Vera's window to-day after

dinner; she was sitting alone on the balcony. A note dropped at my feet: *Come to me this evening at ten by the main staircase. My husband is gone to Piatigorsk, and only comes back to-morrow morning. My servants will be out of the house; I have given tickets to all of them as well as to Princess Ligovsky's people. I expect you. Come without fail.*"

"Aha!" thought I, "at last things are turning out as I said."

At eight o'clock I went to see the conjurer; it was getting on for nine before the public was collected and the performance began. I noticed Vera's men-servants and lady's-maid and those of the Princess sitting in the back seat; every one of them was there. Groushnitzky was sitting in the front row, with an eyeglass. The conjurer addressed himself to him every time he wanted to borrow a pocket-handkerchief, a watch, a ring, or the like.

Groushnitzky had taken no notice of me for some time, but he now stared at me in rather an insolent manner. It shall all go down in the reckoning against the day when we settle our accounts.

About ten o'clock I rose and went out.

It was dark out of doors, but not pitch dark. One could discern the heavy chill clouds which lay on the neighbouring mountain peaks. A breath of wind, scarcely alive, rustled in the

tops of the poplars round the restaurant ; there was a crowd of people packed outside at the window. I descended the hill, turned in at the gate, and quickened my pace. Suddenly I fancied I heard somebody walking behind me. I stopped and looked. In the darkness I could not discover any one ; but, by way of precaution, I went round the house as if I were taking a stroll. As I passed Lady Mary's window I heard steps behind me again, and a man enveloped in a *chineille* rushed past me. I was alarmed by this, but I crept to the *perron*, and sprang up the dark staircase as fast as I could. A door opened, and a little hand seized my arm. " Nobody saw you ? " said Vera in a whisper, as she clung to me.

" Nobody."

" Now do you believe that I love you ? Oh, I hesitated so long and worried myself so long, but you do what you like with me always."

Her heart was beating furiously ; her hands were cold as ice. Next began the chapter of jealous reproaches and lamentations : she demanded a full confession from me, declaring that she bore my disloyalty with submission because she cared for nothing but my happiness. I did not altogether believe this, but I soothed her with vows and promises, etc.

" So you are not marrying Mary ? Are you not in love with her ? Why, she thinks—you

must know it; she's madly in love with you, poor girl!"

* * * * *

It was about two o'clock in the morning when I opened the window and, making a cord of two shawls tied together, let myself down from the upper to the lower balcony, using a pillar to steady myself by. There was a fire still burning in Lady Mary's room. Something drew me towards her window. The shutter was not entirely closed, and through the chink I was able to cast a curious eye round the interior of the room. Mary was sitting on her bed with her hands crossed upon her knees. The gorgeous abundance of her hair was gathered up into a nightcap trimmed with lace; a big scarlet kerchief covered her white shoulders, and her pretty feet were ensconced in a pair of striped Persian slippers. She was sitting motionless, her head drooped on her breast; a book lay open on the table in front of her, but it seemed as if her fixed, inexpressibly sorrowful eyes travelled again and again over the same page a hundred times while her thoughts were far away.

At that moment something stirred in a bush. I jumped down from the balcony to the grass. An unseen hand clutched me by the shoulder. I heard a rough voice say, "Aha! Caught! I'll teach you to go visiting fine ladies at night!"

And a second voice called out, "Hold on to him fast!"

And a second figure bounded out of a corner. The pair were Groushnitzky and the Captain of Dragoons.

I gave the Captain one on his head with my fist which knocked him over, and then I darted into the bushes. I knew all the paths of the shrubbery which covered the slope in front of our houses.

I heard them shouting, "Thieves! Stop thief! Hi, guard!" and a rifle was fired: the smoking wad fell almost at my feet. But in a couple of minutes I was already in my own room. I undressed and lay down. My servant had hardly bolted the door again when Groushnitzky and the Captain began knocking for me. "Pechorin! Are you asleep? Are you there?" called the Captain.

"I'm asleep!" I answered angrily.

"Get up! Thieves! Circassians!"

"I have a cold," I answered, "and I'm afraid of making it worse."

They departed. It was no use my answering the invitation; they would have tried some foul practice, there and then, in the garden. Meanwhile the commotion was frightful. A Cossack came galloping from the fort; everything was in an uproar; they began looking for a Circassian behind every bush, and nat-

urally found none. Probably, though, many people remained firmly convinced that if only the garrison had shown more spirit and alacrity, at least a couple of dozen murderous robbers would have been left dead on the place.

June 27.

At the Well this morning all the talk was about the nocturnal raid of Circassians. After drinking the prescribed number of glasses of Narzan, I walked ten times up and down the long lime walk, and there met Vera's husband, just arrived from Piatigorsk. He took my arm, and we went off to breakfast at the restaurant. He was very uneasy about his wife. "She had this terrible fright last night. Most unlucky its happening just when I was away." We sat down to breakfast close by the door which leads into the corner room, where half a score of young men were collected—Groushnitzky among their number.

And now for the second time Fate gave me the opportunity of overhearing a conversation which was to decide his doom. He did not see me, and consequently I could not suspect him of deliberate intention; but that only aggravated his guilt in my eyes.

Somebody said, "Do you believe they really were Circassians? Did any one see them?"

Groushnitzky answered, "I will tell you the whole truth, only I beg you not to betray me. This is what happened. A certain person, who shall be nameless, came to me yesterday and told me that he had seen somebody creeping up to the Ligovskys' house at ten o'clock in the evening. I must explain to you that the Princess was here at the entertainment, and Lady Mary was at home. Well, I went off with my informant to watch and discover who this favoured person might be."

I confess to feeling some tremors; though my companion was deeply occupied in his breakfast, he might overhear some very unpleasant things if Groushnitzky had by any chance guessed the truth. But Groushnitzky was too much blinded by jealousy to suspect the truth. He continued his story.

"Well, you see, we took a rifle with us and went off. It was loaded with blank cartridge, just to give the alarm. We waited in the garden till two in the morning. At last—God knows where he came from, but it was not out of window, because the window was not open; he must have come out by the glazed door, behind the pillar—anyhow, at last, I tell you we saw a figure emerge on the balcony. . . . Queer sort of young lady, eh? Well, I tell you frankly, you never know, with these Moscow ladies! Who's one to believe in now,

after this? . . . Well, we wanted to catch him, but he broke away and slipped into covert as quick as a hare. Then I fired a shot after him."

Clamours of incredulity surrounded Groushnitzky.

"You don't believe me?" he continued. "I give you my solemn word of honour that every word I'm saying is true, and to prove it, if you like, I will give you the gentleman's name."

This offer was hailed with cries of "Out with it!" "Tell us!" "Who was it?" from every side.

"Pechorin," answered Groushnitzky.

He raised his eyes at that moment, and saw me standing in the doorway confronting him. He blushed extremely red. I walked up to him, and said slowly and distinctly,—

"I very much regret that I only came in after you had given your word of honour in support of a most foul slander. My presence would have saved you from a gratuitous degradation."

Groushnitzky jumped up from where he sat, and was on the verge of an outburst.

"I request you," I continued, without changing my tone—"I request you immediately to withdraw your words. You are perfectly well aware that they are a lie. I do not

think that a lady's indifference to your brilliant merits justifies such outrageous reprisals on your part. I advise you to reflect twice; by maintaining your assertion you will forfeit your right to the name of a gentleman, and you will risk your life."

Groushnitzky stood in front of me, looking down, in a state of violent emotion. But the struggle between conscience and pride was not long sustained. The Captain of Dragoons, who was sitting beside him, pulled him by the sleeve. He trembled, and without raising his eyes answered me, speaking hurriedly.

"Sir, when I say a thing I mean it, and am prepared to repeat it. I am not afraid of your threats, and I am a man to stop at nothing."

I replied coldly, "That much you have already shown," and, taking the Captain by the arm, I left the room.

"What do you want with me?" he asked.

"You are Groushnitzky's friend, and probably you will be his second?"

The Captain bowed very gravely and replied, "You have guessed that I was bound to act as his second, because the affront which you have offered him touches me also. I was with him last night."

And as he said this he drew up his stooping figure erect.

"Ah! So it was you who got such an ugly

rap on the head?" He turned yellow and gray at this stroke; all the suppressed hatred came out in his face. I bowed most politely, and pretending not to take any notice of his rage, added, "I shall have the honour to send my second to you to-day."

As I went out I met Vera's husband on the steps of the restaurant. Apparently he was waiting for me. He seized my hand with a warmth of feeling that resembled enthusiasm.

"You are a gentleman, sir. I applaud your spirit!" There were tears in his eyes as he spoke. "I heard everything. What a scoundrel! And so ungrateful! There's a fellow to allow inside a respectable house! Thank God, I have no daughters! But the lady you risk your life for will reward you. You may have confidence in my discretion, absolutely and always," he added. "I was a young man once myself, and served in the army. I know one must not interfere in a case of this kind. Good-bye!"

Poor fellow! congratulating himself that he has no daughters! I went straight to Werner, and found him at home. I told him everything—my relations with Vera and Lady Mary, and the conversation I had overheard, and thereby discovered that these gentlemen designed to make a fool of me by giving me a blank charge to fire with. The thing had got

beyond a joke, though, now; probably they did not expect such a development.

The Doctor consented to act as my second. I gave him some instructions regarding the conditions of the encounter. He was to insist upon the utmost secrecy, because, though I might be quite prepared to take the risk of being killed, I was not at all disposed to compromise my whole future in this world. This done I went home. The Doctor returned an hour later from his errand, and made his report.

"Just as you said: there is a conspiracy against you. I found the Captain with Groushnitzky, and also another man whose family name I don't recollect. I waited for a moment in the hall to take off my goloshes. There was a great row and dispute going on. Groushnitzky said, 'I will never consent! He has insulted me in public. It was quite another matter then.' And the Captain answered, 'What have you got to do with it? I have been a second in five duels, and I know how to arrange the thing. I've thought it all out—you'll please be good enough not to disturb me. Bluffing is all very well, but why expose yourself to danger when you might avoid it?' At this point I entered the room, and they all suddenly stopped talking. We had a pretty long discussion, and finally we decided the conditions as follows:—

There is a deep ravine about four miles from here; they will ride out to the place at four o'clock to-morrow morning, and we shall follow half an hour later. You are to exchange shots at six paces distance—that was Groushnitzky's own demand. If anybody is killed, put it down to the Circassians. Now I'll tell you my suspicion. They must—I mean the seconds—must have changed their plans a bit: they now mean to load only Groushnitzky's pistol with ball. Rather like murder, no doubt, but still in time of war, and especially war in Asia, tricks are allowed. Only Groushnitzky, it seems, has rather more sense of honour than his companions. What do you say? Shall we show them that we have guessed?"

"Not for worlds, Doctor. Rest easy; I don't intend to be made a victim of foul play."

"What do you mean to do?"

"That is my secret."

"Look out what you're about, my friend; mind they're not too many for you. Six paces are six paces, you know."

"Doctor, I expect you at four to-morrow morning; the horses shall be in readiness. Good-bye."

* * * * *

I spent the evening at home, locked into my bedroom. A servant came with an invitation

to go to the Princess's. I sent back word that I was indisposed.

* * * * *

Two o'clock, and I cannot sleep. I ought to have a nap, though, or my hand will be shaky to-morrow. But one can't well miss at six paces. Ah, Master Groushnitzky, your little hocus-pocus game will not come off. The parts will be exchanged. This time it will be for me to discover the marks of suppressed fear in your white face. Why must you needs prescribe those fatal six paces? You imagine I shall present my forehead to you without an effort. . . . But we are going to draw lots . . . and then . . . and then, what if the luck should favour him? What if my star should betray me at last? . . . And it very well may; it has served my caprices faithfully for so long. Well, death is just death. The loss to the world is not very great, and for my part I am pretty tired of life. I am like a man yawning at a ball, who does not go to bed simply for the reason that his carriage is not there yet. The moment the carriage is ready — good-bye!

I run all through my past life, and I cannot help asking myself the question, "Why have I lived? For what end was I born?" A purpose really existed, and I really had a high destiny appointed for me. I know it, because

I feel an immense force latent in my soul. But I failed to hit the clue of that destiny; I let myself be carried away by the lure of idle and thankless passions. I came out of that furnace hard and cold as iron, but I forfeited for ever the fiery impetus of noble endeavour which is the fine flower of life. Since when, how many times have I served as an axe in the hands of Fate! I have fallen like the executioner's weapon on the head of devoted victims, often without feeling any active ill-will, but always without compassion. . . . My love never brought happiness to any one, because I never sacrificed anything to those I loved. I loved for myself, for my own particular gratification: I was merely obeying a strange craving of the heart. I greedily swallowed their feelings, their tenderness, their joy or suffering, and I never could sate myself. I was like a starving man who falls into a trance from weakness, and sees sumptuous dainties and foaming wine-cups before him: he devours the unsubstantial bounties of imagination with rapturous appetite, and feels relief; but no sooner awake, the illusion forsakes him, and leaves him to redoubled hunger and despair.

And now, perhaps, I am going to die tomorrow! And I shall not leave behind me on earth a single creature which could thor-

oughly understand me. Some will judge me too hardly, others will be too lenient; no one will discern the real *me*. Some will say, "He was a good enough sort of fellow," and others will cry out upon me for a scoundrel. Both will be wrong. . . .

After that, is life worth the trouble of living? Why, your motive for living is always curiosity. You expect some new thing. . . . How ludicrous and how sad!

* * * * *

This makes six weeks that I have been at Fort N.

Maxim Maximich is gone out hunting, and I am left alone. I sit at the window: the mountains are veiled to their foot in gray vapour; the sun shows like a yellow blot through the fog. It is cold; the wind whistles and rattles the shutters. I am weary of everything. I think I will continue my Diary where it was interrupted by such strange events.

I have read over that last page I wrote. How ridiculous it is! I thought I was going to die; that was out of the question. I had not yet drained my cup of anguish, and now I feel I shall live long yet.

How clear and distinct everything that passed is engraved on my memory! Time has not obliterated a single outline, not a single *nuance*.

I remember that during the whole of that night, the eve of the duel, I never slept a wink. I could not go on writing for long; an intimate restlessness overmastered me. For some time I paced my room; then I sat down and opened a romance of Walter Scott's which lay on the table. It was "The Scottish Puritans." At first I read with effort, but presently I forgot myself under the enchantment of the Wizard's imagination. . . .

At last it began to be light. My nerves were now quite calm. I looked in the mirror: a dull pallor covered my face, which preserved the marks of a tormented vigil; but the eyes, though surrounded by a dark circle, had a proud and implacable glitter in them. I was well content with the results of my self-inspection.

After giving the order to saddle the horses, I dressed and hurried to the Bathhouse. After a plunge in the cold cauldron of Narzan I felt my bodily and mental forces come back to me, and I left the bath as fresh and sound as if I had been starting for a ball. After that you may tell me, if you like, that the mind is not dependent upon the body! . . .

On my return I found the Doctor arrived. He had on a pair of gray riding breeches, an *arkhaluk* coat, and a Circassian sabre. I burst out laughing at the sight of his diminutive

figure overshadowed by an enormous shaggy felt hat. He never had at all a martial cast of countenance, but on this occasion it seemed less so than ever.

"Why are you so downcast, Doctor?" I said to him. "Haven't you ushered people out of this world a hundred times before with the greatest equanimity? Imagine me to be suffering from a bilious fever. I may recover, and I may die; either issue is in the order of things. Try to consider me as a patient seized with an illness which is unknown to your experience, and your curiosity will be roused to the highest pitch. You may now be able to make some important physiological observations in my case. Is not the anticipation of a violent death a morbid state deserving to be classed as an actual disease?"

This idea struck the Doctor, and he cheered up.

We mounted. Werner grasped his reins tightly in both hands, and we set off. In a few moments we had galloped past the fort, through the suburb, and were cantering up the valley, through which the road wound, half overgrown with tall grass, and intersected every other moment by noisy streams which had to be forded, to the Doctor's no small despair, because his horse jibbed in the water every time.

Such an azure, delicate morning it was as I

never remember to have seen! The sun was hardly showing above the green hilltops, and the first warmth of his beams, fusing with the relics of the night chilliness, struck every sense with a sort of delicious languor. The gay beams of the youthful day had not yet penetrated into the gorge, but only gilded the summits of the crags which hung above our road on either hand. The thick foliage of the bushes which grew in the deep clefts of the rock, stirred by a breath of wind, sprinkled us with silvery showers. I remember loving Nature more on that occasion than ever I had done before. I looked with eyes of affectionate curiosity into every dewdrop that quivered on a broad vine leaf, ejaculating a million rays of joyful light. And how eagerly my gaze strained to penetrate the hazy distance! The path narrowed and narrowed; the thick blue shadow on the rocks grew more and more menacing, till at last they seemed to meet in an impassable barrier. We rode in silence. Suddenly Werner asked me,—

"Have you made your will?"

"No."

"And if you are killed?"

"My heirs must shift for themselves."

"Have you no friends that you would care to have any farewell message sent to?"

I shook my head.

"No woman on earth to whom you would like to leave any keepsake?"

For an answer I said to him, "Doctor, would you like me to expose my innermost heart to you? . . . Do you see, I have outlived the age at which people die with the name of the beloved on their lips, and bequeath a lock of pomaded or unpomaded hair to their friends. When I think of death near or possible, I think only of myself. Nobody else matters a snap of my fingers to me. Friends who will forget me to-morrow, or, worse, circulate God knows what cock-and-bull stories about me; and women who will joke about me while they put their arms round another man, for fear he might be jealous of the dead—they are all nothing to me. I have rescued only a few ideas and no sentiments from the tempest of life; for a long while I have lived by the head and not by the heart. I weigh and analyze my own passions and actions with a stern curiosity, but without partiality. There are two men in me; one of them *lives* in the full sense of the word, and the other reflects and judges him. The first will possibly be taking his leave of you and the world in an hour's time from now; but the second—eh, the second? . . . Hullo! Look there, Doctor, on that rock to the left don't you see three figures? I expect that's our antagonists—what d'you think?"

We mended our pace.

At the foot of a rock we found three horses tied up among the bushes. We fastened ours in the same place, and proceeded to make our way by a narrow path to the ground where Groushnitzky was awaiting us. He had with him the Captain of Dragoons and his other second, whom they addressed as Ivan Ignatievich, but I never heard his family name.

"We have been waiting for you a long time," remarked the Captain, with an ironical smile.

I pulled out my watch and showed it to him; whereupon he excused himself by saying that his was fast.

A few minutes passed in embarrassing silence, which was at last broken by the Doctor turning to Groushnitzky and saying,—

"Gentlemen, I believe that since both parties have proved themselves ready to fight, and have thereby discharged their obligations to the code of honour, it would now be possible for you to come to a mutual explanation, and terminate this affair amicably."

I said, "I am agreeable."

The Captain winked at Groushnitzky, and he, supposing that I was going to show the white feather, put on a lofty expression which contrasted oddly with the dull pallor that overspread his cheeks at the same time. He raised his eyes and looked at me for the first time

since we arrived; there was a kind of uneasiness in his look which betrayed an inward struggle.

"Explain your conditions," he said, "and you may be sure that anything that I can do for you . . ."

"My conditions are these: That you shall this day publicly withdraw your slander and beg my pardon."

"I am surprised, sir, that you should have the audacity to propose any such thing to me."

"What other proposals could I make but these?"

"We must shoot."

I shrugged my shoulders. He added,—

"Excuse my reminding you that one of us will certainly be killed."

"I wish it may be you."

"And I am confident, on the contrary . . ." He became confused, blushed, and then laughed a forced laugh.

The Captain took him by the arm and drew him aside, and for a long time they whispered together. My disposition had been fairly pacific when I reached the ground; but all this began to irritate me. The Doctor came up to me and said with evident uneasiness,—

"You surely have not forgotten their plot? . . . I don't know how to load a pistol, but in case . . . You are an extraordinary fellow!

Tell them that you are aware of their intentions, and they will not dare . . . What's the fun of letting them pot you like a sitting bird ? "

" Excuse me, Doctor, don't disturb yourself ; just wait a bit. . . . I shall arrange everything in such a way as to leave no escape on their side. They are welcome to their little whisperings." I raised my voice and said aloud, " Gentlemen, this is getting wearisome. Fighting is fighting ; you had time enough to talk it over yesterday."

The Captain answered, " We are ready. Gentlemen, take your places. Doctor, will you be so good as to measure six paces ? "

Ivan Ignatievich repeated in a squeaky voice, " Take your places."

" Allow me," I said. " I have to request one further condition. As we are to fight *à la mort*, we are bound to take every possible precaution to preserve secrecy and to save our seconds from responsibility. Do you agree ? "

" Quite agreed."

" Very well. My notion is this. Do you see that precipitous cliff there to the left, with a narrow, level space on the top ? There must be a clean drop from there of a couple of hundred feet, if not more, and there are sharp rocks below. I propose that each of us shall stand on the very brink of the ledge ; in this way even a slight wound will be mortal. This

must be agreeable to your wish, as it was you who fixed upon six paces. The man who is wounded will inevitably go flying down and be knocked to smithereens; the Doctor will extract the bullet, and then there will be no difficulty whatever in explaining this unexpected death as the result of an unfortunate false step. We will spin a coin who is to fire first. In conclusion, I declare that I will not fight on any other conditions."

"Just as you please," said the Captain, with a significant look at Groushnitzky, who nodded his head in token of assent.

His face kept changing every moment. I had put him into an awkward situation. If we had fired under ordinary conditions, he might have aimed at my leg, wounded me slightly, and by this means satisfied his revenge without putting too heavy a strain on his conscience. Now he must either fire into the air, or play the murderer, or finally abandon the whole plot, and expose himself to the very same risk as I. I would not have given much to be in his shoes at that moment.

He drew the Captain aside, and began talking to him with great vehemence. I could see that his lips were blue and quivering. But the Captain turned away from him with a smile of contempt. He said to Groushnitzky aloud,—

"You're a fool, man! You don't under-

stand at all! Now then, gentlemen, if you please!"

A narrow path led through the bushes up the steep side of the mountain; broken boulders formed the precarious steps in a natural stair. We proceeded to clamber up by the help of the bushes for handhold. Groushnitzky went first, followed by his seconds; the Doctor and I last.

"I am amazed at you," said the Doctor, grasping me cordially by the hand. "Let me feel your pulse. . . . Ah! . . . A little feverish . . . but no symptoms of it in your face . . . only the eyes, perhaps, a little brighter than normal."

Suddenly a cataract of small stones came thundering down at our feet. "What's up?" we thought. It was Groushnitzky, who had stumbled. The branch to which he had entrusted his weight had given way, and he would have tumbled backwards if his seconds had not caught him.

I called to him, "Take care! Don't begin with a tumble! It's a bad omen—remember Julius Cæsar!"

We gained the summit of the projecting bluff. The floor of the top was covered with fine sand—it might have been artificially prepared for a duelling-ground. We had a view all round upon blue mountain tops half vanish-

ing away in the golden haze of the morning; they looked like an innumerable herd of animals. Elbruz rose in a white mass to the south, crowning a long chain of icy peaks over which little threads and wisps of cloud were already beginning to stray in a westerly direction.

I walked to the edge and looked down. The sight all but turned me dizzy. Down below it looked as dark and cold as the tomb, and there were mossy jags of rock, knocked off the mass of the mountain by storms or by stress of time, lying in wait for their prey.

The ledge upon which we were to meet formed an almost regular triangle. Six paces were measured from the projecting angle, and it was decided that the man whose lot it should be to face his enemy's fire first should stand at the extreme angle, with his back to the precipice; in the event of his not being killed, the antagonists were to change places.

I resolved to give Groushnitzky every chance. I wished to satisfy him; there might be a spark of generosity dormant in his heart; and, if so, everything might be arranged for the best. However, the vanity and weakness of his character were destined to prevail.

I wished also to give myself the absolute right to show him no mercy in the event of Fate favouring me. . . . Who has not tried to square his conscience on similar terms?

"Now, then, toss, Doctor," said the Captain.

The Doctor pulled a silver coin out of his pocket and tossed it up in the air.

"Heads!" shouted Groushnitzky hastily, like a man suddenly aroused from a day dream by a friendly jog at his elbow.

I said, "Tails!"

The coin span and fell, jingling. Every one made a dash for it.

"You have the luck," I said to Groushnitzky. "You fire first. Let me remind you that if you do not kill me, I shall not miss—I give you my word of honour."

He turned red. He had scruples about killing an unarmed man. I looked hard and steadfastly at him. For a moment it seemed as if he were going to throw himself at my feet and plead for forgiveness. But how could he confess the foul practice to which he had lent himself? He had one resource left him—to fire into the air. I was convinced that he would fire into the air; there was only one thing that could prevent him—the fear that I should demand a second meeting.

"Time's up," the Doctor whispered to me, plucking me by the sleeve. "If you don't speak up and say that you know their game, it's all over. Look! He's loading now. . . . If you won't speak, I myself——"

"Not for the world, Doctor," I answered,

holding him fast by the arm. "You will spoil everything. You have given me your word not to interfere. What business is it of yours? For all you know, I may wish to be killed."

He stared at me in amazement. "Oh, that's another matter. Only don't put the blame on me when you get to the other world."

Meanwhile the Captain loaded his pistols, gave one to Groushnitzky (whispering something to him with a smile as he did so) and the other to me.

I placed myself at the angle of the ledge, planting my left foot firmly against a stone, and leaning slightly forwards, so that I might not tumble backwards at a slight wound. Groushnitzky took his station himself opposite to me.

On the signal being given he began to raise his pistol. His knees were shaking. He took aim full at my forehead.

My heart was boiling with an inexplicable fury of anger.

Suddenly he dropped the muzzle of the pistol, turned as white as wax, swerved round to his second, and ejaculated in a deep voice, "I cannot."

"Coward!" was the Captain's answer.

The shot went off. The bullet grazed my knee.

By an involuntary impulse I took a few

hasty steps forward to get farther away from the edge.

"Pity you've missed your shot, old fellow," said the Captain. "Now it's your turn. Get to your place. Come, though, embrace me first; we shall never meet again." They embraced. The Captain could hardly repress himself from laughing. "Don't be afraid," he added, with a knowing look at Groushnitzky. "All the world's a farce. Nature's a doting beldame, Fate's but a jade, and life's a farthing's worth."

After he had declaimed this stuff with mock solemnity, he withdrew to his place at the side. Ivan Ignatievich next embraced Groushnitzky with tears, and finally my antagonist was left alone face to face with me.

I have tried ever since to explain to myself what feelings those were which seethed in my breast. There was vexation for my wounded self-esteem—there was contempt—there was malice—engendered by the thought that this man who was now confronting me so confidently, so coolly, so impudently, had two minutes ago tried to kill me like a dog without exposing himself to any danger; for had the wound in my knee been but a little more serious, I must inevitably have gone headlong down from the rock.

I looked him steadily in the face for several

minutes, endeavouring to detect the least trace of remorse. On the contrary, he looked to me as though he were suppressing a smile.

Then I said to him, "I advise you to commend yourself to God before you die."

"You need have no more anxiety about my soul than your own. I make only one request of you. Fire quickly."

"And you do not withdraw your slander? You refuse to beg my pardon? Think twice what you are about. Has your conscience nothing to say to you?"

At this the Captain exclaimed, "Mr. Pechorin, we are not in the confessional here, allow me to remind you. Let us make haste and be done with this, or we shall have somebody coming up the valley and discovering us."

"Good. Doctor, come here."

The Doctor approached. Poor man, he was whiter than Groushnitzky had been ten minutes before.

Then, after a deliberate pause, I pronounced the following words loudly and distinctly, in the manner of a judge pronouncing sentence of death,—

"Doctor, these gentlemen have forgotten, in their hurry, no doubt, to load my pistol with ball. I beg you to reload it and do it properly."

"Impossible!" exclaimed the Captain.

"Impossible! I loaded both pistols, unless the bullet can have slipped out of yours—that's no fault of mine. But you have no right to reload—no right! It is absolutely against the rules. I will not allow . . ."

"Very well," I said to the Captain, "if that is the case, I shall have the pleasure of exchanging shots with you under the same conditions."

This stopped him short.

Groushnitzky stood there, sullen and confused, his head dropped on his breast. At last he said to the Captain, who wanted to snatch my pistol from the Doctor's hand,—

"Let them alone. You know they're right."

The Captain in vain made all sorts of signs to him. Groushnitzky would not so much as look at him.

Meanwhile the Doctor loaded the pistol and handed it to me. The Captain fumed and sputtered and stamped his foot when he saw it.

"You're a fool, man, a fool, I tell you! A common fool! Trust me. Put yourself entirely into my hands . . . You deserve all you'll get. Well, turn up and die like a common fly!" He turned sharply away, and went aside, muttering, "All the same, it's absolutely contrary to the rules."

I said, "Groushnitzky! Now is your time.

Withdraw your slander, and I will forgive you everything. You have failed in your attempt to make a fool of me, and my self-respect is satisfied. Remember that once upon a time we were friends. . . ."

Suddenly his face kindled and his eyes glittered. "Shoot!" he answered; "I despise myself and I hate you. If you do not kill me, I shall lay wait for you in a corner at night and murder you. There is no room for us both on earth."

I fired.

When the smoke rolled off there was no Groushnitzky to be seen, only a slight column of dust spinning on the verge of the abyss.

Everybody gave a cry like one man. I said to the Doctor, "*Finita la Commedia!*" He made no answer, but turned away in horror. I shrugged my shoulders and made my bow to Groushnitzky's seconds.

As I went down the path, I had a glimpse of Groushnitzky's mangled corpse lying among the clefts of the crags; and instinctively I covered my eyes.

Unfastening my horse, I rode homewards at a foot's pace; I had a stone in my heart. The sun looked livid, and its rays gave me no warmth.

Before I reached the native village, I turned off to the right into the valley. The sight of

a human face would have crushed me. I desired to be alone. Letting go the reins on my horse's neck, and letting my own head drop on my breast, I rode for a long while, and came out at last in a place entirely strange to me. I turned my horse about, and began to look for my road home. It was past sunset when I rode into Kieslovodsk, wearied out, and my horse wearied out too.

My servant told me that Werner had been to call, and handed him two notes for me: one was from himself, the other from Vera.

I broke the seals of the former; it was of the following purport:—

"Everything has been arranged as successfully as possible. The mutilated body has been brought in, and the bullet extracted. Every one is convinced that the cause of death was an unfortunate accident. Only the Governor, who probably was aware of your quarrel, shook his head; but he said nothing. There is no evidence against you, and you may sleep quietly—if you can. Good-bye."

It was long before I made up my mind to open the second missive. What could she have to write to me about? A heavy burden of presentiment oppressed my spirit.

Here is the letter: every word of it is indelibly engraved on my memory:—

"I am writing to you in the full conviction

that we shall never see each other again. Some years ago, when we parted before, I had the same thought; but Heaven saw fit to tempt me a second time, and I could not endure the temptation. My weak heart again yielded and obeyed the familiar voice. You will not despise me for that, will you? This letter must be partly a leave-taking and partly a confession. I am compelled to tell you all that has been accumulating in my heart ever since it first loved you. I am not going to reproach you. You have behaved to me as any other man would have behaved. You loved me as your property, as a source of pleasure to yourself—of that alternate succession of pleasure, alarm, and sadness without which life is wearisome and monotonous. I understood *that* from the beginning; but you were unhappy, and I sacrificed myself in the hope that some day or other you would appreciate my sacrifice, some day or other you would understand the deep tenderness which could thus surrender at discretion. This was a long while ago, and since then I have penetrated into every recess of your heart and satisfied myself that that hope was vain. It was a bitter discovery. But my love had grown to be part of my soul; it was only darkened, not quenched.

"Now we are to part for ever. You may be sure, though, that I shall never love another.

My soul has lavished all its treasures on you, all its tears and hopes. After once loving you, it cannot look upon other men without a certain contempt—not because you are better than others, oh no! but there is something peculiar in your nature, something that belongs to you alone, something proud and mysterious. There is an irresistible power in your voice, whatever you may happen to be saying; no one has the secret of so perpetually desiring to be loved as you; no one can make evil so alluring; no one's mere look gives such promise of happiness; no one knows better how to make the most of his advantages; and no one can be so truly unhappy as you, because no one makes such efforts to convince himself of the contrary.

"Now I must explain to you the reason of my hurried departure; you will think it trivial, because it concerns only me.

"My husband came to me this morning, and told me all about your quarrel with Groushnitzky. My face must have betrayed me very badly, because he looked me in the eyes long and fixedly. I nearly fainted at the thought that you were to fight a duel to-day, and that I was the cause. I thought I should go out of my mind. But now that I am able to think calmly, I feel certain that you have come through it alive. It is impossible you should die with-

out me, impossible! Well, my husband paced the room to and fro for a long while; I don't know what he said to me or remember what I answered—for all I know, I may have told him that I loved you! All I remember is that at the end of our interview he insulted me by using an abominable expression, and left the room. I heard him give the orders to get the carriage ready.

"For three hours I have been sitting here at the window and waiting for your return. You *are* alive? You cannot die? The carriage is all but ready. Good-bye, good-bye! I am a lost woman, but what does it matter? If I could only be assured that you would always *think* of me—I don't say *love* me—no, only think of me. Good-bye! They're going. I must close my letter. Tell me, you don't *really* love Mary? You won't marry her? Listen, you *must* make me this sacrifice; I have lost everything in the world for you."

I sprang to the door like a man possessed, jumped on my horse Tcherkess whom they brought me, and went off at full speed along the road to Piatigorsk. I pushed my weary beast mercilessly; snorting and covered with foam he whirled me along the stony road.

The sun was already sunk deep in the black cloud which enshrouded the western range of mountains; it was dusk and dank in the valley.

From the Podkoumok, where he ran bursting his way along his rocky channel, rose a deep monotonous murmur. I galloped on, panting with impatience. The thought of not overtaking her at Piatigorsk smote my heart like a hammer-stroke. One minute—to see her only for one minute, to say farewell, to press her hand! I prayed, cursed, wept, laughed—no, nothing can express my restlessness and despair! Now that there was the possibility of losing her for ever, Vera became dearer than everything in the world to me—dearer than life, honour, and fortune! God knows what extraordinary, what frantic imaginations came into my head. And all the while I pressed on mercilessly, galloping and galloping!

But I began to be aware that my horse's breathing was getting heavier; he stumbled twice on the level.

I was still nearly four miles from Esentouk, a Cossack station, where I could procure a remount. Everything would have been saved if my horse's strength had lasted out another ten minutes. But suddenly on the ascent from a little gully, just where one leaves the mountain and the road makes a sharp corner, he collapsed. I jumped off nimbly, and tried to get him up. I tugged at his bridle in vain. A scarcely audible groaning came through his

clenched teeth, and in a few minutes he expired.

I was left alone on the steppes, and my last hope was lost. I set out to walk, but my knees knocked together. Worn out by the agitations of the day and the sleepless night before, I fell down on the wet grass and began to cry like a child. For a long time I lay there motionless, and wept bitterly, without making any effort to restrain my tears and sobs; I thought my heart would break. All my resolution, all my cold stoicism vanished from me like smoke. My soul was helpless with exhaustion, my reason could say nothing. If any one had seen me at that time he would have turned away from me with scorn and disgust.

When the night dews and the mountain wind had refreshed my burning head, and my thoughts returned to their regular course, I recognized that it was foolish and useless to chase a lost happiness. What was the good? To see her? Why? Was not all over between us? One bitter kiss of farewell could not enrich my recollections, and it could only make the parting harder to bear.

My one comfort was that I could weep. And for that I dare say I had to thank the disorder of my nerves, a sleepless night, two minutes spent *vis à vis* with a pistol muzzle, and an empty stomach.

It was all for the best. This new pain created what the tacticians call a favourable diversion in me. Weeping is not wholesome. And, besides, but for my wild ride, and but for my being compelled to walk the best part of ten miles to get back again, I should probably not have slept a wink that night either.

I got back to Kieslovodsk at five o'clock in the morning, threw myself on my bed, and slept the sleep of Napoleon after Waterloo.

I did not wake till it was already getting dark out-of-doors. Then I sat by the window with my *arkhaluk* unbuttoned, and felt the soothing freshness of the mountain wind on my breast, which was still unassuaged after the heavy slumber of exhaustion.

In the distance, beyond the stream, through the thick lime tops which overshadowed it, lights were twinkling in the fort and the native village. But everything about me was quiet; no lights were to be seen in the Princess's windows.

I had a visit from the Doctor; his brow was wrinkled; and, contrary to his habit, he did not hold out his hand to me.

"Where do you come from, Doctor?"

"Princess Ligovsky. Her daughter is ill—a nervous breakdown. However, that's not the point. This is what I came about: the authorities are beginning to guess; and though

they have no positive evidence against you, I would recommend you a little more prudence. The Princess has told me to-day that she knows you fought a duel for her daughter. That old fellow—what's his name?—told her all about it: he witnessed your quarrel with Groushnitzky at the restaurant. I came to warn you. Good-bye. I dare say we shall not see each other again. They will send you off somewhere."

He stopped in the doorway. He wanted to shake me by the hand, or, if I had betrayed the slightest wish for it, he would have thrown himself on my neck; but I remained stony cold, and he went out.

Just like people! They're all the same sort. They know all the bad sides of a business beforehand. They help you, they advise you, they even approve you, because they see the impossibility of any other means but those you are taking, and then afterwards they wash their hands of it, and turn away from you in disapproval, because you have presumed to take upon yourself the whole burden of responsibility. They're all like that, even the good ones and the sensible ones.

Next day I received orders from the authorities to proceed to Fort N., and accordingly I set out to make my adieux of the Princess. She was astounded when I answered her ques-

tion, " Had I not something very important to say to her ? " by merely assuring her that she had my best wishes for the future, etc.

" But I must have a very serious talk with you," she said.

I sat silent. It was plain that she did not know how to begin. She turned purple in the face, her puffy fingers tapped nervously on the table ; at last she began in a broken voice, " Listen, Monsieur Pechorin ; I believe you are a gentleman ? " I bowed.

" I felt sure of it," she continued, " though your behaviour has been rather questionable ; but you may have reasons which I am not aware of. You have championed my daughter against a slander, you have fought a duel on her account at the risk of your life. You need not answer—I know—you do not confess it, because Groushnitzky was killed." Here she crossed herself. " God have mercy on his soul ! and on you, too, no less ! However, that is no concern of mine. I do not presume to judge you, because my daughter was the cause of it, though in perfect innocence. She has told me everything—I *believe*, everything. You made her a declaration ; she confessed that she loved you." Here the Princess heaved a deep sigh. " Now she is ill, and I am certain it is not an ordinary illness. A secret anguish is killing her ; she does not confess

it, but I am sure that you are the cause of it. Listen: perhaps you think that I am the sort of mother who hunts after rank or enormous wealth. You are mistaken; I wish for nothing but my daughter's happiness. At present your situation is nothing very enviable, but it may mend; you have a competence; my daughter loves you; she has been educated so as to make her husband happy. I am rich, and she is my only child. Tell me, what is the obstacle? You see, I have said all these things to you which I ought not to say, but I rely upon your proper feeling, upon your honour. Remember she is my only child, the only one!"

She began to weep.

"Princess," I answered, "it is impossible for me to give you an answer. I beg you to allow me a private interview with your daughter."

"Never!" she exclaimed, springing up from her chair in violent emotion.

"As you please," I answered, and prepared to take my leave.

She began to be thoughtful; presently she made me a sign with her hand which meant "Wait a minute," and she left the room. Five minutes elapsed. My heart was beating violently, but my mind was calm and my head cold. How I ransacked my heart in the search

for any vestige of love for the charming Mary! But my endeavours were vain.

Then the door opened and she came in. Good God! how altered she was since last I had seen her! Was it such a long time as all that? When she reached the middle of the room, she suddenly staggered. I jumped forward, offered her my arm, and led her to an easy-chair. I remained standing in front of her, and a long silence followed. Her big eyes, full of irrepressible sadness, seemed to probe into mine for anything resembling hope; her pale lips in vain made an effort to form a smile; her dainty hands as they lay on the table looked so thin and transparent that I was sorry for her.

I said, "Lady Mary, do you know that I have made a fool of you? You must despise me."

An unhealthy flush came into her cheeks.

I continued, "Consequently you cannot possibly love me."

She turned away, leaned her elbows on the table, and covered her eyes with her hand; it seemed to me as though tears were starting in them.

"My God!" she ejaculated, in a voice hardly audible.

It began to be unendurable; another minute and I should have fallen at her feet.

"So you see for yourself," I said, with as resolute a voice as I could command, and forcing a little laugh—"you see for yourself that I cannot marry you. Even supposing you wished it now, you would very soon repent. A conversation that I have had with your mother has forced me to come to a frank and perhaps brusque explanation. I am confident she is mistaken, and it is an easy matter for you to undeceive her. I am playing a very mean and miserable part, you see, and I make no attempt to deny it. That is all I can do for you. I humbly submit to any bad opinion you may form of me. Do you see what abasement this is? Do you realize? If you did love me once, can you help despising me at this moment?"

She turned towards me, white as marble, but with a marvellous brilliance in her eyes, and said, "I hate you."

I thanked her, bowed deferentially, and went out.

* * * * *

An hour later an express *troika* was hurrying me away from Kieslovodsk. Within a mile or so of Esentouk I saw the carcass of my poor horse lying by the roadside. The saddle had been removed, probably by some passing Cossack, and in the saddle's place two crows were seated on his back. I sighed and turned away.

And now here, in this tedious fort, when I mentally retrace the past, I often ask myself, why would I not enter upon the road which Fate opened for me, the road by which tranquil joys and peace of mind awaited me? . . . No; I never could have put up with such a lot. I am like a seaman born and bred on the deck of a pirate brig: his soul is grown intimate with storm and fight; cast ashore, he sulks and pines as though the shady grove had no allurements, the peaceful sunshine no brightness for him; he walks alone all day long on the sands of the shore, attunes his ear to the monotonous noise of the breakers, strains his eyes into the hazy distance. What can he see there? Yonder, on the pale horizon, where the blue abyss marches with the gray clouds, a long-desired sail, at first no bigger than a gull's wing, but gradually detaching itself clear from the foam of the waves, driving onward in steady career, and drawing near to a deserted haven. . . .

III.

The Fatalist.

It happened to me once that I had to spend a couple of weeks in a Cossack *stanitza* on the Left Front. There was a battalion of infantry quartered there, and the officers used to meet on friendly terms and exchange civilities of entertainment; in the evening there would be cards. One day we were guests of Major S. Tired of playing Boston, we had thrown the cards down on the table; we commenced a long session of talk. Contrary to our habit, this was an interesting talk. The theme of discussion was this: that the Mussulman creed, which teaches that a man's destiny is written in heaven unalterably, is a creed that numbers plenty of votaries even among us. And everybody was proceeding to instance sundry remarkable cases in support of his argument *pro* and *con*.

"Gentlemen," said the old Major, "all this stuff amounts to nothing. Have any of you

ever been an eye-witness of any of these extraordinary facts which you rest your opinions upon ? "

" Ah, well—no, not exactly that . . ." said most of the company ; " but we heard it from trustworthy persons."

" It's all nonsense," said somebody. " Where is your trustworthy person who has ever seen the scroll that registers the hour of our death ? And if there is in fact Predestination, then how did we come to be endowed with Will and Reason ? And why are we accountable for our actions ? "

At this point an officer who was sitting in a corner of the room got up, advanced slowly to the table, and comprised the whole company with a calm, dominating survey.

Lieutenant Boulitch was a Servian by birth, as his name betrayed ; his outward appearance thoroughly corresponded to his character. Tall stature, swarthy complexion, black hair, and black, penetrating eyes, big but regularly formed nose, and the peculiar attribute of his race—a cold and cheerless smile that haunts the lips long and faintly. Every detail seemed to conspire in lending him the air of a creature apart, singular, and incapable of sharing the thoughts and passions of those with whom it was his lot to be companions.

He was a brave man, chary of speech, but

his tongue sharp enough when he did speak. He made nobody free of the privacy of his spiritual or family secrets; he drank hardly any wine; and he was adamant to the seductions of those Cossack girls whose charm you cannot apprehend till you see them. Gossip had it that the Colonel's wife was not indifferent to the expressive energy of his glance; but Boulitch saw no joke in this suggestion, and got angry at the mention of it.

The only passion which he made no secret of was the passion for gaming. The sight of a green board made him forget everything. He was usually a loser, but persistent bad luck only provoked his obstinacy. It used to be told of him that once on campaign he was keeping the bank, playing on a gun-carriage for table. He was having a frightful run of luck, when suddenly the alarm was given, shots were fired, and everybody jumped up and made for his arms.

"Pay up to the bank!" shouted Boulitch, without getting up, to one of the most ardent punters in the company.

"Seven!" answered the other as he hastened off. In the thick of the bustle and uproar Boulitch dealt: the card turned up.

When he took his place in the line there was already a pretty stiff fusillade going on. Boulitch took no heed of bullets or Tche-

tcheness sabres, but hunted out his lucky punter.

"The seven turned up," he shouted, when at last he caught sight of his man in a line of skirmishers who were beginning to dislodge the enemy from the covert of a wood; and, coming up nearer, he took out purse and pocket-book and paid the winner, in spite of his protests against the untimeliness of the settlement. This disagreeable duty accomplished, he flung himself forward, inspired his man to follow him, and blazed away at the enemy with perfect *sangfroid* till the very end of the engagement.

When Lieutenant Boulitch came up to the table there was a general silence, in expectation that he would have something original to contribute. He began in a voice pitched lower than his wont, but quite steady,—

"Gentlemen, what is the good of this unreal debate? Would you like a proof? I propose to put this question to the test in my own person: can a man dispose of his life at his free will, or has every one of us his fatally-decreed moment to die? Who will accept the challenge?"

"Not I! Not I!" resounded from every side. "The fellow's mad! What on earth is he about?"

I said in joke, "I'll offer a bet."

"What! you bet?"

"Against Predestination," I answered, and threw down a score of quarter-guinea pieces on the table—all the money that I had in my pocket.

"Done," said Boulitch in a deep voice, and then added, "Major, you shall be umpire. Look, here are fifteen pieces; the remaining five you owe me, and you shall do me the favour of putting them down there to make up the sum."

"Right!" said the Major. "But I cannot pretend to understand what you are about, or how you are going to decide the point at issue."

Boulitch said nothing, but walked into the bedroom. We followed him. He went up to the wall on which the Major's firearms were hanging, and took down at random from a nail one out of the various calibres of pistol. We still did not take his meaning. But when he cocked the trigger and primed the pan, several of us exclaimed involuntarily, and caught him by the arm. "What are you about? Listen! . . . It's madness!" He disengaged his arms and answered their ejaculations by saying slowly, "Gentlemen, who would like to pay up the five guineas for me?"

General silence was the reply, and everybody drew back. Boulitch came out of the other room and sat down at the table, and again we

all followed him. He made a sign inviting us to sit down in a circle round him, and we all obeyed without a word; he exercised some mysterious authority over us during those moments. I looked him steadily and hard in the face, but he met my scrutiny with a calm and unperturbed eye, and his pale lips formed a smile. Yet, notwithstanding his cool composure, I thought I read the sign-manual of death on that white face. I have observed—and many old soldiers have confirmed the observation—that upon the face of a man who is to die within a few hours there is, as it were, the imprint of inevitable doom so clearly graven that a practised eye cannot fail to recognize it.

"You are going to die to-day," I said to him.

He turned sharply towards me, but his answer was slow and unmoved,—

"Perhaps yes, perhaps no."

Then he turned to the Major and asked if the pistol was loaded. The Major could not well recollect in the confusion of the moment.

Somebody exclaimed, "Oh, that'll do, Boulitch! Of course it's loaded if it was hanging at the head of the bed. What's the point of playing the fool?"

And another said, "Come, the joke's not good enough."

A third shouted, " I bet fifty roubles to five that it's not loaded ! "

The new bet was duly recorded.

I began to be tired of all this ceremony, and said, " Look here : why don't you either fire, or else hang up the pistol again where you found it, and let's all go to bed ? "

" Hear, hear ! " said several voices. " Hear, hear ! Let's go to bed ! "

Boulitch presented the muzzle of the pistol at his forehead and said, " Gentlemen, I request that none of you move from his place." Every one might have been frozen into stone. He then addressed me. " Mr. Pechorin, take a card and toss it in the air."

I picked up (I remember it well) the ace of hearts and tossed it in the air. Everybody held his breath ; every eye—in horror and a kind of irrepressible curiosity too—leapt from the pistol to the fatal ace, which fluttered in the air and then slowly fell. At the moment when it touched the table Boulitch pulled the trigger—and missed fire.

" Thank God, it was not loaded ! " The words were heard from more than one quarter.

" Let us have a look, though," said Boulitch.

He cocked the trigger again, took aim for a *fourajka* cap which was hanging by the window, and fired. The room was filled with smoke. When it dispersed we picked up the *fourajka*.

It had a hole in it, plumb-centre, and the bullet was imbedded deep in the wall.

It was several minutes before any one could utter a word. Boulitch poured my coin into his purse with perfect unconcern.

Then the talk revived with a discussion why the pistol had missed fire the first time. Some asserted there must have been an obstruction in the priming-pan ; others whispered that the powder had been damp the first time, and Boulitch had afterwards primed it with fresh ; but I was positive that this latter suggestion was quite unwarrantable, because I had never taken my eyes off the pistol the whole time.

" You've the luck of the game with you," I said to Boulitch.

He answered, " For the first time in my life," with a self-complacent smile ; and added, " It's better than Faro or *Stoss*."

" A bit more risky, though."

" Do tell me, though. Are you a convert to Predestination ? "

" Yes, I do believe in it. But what beats me now is—why should I have had the feeling that you would infallibly die to-day ? "

The man who had a few moments before aimed quite coolly at his own forehead suddenly lost his temper and his self-control at these words.

" Oh, enough of that ! " he said, and got up

from the table. "Our bet is finished and done with, and I consider it bad taste for you to say any more about it."

He picked up his hat and went out.

I thought this was strange behaviour, and well I might.

However, the company soon dispersed, and everybody went home, all canvassing Boulitch's mad prank in various senses, and probably all with one voice pronouncing me a cynical egoist for accepting a bet with a man who wanted to shoot himself. As if he could not have found a suitable occasion without me.

I returned home through the deserted by-streets of the village. A full moon, red as the glare of a conflagration, was beginning to show itself clear of the indented horizon of roofs; the deep-blue vault of the sky was full of the steady brilliance of stars. How ludicrous it seemed when I thought how there were once sensible people to be found who could suppose that these celestial luminaries partake in the miserable little quarrels which we wage for the sake of a scrap of land or some imaginary right. What? Did people once hold that these lamps were kindled for us, and but to light up their squabbles and triumphs? These burn still with their ancient splendour, but *their* passions and hopes have long since been quenched with them, like a little fire which

some careless traveller lights at the edge of a forest. And yet what strength of will was lent to men by this belief that the whole heaven, with its innumerable inhabitants, looked down on them with sympathetic interest, speechless but unfailing. But we, their sorry descendants, we who crawl about the world without pride or conviction, without delight or fear, notwithstanding the instinctive dread which strangles the heart at the thought of an inevitable end—we are incapable any more of making a great sacrifice either for the benefit of mankind, or even for our individual happiness, because we know its hopelessness. We pass nonchalantly from one doubt to another doubt, as our ancestors flung themselves from one error to another error; but we have not either the hopes they had, or even that vague, though vast, delectation which the soul tastes in every combat, whether with men or with Fate.

My mind ran on through many musings in this strain. I did not arrest its course, because I do not care to halt and dwell upon any abstract idea. What does it lead to? . . . In my earliest youth I was a visionary: I loved to gloat over the pictures, now dark and now joyful, which an eager and restless imagination limned for me. But what profit had I in the upshot? Nothing but weariness, as of a man that has fought with dreams in the night,

and a perplexed recollection full of regrets. In that vain battle I squandered the ardour of soul and the resoluteness of will which are indispensable for real life. When I first entered on life I had lived it all before in imagination, and therefore I found nothing but disenchantment and boredom—like a man reading a bad imitation of a book which he knows already.

The events of the evening had struck a pretty deep impression in me, and my nerves were shaken. In truth I do not know whether I do believe now in Predestination or not, but I was firmly persuaded of it that evening. The proof had been pretty trenchant; and though I might scoff at our ancestors and their obsequious astrology, I was falling into the same net with them, willy-nilly. However, I brought myself up short in time on this perilous road, by telling myself that the best way was to deny nothing unreservedly, to commit myself to nothing blindly, to cast metaphysics aside, and just look before my own feet.

A most timely precaution; for I as near as could be tumbled headlong over a thick, soft, but apparently lifeless obstacle in my path. Stooping down, and the moon now shining full into the street, I discovered it was a pig, slashed in two by a sabre. My hasty inspection was hardly completed when I heard the sound of footsteps, and two Cossacks came

running out of a side lane. One of them approached me, and asked if I had seen the drunken Cossack who had run amok at a pig. I answered that I had met no Cossack, but pointed to the unlucky victim of his misguided prowess.

"The bloody-minded scoundrel!" said the Cossack. "Give him a sup of beer, and off he goes, bent on making mincemeat of anything that he comes across. Come along—after him, Erémeitch; we must pinch him, but it's not so . . ."

I heard no more. They were already far away, and I continued my walk with more circumspection, and at last gained my quarters safely.

I lived with an old Cossack sergeant, whom I liked for his good nature, and particularly for his pretty daughter Nastia.

She was waiting for me as usual at the wicket gate, wrapped up in a fur pelisse. The moon lit up her pretty lips, which were pale, almost blue, with the cold of the night. She recognized me, and greeted me with a smile; but I had no thoughts of her, and saying, "Good-night, Nastia," I walked past her. She wanted to answer, but uttered nothing but a sigh.

I shut the door of my room behind me, lit a candle, and threw myself down on my bed; but slumber kept me waiting longer than usual.

Whitish glamours were showing in the east already when I fell asleep. But manifestly it was written in heaven that I was not to have any rest that night. At four o'clock in the morning a pair of fists knocked at my window. I sprang up. "What's the matter?" I was answered by several excited voices. "Get up! dress!" I dressed with all speed and rushed out. Three officers were there. With one voice they said, "Do you know what has happened?" They were as pale as death.

"What?"

"Boulitch has been killed."

I was stupefied.

"Killed," they repeated. "We must make haste."

"But where?"

"You shall hear as we go along."

We started; and they told me the story, interspersed with sundry comments upon the strange predestination which had saved him from imminent death in one form within half an hour of his actual death. Boulitch was walking alone in a dark street, when the drunken Cossack who had slaughtered the pig came running up to him. The man might probably have passed him without notice if Boulitch had not suddenly stopped and said, "Hullo! brother, who are you looking for?"

"You!" replied the Cossack, and felled

him with his sabre ; the stroke laid him open from the shoulder almost to the heart. The two Cossacks whom I had met in pursuit of the butcher hurried up, and raised the wounded man ; but he was already almost at the last gasp, and could not utter more than the three words, " *He was right.*"

The inner significance of these words was known to me alone ; they referred to me. I had undesignedly foretold his fate to the poor fellow, and my instinct had not deceived me. The change which I had read in his countenance had been a veritable prognostic of approaching death.

The assassin had shut himself into an empty cottage at the extremity of the village ; we now proceeded thither. A multitude of women in tears was hurrying in the same direction. Every now and again a belated Cossack trooper would come charging into the street, hastily fix his dagger by his saddle-side, and gallop away past us. The confusion was frightful.

At last arrived, we began to survey the scene. A crowd was assembled around the cottage, which had doors and shutters fast closed from within. Officers and Cossacks were engaged in a heated discussion together ; there was an uproar of women's voices, some accusing, some giving judgment. One figure in the midst of

a group caught my eye—an old woman whose face was eloquent of distraction and despair. She sat on a big balk of timber, huddled in a heap, her elbows leaning on her knees, and her head supported in her hands. She was the homicide's mother. From time to time her lips moved; was it prayer or curse, the inaudible murmur?

However, something must be resolved upon and some means made to capture the delinquent; only nobody ventured to come forward and take the brunt.

I walked up to the window and looked through a chink in the shutter. The wretched man was lying on the floor, grasping a pistol in his right hand; his bloody sword lay by his side. His quick, eager eyes kept revolving round in terror. At times he shuddered and clutched at his head, as if in a confused recollection of overnight. I did not read much of desperado in those restless eyes, and I told the Major that there was nothing to be gained by waiting; he might as well give the Cossacks orders to break in the door and fall upon the man; better now than later, when he should be completely come to himself.

Meanwhile an old native *yesaoul* went up to the door and called him by name; and an answer came from within.

The *yesaoul* said, "Brother Ephimitch, you've

done wrong; there's nothing for it but you must give yourself up."

The Cossack answered, "I won't give myself up."

And the *yesaoul* continued, "Fear God, man! Come, you're not a damned Tchetchenetz, but a decent Christian. Come now; you've fallen into temptation, and there's nothing for it—you can't escape your fate."

But the other answered in a loud voice, "I will not give myself up." And we could hear the click of the trigger as he cocked his pistol.

"Hi! Gammer," said the *yesaoul* to the old woman, "you talk to your son; perhaps he'll listen to you. It's a mere provoking of God. Why, look, the gentlemen have been waiting two hours."

The old woman stared at him steadily and shook her head. Then he walked up to the Major and said, "Vassili Petrovitch, he won't surrender; I know him. If we break in the door he may kill several of our men. Don't you think it better, sir, to shoot him? There's a wide chink in the shutter."

A curious idea flashed into my mind at this moment. Like Boulitch, I had the notion to experiment on destiny. I said to the Major, "Allow me, sir; I will take him alive."

I told the *yesaoul* to engage the man in conversation, posted three Cossacks at the door,

ready to break it down and come to my aid at a given signal, and then walked round the hovel and approached the fatal window. My heart was beating hard.

The *yesaoul* proceeded to vociferate, "Ah, you damned hound! What d'you want to make fools of us for, eh? Do you think we can't master you?" And he began to rap on the door with all his might. I put my eye to the chink, and followed the Cossack's movements: he was not expecting an attack on that side. Suddenly I broke down the shutter, and threw myself in at the window head foremost.

A shot went off just by my ear; the bullet carried away my epaulette. But the smoke which filled the room prevented my adversary from finding the sabre which was lying by his side. I pinned him by the arm; the Cossacks burst in, and it was not three minutes before he was handcuffed and led off under arrest. The crowd dispersed; the officers congratulated me, and really there was some cause for it.

* * * * *

And was not all this enough to make anybody a fatalist? But, after all, who ever really knows what he believes and what he does not? How often we mistake for belief what is but an illusion of the senses or a mere blunder of the reason! I prefer to doubt of everything; it

is a temper which does not impair energy of character; on the contrary, for my part I always go ahead with a better courage when I do not know what is awaiting me. After all, nothing worse than death can befall you, and death you cannot avoid.

When I got back to the fort, I told Maxim Maximich all that had happened to me and all that I had witnessed, and tried to elicit his opinion concerning Predestination. At first the word puzzled him; but when, to the best of my power, I had explained it to him, he shook his head significantly, and observed, "Ah, well, yes; it's all very fine and very clever! All I know is that those Asiatic triggers often do miss fire, if you don't keep them properly greased, or don't press firmly enough with your finger. To tell you the truth, I don't care about the Circassian carbines either. They don't suit the Little Brother * somehow. They're so short in the butt, you may get your nose burnt off before you know where you are. That's why they use the sabre. However, it's only my humble opinion."

Then he was silent for a while—pensive; and at last he added, "Yes, to be sure—a pity about that poor chap! The devil must have put it into his head to accost a drunken man at night! All the same, it looks as if it had been

* The Russian private soldier.

written that it should happen to him from his birth."

* * * * *

This was all that I could get out of him; he is not, in general, a great fancier of metaphysical discussions.

THE END.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT
THE PRESS OF THE PUBLISHERS.